

School of Management

**Cinematographs Contextualising Historical, Political and
Philosophical Influences on the Development of
Education in Vietnam**

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This Thesis is presented as part of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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To my mother

献给 在天国之灵的母亲

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

Signature:
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Date:
17 March, 2003

ABSTRACT OF STUDY

It is arguable that at all times the long-term prosperity of a nation is inextricably linked to its educational system, especially of higher education. This study of Vietnam's educational structure and system is both unique and necessary. It provides detailed information and considerable analysis not previously available to readers outside Vietnam. As a historical study, it covers aspects of more than 2,000 years of the country's educational developments, from the invasion of China in 111 B.C. to the present.

The study is divided into six chapters, each of which deals with a major period of time. Each chapter is self-contained. Historical background and essential materials are presented and analysed. The writing of historical events is based on chronological order.

Vietnam was a country without written language before the coming of the Chinese who, in their invasion of Vietnam in 111 B.C., brought with them their civilization, culture, educational system and language. The introduction of Chinese language to Vietnam can be taken as the overture of Vietnamese education. The first two chapters provide detailed information and historical factors as to how an early educational system of Vietnam was established under the influence of China and through its impact of education on the formation of a

Confucian political system and Confucian society, which continued to exist for over 2,000 years.

The political decline of China in the late 19th century provided the opportunity for the French to enter Vietnam and finally replace the Chinese sovereignty over the country in 1885. The invasion and ruling of the French (1886-1954) brought forward significant changes in Vietnam politically, socially and educationally. The French introduced a new, modern educational system to Vietnam and set up an elite colonial educational system which had a great impact on Vietnamese society as well as its education. Traditional Chinese education and its imperial examination system commenced to fade out in Vietnam from the early 20th century and came to an end in 1917. During this colonial period, Western ways of thinking and culture began to flow into Vietnam and continued thenceforth.

With the division of the country into North and South as separate regimes under the Geneva Accords in 1954, the educational systems of each regime developed under different political systems and different ideologies from 1955-1975. In the North, the educational system was totally reformed according to Communist doctrine while in the South, education continued to develop in the Western ways.

The world-known Vietnam War ended in April 1975. However, the unification of the North and South failed to be effected in many aspects due to varied ideologies and political systems. During the period of 1975-85 Vietnam underwent a

transitional reform of education in the South, which continued up to the practice of the nation's 'open-door policy' starting from 1987. Narration of a significant profile of attributes of Vietnam's system of education today is fully sketched.

The concluding chapter comprises two major parts; the summing up and a general review on Vietnam's educational system and practices, together with some of the issues evident in the system at present.

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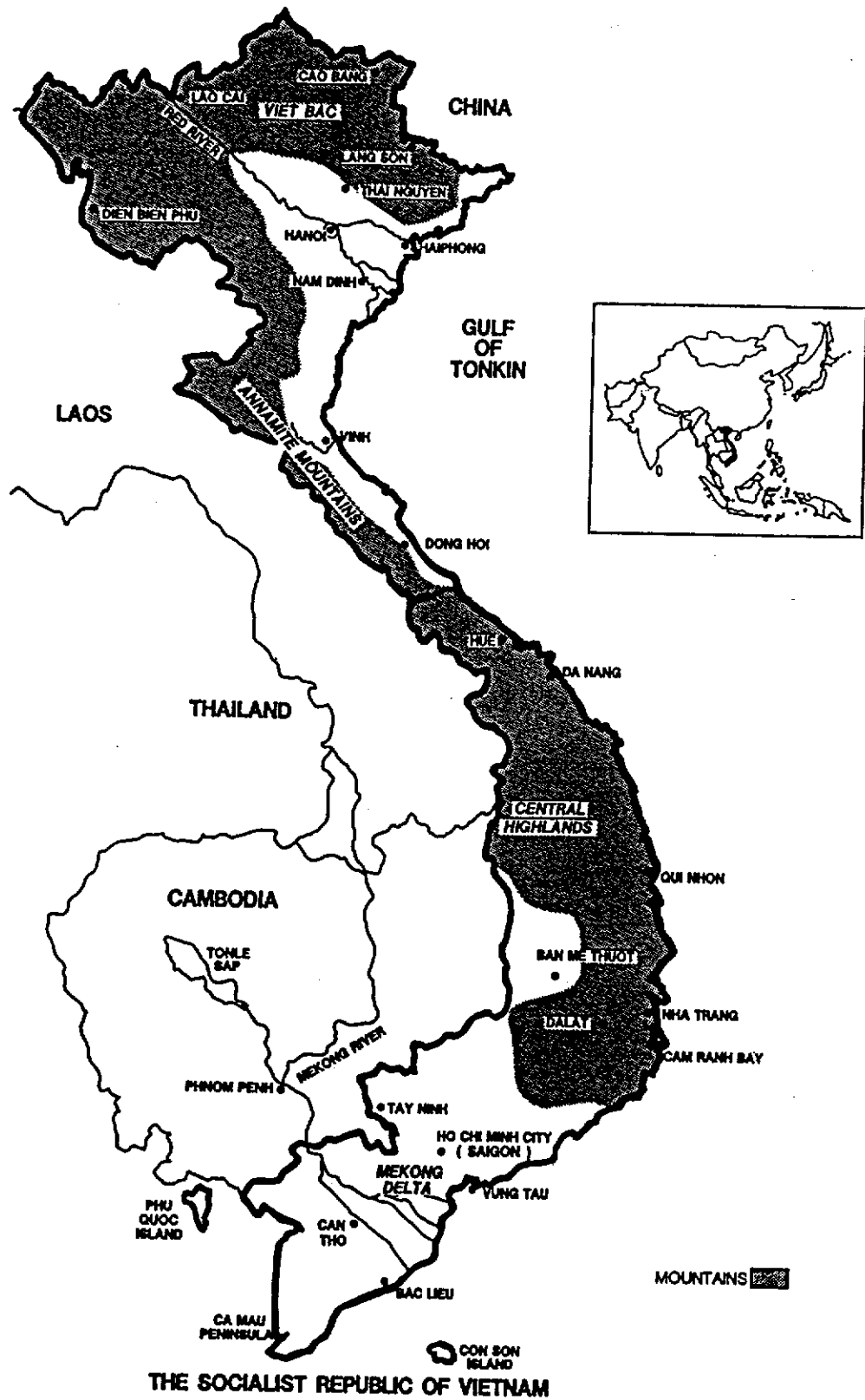
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

Purpose of the study

Many excellent books and periodical articles have been written on Vietnam; some provide a simple introductory overview of the country, while others focus on specific episodes of war or a span of time in its long history.

The present study is a condensed historiograph of Vietnamese education since early Chinese influences to the present day. The intention of the study is to develop a perspective to produce a panoramic narrative that, while concentrating primarily on Vietnamese education, also describes and analyses the origins of a series of causes and effects, the past and present that constitute the accumulating history of Vietnam, and of the history of modern times which, inevitably, will affect the future of that nation and the education of its people.

It is predictable that Vietnam, with its geographic location, natural resources, considerably large population and its intelligent and diligent people, will become a major country in Southeast Asia. Coming to know and understand the country and its people, as such, is a matter critical to the development of the region. Perhaps, it can be argued, it is quite impossible to understand a country thoroughly without knowing its culture, its language evolution and social developments. This study provides a broad and deep cultural background leading

to a better understanding of Vietnam and the various influences on its educational system.

Contemporary and background information on Vietnam is provided for the development of the themes of the thesis, to enable a detailed and realistic picture of Vietnam today to be perceived through sundry views of Vietnam's current economic reforms, its social situation and educational system. The background study of this chapter of introduction includes a brief examination of the country and its geographic features, natural resources and population, its people and the society.

Significance of the Study

The major part of the research study provides a historical interpretation of Vietnamese education since its formal recorded origins in 1075 A.D. to the present day. Historical settings and contexts are presented for each major development period, so that the country's changes in education under the impact and influences of China, France, Russia, and America can be understood. The study also includes a close investigation of the country's current status whereby the new direction for Vietnam's education may be clearly ascertained.

Scope of the Study

As a study for a Doctor of Philosophy degree, this research has certain capacities and limitations. One issue is that there is a dearth of research in Vietnamese

education. As one of the Asian scholars from the University of Hawaii said: “In terms of research in Asia, Vietnam is still an unexplored land. There are vast territories remained untouched” (Tran Van Tai, 1996, p.46). Scarce resources for research and study on Vietnam is another limiting factor; the restrictions on the researcher seeking to go into a deeper and broader discussion of the topic have required the translation and interpretation of many original language documents. However, this study will focus on:

- a. The early origins of Vietnamese education derived from China, and the influence of Chinese culture on Vietnam's social and political formation. In particular, there is a review of how a Confucian Society was formed in Vietnam through the process of education.
- b. The impact of the Colonial period under the French, viz., 1885-1954. A detailed narrative as to how the French elite education system brought about the social changes in Vietnam is given.
- c. The context of the division of the nation after the first Indochina War in 1954, and the changes in educational policies experienced by both North Vietnam and South Vietnam since the division.
- d. A critical review of the effects on society of the two different ideologies of North and South during the period of 1955-1975.
- e. Examination of the transformation and transition of the educational system in the South after unification in 1975.

- f. The issues in education arising from the open-door policy and economic reforms since the late 1980s.
- g. The rise of pragmatism in education since economic reform, and its failure to respond to the demands of the market-oriented society.

Research Methodology

Theory has many implications for historical methodology. It may influence the type of evidence sought, the type of evidence that is accepted, and the sort of arguments to be made from the evidence. In presenting this thesis, there has been an attempt not to get involved totally with any specific theories. 'Interpretation of history' is the main methodology of this study. As historical writing is selective and interpretive, it is necessarily guided by the writer's own sense of what is important, where to find meaning, and how socio-political change and human motivation work. The success of the study arises partly from the available materials, but also in the writer's own temperament, convictions, hunches and theories, whether implicit or explicit.

The research study on Vietnam's education is quite different from that of a Western country. The author of this thesis would like to point out that in the West, the formation of an educational system usually comes from the interplay of socio-political factor, economic factor, problem of intent (attribution of human motivation), leadership and organization; these are all the factors from within. However, a study on Vietnam's education, the researcher is required to complete his task to locate more solidly in context of socio-political structure, upon which it

is evident that education of this country was dominated by and being used as an instrument to serve the body politic. And in the long course of Vietnam's educational development, the dominance and influences were from without (from foreign countries).

The early period of Vietnam's education (since establishment of the Royal College in the Temple of Literature in 1076) was dominated by Chinese Imperial Examination System for selection of State Officials. Modern education of Vietnam was introduced and established by the French after the completion of their conquest of Vietnam in 1885. During the Colonial period by the French (1885-1954), Vietnam's education was strictly under the control of the French.

Following the splitting of the country into the North Regime and the South Regime (1955-1975), education in the North was dominated and influenced by Socialist ideology, while in the South, American educational system was replacing the French colonial education system.

Since the unification of Vietnam in 1975, the country could then enjoy the freedom to set up an educational system of their own. This is a phenomena never perceived in the study of Western education.

Written Resources

Resources of literature for this study were mainly taken from books, a small part of it were from journals, newspapers, research theses, study notes of some Vietnamese scholars. By dint of ideological problems and governmental restrictions in Vietnam, personal interview and formal surveys were not applied in the study.

Overview

As stated in the previous pages, this thesis is a historiography of Vietnamese education from the early Chinese influences to the present day. Critical investigation of the social and political impacts on the management of education in the country will be made on the basis of historical evidence.

This study will conclude with analysis of Vietnam's present status in political, economical, and social terms that give occasion for issues such as, 'What prospects are open to Vietnam's education?' to be assessed within the region.

Consequence Expected

Despite the limitations of research and documentation previously mentioned, it is considered that this introductory study can be a useful reference for the many Australians and others who are interested in studying the problems and issues of Vietnam, and those who are to venture an undertaking in the country.

NATION OF VIETNAM

Political Structure

The official name of Vietnam is The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Cong Hoa Xa Hoi Chu Nghia Vietnam). The head of state of Vietnam is the Council of State, a legislative body. It has no executive power, and is subject to the overriding authority of the National Assembly (functioning as a collective presidency).

The head of government is the Prime Minister, Chairman of the Council of Ministers. The standing Committee of the Council is the highest executive organ of the state. It is directly responsible to the National Assembly and reports to the Council of State when the National Assembly is not in session.

The legislature of Vietnam is the National Assembly, the highest organ of the government of Vietnam. It comprises approximately 700 elected members and is presided over by the National Chairman.

The capital of Vietnam is Hanoi, a city in the northern part of Vietnam.

Geographical Features – The Land

Vietnam extends along the eastern flank of the Indochinese Peninsula. Leaning back against the Asian continent, it looks out on the South China Sea and the

Pacific. Shaped like a giant letter 'S', it runs along the eastern edge of the south-east Asian mainland from the Chinese border (Yunnan and Guanxi Provinces) to the southern tip of Ca Mau Peninsula (Gulf of Thailand), a straight-line distance of about 1,600 kilometres. It is broad in the north and south, but is very narrow in the centre, where at one point it is only 50 kilometres wide. Its western border is contiguous with land locked Laos in the north and Cambodia in the south. Vietnam encompasses 329,556 square kilometres. Excluding its islands, its co-ordinates are:

Longitude: 102° 10' – 109° 30' East

Latitude: 8° 30' – 23° 22' North

Vietnam's total land area is roughly 333,000 square kilometres, which makes it slightly larger than Italy. Much of the country consists of hills and mountains. The principal physiographic features are the Chaine Annamitique (Annamite Chain or Cordillers, Trung Son), extending from north to south in central Vietnam and dominating the interior, and two extensive alluvial deltas formed by the Red River (Song Hong) in the North and the Mekong River (Song Cuu Long) in the South. Between these two deltas is a long, relatively narrow coastal plain (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Government Publication, 1989).

The country naturally falls into three distinct geographical regions, recognised by the French administration and much as the Vietnamese now perceive their land:

the North (Bac Bo) region (formerly French, known as Tonkin), the Central (Trung Bo) region (Annam), and the South (Nam Bo) region (Cochinchina).

Hanoi, the capital, and Saigon (Ho-chi-minh City), the country's two largest cities, sit respectively in the northern and southern delta lands, overseeing Vietnam's most fertile and productive rice bowls.

The Red River originates on the Yunnan Plateau of South-western China and flows southeast to the Gulf of Tonkin. Its delta is bounded by rugged mountains that extend to the Chinese border in the north and to the frontier with Laos in the West.

The Mekong River, southeast Asia's longest river, originates on the Tibetan Plateau and flows southwards for some 4,160 kilometres to the South China Sea. This delta extends from the vicinity of Ho-chi-minh City (formerly Saigon) to the mangrove swamps of narrow lowland along the South China Sea. In the north, this coastal area consists of a considerably flat, sandy plain, with several rivers flowing into the sea from the mountains to the west in the central south of Hai Van Pass, near Danang City where mountains often jut directly into the sea. In the south, smaller deltaic plains also occur along the south central coast of the South China Sea.

The mountainous relief and the South China Sea exert a decisive influence on Vietnam's natural environment. Mountains and hills cover three quarters of the territory. The continental shelf stretches over 500,000 square kilometres and the coastline 3,260 kilometres.

Owing to its positive transition and contact between several natural systems and to the long geological history of the subsoil, Vietnam's natural conditions are complex and its natural resources highly varied (Nepote, 1992).

The Climate

With Vietnam stretching from the mountainous far north to the Mekong Delta in the south, its climate has pronounced regional variations. It is essentially a tropical country with a humid monsoon climate. It lies in the southeast Asian inter-tropical monsoon zone which is different from other monsoon zones of Asia such as those of India, China or Japan. This monsoon is characterised by two facts. One is the vigorous mass of polar air blowing south, thus causing a real winter in the north of the country above the 18th parallel, a winter which is colder than any other regions of the same latitude. The other is the strong expansion of the equatorial mass of air to the north, bringing along humidity. But for this humidity, large parts of the country would have remained arid, as in other countries on the same latitude in eastern Asia and eastern Africa (Dobby, 1989).

As the country is inter-tropical, its natural environment is tropical in the north and sub-equatorial in the south, especially south of Qui Nhon. As North Vietnam is on the edge of the tropical world, January is the coldest month of the year. Hanoi has a mean temperature of 17° and an annual average temperature of 23°C. Farther south in Hue, the average annual temperature is 25°C and in Ho-chi-minh City (Saigon) it is 27°C. In the highland city of Da Lat (1,500 metres above sea level), it is 21°C. The winter season in northern Vietnam lasts for six months (from November to April); from early February to the end of March, there is a persistent drizzling rain that the Vietnamese call 'dust rain' or 'flying rain'. The summer in the north of Vietnam last for 5-6 months (from April/May to October) and is characterised by heat, heavy rain and occasional typhoons.

In Central and South Vietnam, the Southeast monsoon winds between June and November bring rains and occasional typhoons to the eastern slopes of the mountains and the low land plains. Between December and April, it is the dry season which is characterised by northeasterly winds and, in the south, by high temperature. On the mountains, for every 100 metres rise in the altitude, the temperature decreases by 0.5°C on the average.

The varied climate in Vietnam has, to a certain extent, a strong impact on the country's economic patterns, culture, and the living style of the people (Vietnamese Nation, Government Publication, 1989).

Vietnam: The People

The Viets (also known as Kinh) are commonly referred to as the Vietnamese people. However, the origins of the Vietnamese people are obscure and legendary. Archaeological excavations carried out and continued even during the climax of the Vietnam War, have indicated that the earliest existence of man on Vietnam territory goes back to about the paleolithic age. The Hoa Binh-Bac Son Cultures (about 10,000 years ago) already knew about agriculture and live stock breeding and probably the art of growing water rice in north Vietnam where historically the Vietnamese nation was formed. The sophisticated Bronze Age, Dong Son culture became apparent around the 13th century B.C. (Storey & Robinson, 1993).

In short, the Vietnamese origins are an ethnic hybrid – Indonesian, Viet, Thai, and Chinese – which came together in the northern part of the present-day Vietnam around the Red River Delta between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200.

Over this period, a kind of proto-Vietnamese identity and culture emerged, strong enough not only to survive the ensuing periods of Chinese rule, but also to imbue generations of these people with a stubborn sense of independence. Having said that, the Vietnamese do display strains of Chinese civilisation in their culture; the result of 1,000 years of Chinese rule. Similarly, though not so pronounced, Indian culture was assimilated by the Vietnamese as they moved southward to conquer the Chams and Khmers in southern present-day Vietnam (Nepote, 1992).

In pre-history times, the Vietnamese lived around the Red River Delta, where they were obviously one of the earliest people in Asia to grow rice. Ethnically, they are probably related to or belonged to the Yueh (Viet) peoples living in south-eastern China, but by the time these peoples first appeared in the recorded history, they had already evolved into a distinctive society and called themselves the Lac peoples (Storey, 1993).

The Modern-Day Population

According to the government's 1999 census, Vietnam's population had reached 82.10 millions, placing it as the 12th most populous country in the world, and the first in mainland Southeast Asia. The major ethnic grouping is the Vietnamese (84%); the rest are ethnic-Chinese (2%), Khmers, Chams and members of some 60 ethno-linguistic groups totalling 5.5 million people living mostly in the mountain areas stretching from the north to the south of Vietnam, covering two-thirds of the country (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Government Publication, 1999). With about 200 people per square kilometre, Vietnam has one of the world's highest population densities for an agricultural country. The current rate of population growth is 2.3 percent per year. Overall life expectancy is 66 years, and infant mortality is 46 per 1,000 (Michaels, 1997).

Natural Resources

The Mekong and Red River Deltas comprise only 23 percent of the total land areas of Vietnam, yet they contain approximately 60 percent of its population.

These two areas, due to their warm climate and rich alluvial soils, provide more than 6,700,000 acres of cultivated land for growing rice; and some areas support two rice crops per year. However, in North Vietnam, thousands of peasants sometimes encounter the threat of starvation owing to damage caused by cold and drought, while the Central coast often suffers from damage caused by typhoons and floods.

Vietnam has an unusually wide range of mineral resources, mostly untapped. In the provinces around Hanoi, in the North, there are many large reserves of anthracite coal. Two percent of the world's supply of raw phosphates and one percent of its high-grade chromite come from Vietnam. There are also very large deposits of tin, antimony, bauxite, gold, iron ore, lead, tungsten, zinc, and lime.

Forests, potentially, are a major natural resource; the total area under forest cover is 52,000,000 acres. During the Vietnam war, some forest and plantation areas, notably along the frontier with Cambodia, were defoliated by U.S. herbicides. There was profound concern that such areas might suffer permanent damage, but fortunately, most appear to be recovering.

Fish and shellfish from Vietnam's coastal waters and the plains of Mekong and Bassac Rivers are the most important staple food after rice. Fishing businesses employ more than 550,000 people. It is an important industry in the country (The Vietnamese Nation, 1999).

History of Vietnam

Evidence shows that Hoa Binh-Bac Son tribesmen of the territory had one of the earliest civilisations of mankind, and that these groups engaged in a primitive agriculture dating back over 9,000 years. It can be certain that the Red River Delta of 15,000 square kilometres surrounded on all sides by vast mountainous regions in Bac Bo (North Vietnam) was where the Vietnamese nation was formed (Tran, 1970).

The arrival of bronze technology via emergent trade routes with China and India led to the rise of the Dong Son culture under the Lac Viets (People of the Valley). By the 10th Century B.C., a bronze culture of some sophistication had grown up in present-day northern Vietnam, and the Lac Viets exercised a pre-eminence over much of the Red River Delta. Their Au Lac Kingdom, symbolised by the shape of the bronze drum, probably reached its zenith in the third century B.C., when Co Loa became its magnificent citadel and political seat. Lac Viet power relied on an ability to coalesce the various tribal elements of the delta lands into a loose feudal cartel that controlled the lucrative routes to the north and west; but this quickly dissipated with the increasingly successful incursions of southern China's Yueh people who by this time had managed to break their migratory trails across the inhospitable northern mountains. Thus began the gradual merging of proto-Vietnamese groups, including the Lac Viet, with people of southern Chinese origin, out of which the Vietnamese emerged.

For the Vietnamese, whose national identity would be shaped largely by the experience of Chinese colonialism, some benefits accrued. Aspects of Han technology and learning were eagerly absorbed; in particular, methods of rice cultivation, animal husbandry, and construction (of flood controlling dikes, especially). Science, medicine, and schooling were all introduced and promulgated by scholars and religious travellers who also brought the great eastern religions of Buddhism and Taoism, and the civil code of Confucianism. While clearly a people apart, the rich texture of Chinese civilisation influenced the northern Vietnamese so profoundly that it became a central factor in their complex make-up (Nguyen Khac Vien, 1993).

Like most nations, Vietnam traces its origin to legendary kingdoms ruled by mythical monarchies. The Vietnamese call themselves “descendants of the Dragon (Lac Long Quan, Dragon Lord of Lac) and the Fairy (Au Co, a Chinese immortal)” (Karnow, S. 1991: p.88). The intention makes this folklore perpetual, as they want to show that their national roots run as deep as those of China.

The mythical nature of the first Vietnamese dynasty is well established by its miraculous longevity. According to Vietnamese legends whose literary elaboration, however, was undertaken only after the thirteenth century, Vietnam began as a kingdom called Van Lang (or Van Tang, ‘the country of the Tattooed Men’) over which a dynasty by the name of Hong Bang ruled for more than 2,600 years – from 2879 to 258 B.C. (Le Thanh Khoi, 1933). In 258 B.C., the last of the

Hong Bang leaders was overthrown. Van Lang was conquered by the King of Thuc, an aggressor from the north who allegedly united his own country with that of Van Lang and became the founder of the second Vietnamese kingdom, known under the name of Au Lac. This semi-legendary creation existed for only fifty years. Its disappearance in the year 207 B.C. under a flood of armies coming down from southeast China marks the beginning of authentic Vietnamese history (Buttinger, 1970). However, their recorded history, according to the Chinese annals, begins only in 208 B.C. when Trieu Da (Zhao To in Chinese), a Chinese general, conquered Au Lac and formed the Kingdom of Nam Viet (Nan Yueh in Chinese). Nam Viet covered much of south China, the Red River Delta and as far as modern Da-Nang City (in central Vietnam). Trieu Da, defying the decadent Qin Dynasty, throwing off Chinese sovereignty and killing all officials loyal to the Chinese emperor, adopted the customs of the Viets, made himself the ruler of the country from his own constructed capital near the present site of Canton. Its population consisted chiefly of the Viets who had earlier been driven by the Chinese from the Kingdoms south of Yangtze River (Chen, 1977).

Vietnam Under Chinese Rule: 111 B.C. – A.D. 939

Going through almost a century of diplomatic and military conflicts between the Chinese Emperor and Trieu Da and his successors, and following on the heels of the Yueh migration, the ruling Han Chinese conquered the Red River Delta by the Han Emperor Wu Ti (as Emperor 139 B.C. – 87 B.C.) in 111 B.C. He established a string of fortified garrisons to secure his initial tenuous rule. In 207 B.C. the

area from the Red River north to Yunnan was renamed Nam Viet by the Chinese and, later became the Chinese province Giao Chi (Jiao Zhi in Chinese), which covered the northern half of what is now Vietnam (Foo, 1981).

From then on, Chinese culture and civilisation tremendously influenced Vietnam and gradually became the main force in shaping Vietnam culture. “But China failed to assimilate the Vietnamese, who retained their ethnic singularity despite their receptivity to Chinese innovations” (Karnow, 1991: 109).

The Vietnamese were never an easy people to subjugate. During the Han rule, some revolts against China were notable. One of them occurred in 39 A.D., led by Trung Trac, widow of a local lord and her sister Trung Nhi (The Trung Sisters, Hai Ba Trung). They briefly compelled the Chinese governor to flee and restored Vietnamese independence. Three years later, a strong army sent by the Han emperor re-established Chinese rule and sinicization was expedited. Resistance to total sinicization continued. It was led by another woman Trieu Au, yet was crushed after only six months. During the Chinese rule, the Chinese tried to impose a centralised state system on the Vietnamese and to forcibly sinicize their culture, but local rulers made use of the benefits of Chinese civilisation to tenaciously resist these efforts. In fact, the early Vietnamese learned a great deal from the Chinese, including the use of the metal plough, how to domesticate beasts of burden and the construction of dikes and irrigation works. These innovations made possible the establishment of a culture based on rice growing,

which remains the basis of the Vietnamese way of life today. During this era, the Vietnamese were introduced to Confucianism and Taoism by the Chinese scholars who came to Vietnam as administrators or as refugees.

There were some rebellions against Chinese rule – which was characterised by tyranny, forced labour and insatiable demands for tribute – in the third and sixth centuries, but all were crushed (Tran Trong Kim, 1970). In A.D. 679, the Chinese named the country An-Nam, which means the ‘Pacified South’. Nevertheless, since this era, the collective memory of those early attempts to get rid of the Chinese yoke has become an important ushering force in shaping Vietnamese identity.

Independence from China: A.D. 939-1407

Owing to both the vitality of their culture and their great distance from the centre of the Chinese empire, the Vietnamese persistently asserted local autonomy and launched periodic revolts against Chinese rule. As a consequence of the disintegration of the Tang Dynasty in China early in 10th Century, the Vietnamese again started revolting against Chinese rule. The Vietnamese Commander Ngo Quyen defeated the Chinese armies at a decisive battle on the Bach Dang River in A.D. 939 and became the first head of the new state of Vietnam, ending 1,000 years of Chinese governing. The capital was set in Co Loa, just north of Hanoi, the site of the capital of Au Lac more than a thousand years earlier (Chen, 1977).

However, for more than 50 years, independence brought to Vietnam neither peace nor political stability. When Ngo Quyen's reign came to an end after only six years (A.D. 945), Vietnam was torn apart by roughly a dozen local generals who, in the duration of more than 20 years, fought each other for power. Finally, Dinh Bo Linh defeated all the others and established a new dynasty in A.D. 968. After gaining power, Linh entered into an agreement with China. In return for recognition of their actual independence, the Vietnamese accepted Chinese sovereignty and agreed to pay a triennial tribute (Nguyen, 1993). The Dynasty established by Dinh Bo Linh lasted only 12 years. Le Dai Hanh (Le Hoan) overthrew it in A.D. 980 and set up the Le Dynasty which continued from A.D. 980-1009.

The Ly Dynasty: A.D. 1009-1225

The Ly Dynasty was founded by Ly Thai To. They called their country Dai Viet (Great Viet), but the Chinese continued to call it An-Nam (the pacified south). The greatest accomplishments of this dynasty are (a) the re-organization of the administration system, (b) the founding of the nation's first university – the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, (c) promoting agriculture in Viet-nam, and (d) building the first embankments for flood control along the Red River.

The Ly Dynasty set its capital in Hanoi, consolidated its position in the Red River Delta, and secured its northern border by paying tribute to the new Sung Dynasty of China. The Ly dynasty, although breaking away from Chinese governance, had

retained many of the institutions introduced from China, but the influence of Confucianism began to fade from Vietnam's politics. Confucian advisers at court were diluted by the presence of Buddhist and Taoist monks, and of the members of the great feudal families who dominated the bureaucracy and restricted the power of the monarch (Tran, 1970).

The Tran Dynasty: A.D. 1225-1400

Civil war continued in Vietnam to the end of the Ly Dynasty which was replaced, finally, by the Tran Dynasty in 1225. Soon after the founding of the dynasty, a new threat from the north came from the Mongols when Kublai Khan completed his conquest of China in 1279. From 1285 to 1287 the Mongols attacked Dai Viet and occupied Hanoi, the capital. Tran Hung Dao led Vietnamese forces to put up such a forceful resistance that the invaders were finally expelled from the country.

Nevertheless, the expulsion of the Mongols from China in 1368 did not end Vietnam's security problems in the north. Ho Qui Ly overthrew the Tran Dynasty in A.D. 1400, but the Ho Dynasty was short-lived. It survived only seven years. In 1407 the Ming dynasty invaders arrived on the pretext of supporting the rule of the Tran family against the usurper, Ho Qui Ly. Dai Viet, in its weakened condition, once again succumbed to Chinese rule (Buttinger, 1970).

The Post-Tran Dynasty: A.D. 1407-1427

Instead of re-establishing Tran rule, the Ming Dynasty set up a direct Chinese administration in Vietnam. “The Chinese culture and ways of doing things were forced on the population. The Chinese also took the national archives and some of the country’s intellectuals as well to China; it is an irreparable loss to Vietnamese civilization” (Nguyen, 1993: 198). Under Ming’s direct reign, Vietnam was ruthlessly exploited, and the old policy of sinicization and assimilation resumed with austerity. Once again, however, resistance rose very promptly and, at last, in 1427, the rebel Le Loi ousted the Chinese.

Later Le Dynasty: A.D. 1428-1524

In 1428, Le Loi formed the new Le Dynasty, and declared himself Emperor Le Thai To, becoming the founder of the third Great Vietnam Dynasty. The Later Le, who, although not actually in power after 1600, headed the State until 1788. Le Loi and his successors, like the better rulers of the Ly and Tran Dynasties, instituted a vast programme of agrarian reform and land redistribution. In fact, they introduced many reforms. They gave Vietnam the most advanced legal code in Southeast Asia and advocated actively the arts, literature and education. However, the Chinese language and traditions remained dominant socially and politically, in spite of their efforts to break free from the cultural and intellectual domination of Chinese civilization (Storey, 1993).

The Le Dynasty pursued a policy of territorial expansion due to a population increase and the limits of available land in the north. They drove the Chams from the small but fertile deltas in the south. Most of Champa was conquered in 1471 under the leadership of Emperor Le Thanh Tong (reigned 1460-1497). After annexing most of Champa they continued to advance southward, gradually absorbing the petty principalities that had been formed out of the remainder of Champ territory. The Vietnamese completed their expansion by the mid-18th Century, having wrested the lower Mekong Delta from Kampuchea. Laos was finally obliged to admit Vietnamese suzerainty.

Under the Tran and then the Le Dynasties the importance of Confucian institutions and practices increased whilst the influence of Buddhist and Taoist advisers declined at Court (Nepote, 1992). Commoners were permitted for the first time to take the State Civil Services Examinations, thus limiting the power of the aristocracy. The new legal system served to bring Vietnamese social institutions, in some respects, closer to the Chinese model.

Mac Dynasty: A.D. 1527-1592

In 1527 the Governor of Hanoi, Mac Dang Dung, made himself master of the country and set up his own dynasty. Nevertheless, the deposed Le rulers and the generals loyal to them regained control of the lands south of the Red River Delta in 1545; they finally reconquered Hanoi and the north after almost 50 years of civil war. This was the first civil division of the country (Tran, 1970).

Trinh Lords of the North: A.D. 1539-1787

The duration of the second division of Vietnam was much longer and, in the sense of history, more significant. It occurred in about 1620 when the noble family of Nguyen, which had exercised control of provinces south of the Red River Delta from Hue since 1558, refused to accept authority from the Le rulers in Hanoi who were monarchs in name only after the country was reunited following its first division; political power was in the hands of the Trinh family. For almost half a century, the Trinh lords tried in vain to take over by military means the areas under Nguyen's control. During this period, the Nguyen Lords succeeded in expanding Vietnam's control into Cambodian territories of the Mekong Delta. Thus, Cambodia had no choice but to recognize suzerainty of Vietnam in the mid-17th century (Buttinger, 1970).

The conquest of Cambodia brought into the country the essential influence of Buddhism, which was "no longer doctrinally pure, having become intermingled with animism, ancestor-worship and popularised Taoism" (Storey, 1993: 15).

Tay Son Dynasty: A.D. 1788-1802

The defacto division of Vietnam between the Trinh and Nguyen families lasted for another century. Vietnam's unification was undergoing a long period of revolution, political upheaval and even a civil war, which lasted for thirty years (1772-1802). The revolution was led by three brothers Nguyen Nhac, Nguyen Hue, and Nguyen Lu. They were from a wealthy merchant family in the town of

Tay Son near Qui Nhon. Although the revolution started in the south (Tay Son), it was directed against the ruling houses of the North (i.e., the Trinh family) and the South (the Nguyen family). The Tay Son brothers overthrew the southern regime in 1777 and killed the ruling family. However, one member of the southern royal family Prince Nguyen Anh had escaped the slaughter, and regained control of Saigon and the deep south in 1778; but again he was ousted by the Tay Son brothers, in 1783. The Tay Son brothers also defeated the Trinh Lords in 1786 and took over Hanoi. Vietnam was briefly reunited under their rule, with Nguyen Lu as King of the South, Nguyen Nhac King of central Vietnam, and Nguyen Hue as Emperor Quang Trung who successfully expelled the Chinese in 1788.

Nguyen Anh, a surviving Nguyen prince, with the assistance of the French, succeeded at long last in defeating the Tay Son brothers with a small army of mercenaries in 1801 after fourteen years of strife. When Hue and Hanoi were in his hands, he proclaimed himself emperor of united Vietnam under the reign name of Gia Long. He set up the Nguyen Dynasty over the entire country and established an imperial court at Hue in 1802.

Gia Long continued to follow the traditional insurance of obtaining from the emperor of China his investiture as a tributary ruler in return for their continued assistance; and the French mercenaries were rewarded with commercial concessions. His profession of loyalty to the Chinese emperor was respectful. He described himself as King of Nan Yueh (a region of southeast China). The

Chinese Emperor Chia Ching, preferred his vassal state to be called Yueh Nan (South of Yueh). The name has applied ever since and local pronunciation turned it into 'Viet-nam' (Davison, 1979). The Nguyen Dynasty lasted approximately 143 years (1802-1945); the list below shows the ruling periods of each emperor:

Gia Long	- 1802-1819	Ham Nghi	- 1884-1885
Minh Mang	- 1820-1840	Dong Khanh	- 1885-1889
Thieu Tri	- 1841-1847	Thanh Thai	- 1889-1907
Tu Duc	- 1848-1883	Duy Tan	- 1907-1916
Duc Duc	- 1883	Khai Dinh	- 1916-1925
Hiep Hoa	- 1883	Bao Dai	- 1925-1945
Kien Phuc	- 1883-1884	(Replaced by Ho-chi-minh in 1945)	

The rule of the Nguyen Dynasty from Emperor Gia Long and his successors up to the French conquest of Vietnam in the late 19th Century brought no reforms in the constitution of the state, the basic character of which had been firmly established since the Ly Dynasty during the 11th century.

Emperor Gia Long reasserted Confucian values and institutions so as to consolidate the unstable situation of the Dynasty – an atmosphere of reform stirred up by the Tay Son brothers' rebels, about which the conservative elites of the court worried.

Gia Long's son, Emperor Minh Mang (reigned 1820-1840), had a background as a Confucian scholar, and proved an even more orthodox Confucian than his father; he stressed the importance of Confucian traditions and education, for which Chinese and Confucian classics were revived. He further consolidated the

State by establishing a powerful centralised government. He was strongly against Catholicism and saw it as an impending danger to the Confucian State. His antipathy to Western influences was shown in the killing of several missionaries and a certain number of Vietnamese Catholics during the 1830s.

The successors Emperor Thieu Tu (reigned 1841-1847) and Emperor Tu Duc (1848-1883) continued the policy of hostility towards foreign missionaries, and of ruling the state with the Confucian philosophy (Storey, 1993).

The French Rule: A.D. 1859-1954

As early as 1516, a number of Portuguese adventurers had begun the modern era of Western penetration into Vietnam. The French missionary work also developed hand in hand with French government efforts to establish trade relations with Vietnam. A French trading centre was set up subsequently in Hanoi in 1680, although it was not successful. The failure was due to two reasons: the first was the hostile attitude of the Mandarins toward Westerners in general and missionaries in particular; the second was the poverty of the people. The local authorities were fully aware of the fact that their own moral authority was being challenged by the teaching of Christianity; they rejected, therefore, intruders from the West. The work of Catholic missionaries, especially those of the Paris Society of Foreign Missions, founded in 1659, was so successful that the Vietnamese authorities became alarmed. Persecutions began and, in 1750, nearly all the missionaries were expelled (Tran, 1970).

It was not until 1857, that Napoleon III decided to invade Vietnam. The major factors for making such a decision were the result of missionary propaganda, the sudden rise of French capitalism which initiated the colonialist idea of a need for overseas markets and the parallel request for a French share of Asian territories with other Western Powers. Napoleon the Third's resentful mind put into reverse many of his father's policies of granting trade concessions to foreigners, and instituted a campaign of repression among the clergy. The more he and his successor pursued this exclusionary purification, the more it resulted in the determination of the French to subjugate the Nguyen Kingdom.

The French completed their conquest of Vietnam in 1885 after the Sino-French war (1884-1885), during which the Chinese were largely defeated and China, under the Tien Tsin Treaty signed in 1886, was forced to declare her abandonment of its suzerainty over Vietnam (Chen, 1977).

The first fifteen years of French rule, due to lack of consistency in policy, continued to plague the French in Vietnam: they were unable to decide how to administer their new possessions or how to develop them economically. However, things changed drastically in 1897 when the French Governor General Paul Downer arrived. Completing the pacification of the country, he destroyed all the old organizations of the Vietnamese State and established direct French rule at all levels of the administration. The Governor left the Court of Hue and its mandarins with no real power. The Colonial Administration was staffed on all levels with

officials from France; even in the late 1930s, Vietnamese officials were only employed in minor positions and at very low salary.

Economically, achievements the Vietnamese made with their 'blood and sweat' benefited only the French and a small class of rich Vietnamese created by the colonial authorities. The masses of the local people were divested of such profits by the social policies which had operated since the rule of Paul Downer, 1897-1902. The French had, in fact, done very little to develop Vietnam while under their rule. Their statistics were often contradictory to their own claim that much was done for the Vietnamese; e.g. in the case of education, in 1939 no more than 15 percent of all school-age children received any kind of schooling, and about 80 percent of the population was illiterate. This contrasted to the pre-colonial times when "the majority of the people possessed some degree of literacy" (Education in Vietnam, MOE, Hanoi, 1982, p.117). With its more than 20,000,000 inhabitants in 1939, Vietnam had only one university, with fewer than 700 students. Only a small number of Vietnamese children were admitted to the Lycee (Secondary Schools) which were mainly for the children of the French. Medical care was said to be well organized by the French in the cities, but in 1939 there were only two medical doctors for every 100,000 Vietnamese.

Throughout their rule, the French were faced with a seething nationalism that, often, was manifested in sporadic violence against, and confrontations with, the colonial authorities. The anti-colonial movement of the Vietnamese people

essentially started with the establishment of French rule. Most of these national liberation activities were led by the local mandarins and scholars who were taking to Western democratic ideas in opposition to colonialism. Notable ones included Phan Dinh Phung, Phan Boi Chau, and the emperor Duy Tan who led an unsuccessful revolt and was exiled to Reunion Island at the age of 18. All these failures, however, resulted in a revival of secret and revolutionary groups, such as the Vietnam Revolutionary Party (founded in 1925), the Vietnamese Nationalist Party led by Nguyen Thai Hoc (Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang, founded in 1927), and later the Viet-minh organized and led by Ho Chi Minh in May 1941. Ho had left Vietnam in 1912 when he was a young seaman. He travelled extensively and settled in Paris in 1917 where he joined the Communist Party of France in 1920; later he spent part of his life in Moscow and China dedicating his services to the International Communist Movement (Hiebert, 1993).

For five years during World War II, Indochina was a French-administered possession of Japan. On September 22, 1940, Admiral Jean Docoux, the French governor-general who was appointed by the Vichy Government after the fall of France, concluded an agreement with the Japanese that permitted the stationing of 30,000 Japanese troops in Indochina and the use of all major Vietnamese airports by the Japanese armies. This agreement made Indochina the most important staging area for all Japanese military operations in Southeast Asia. However, the French Administration was ousted by the end of the war (March 1945) when the Japanese started to fear that the French forces might turn against them at the hour

of approaching defeat. Bao Dai, the last French appointed emperor of Vietnam was allowed to proclaim the independence of Vietnam after the French were disarmed. A national government was established at Hue, but the essential power was in the hands of the occupying Japanese Army.

Ho Chi Minh returned to Vietnam in October 1944 and led a general uprising when the Japanese surrendered in August 1945. The Hue Imperial Court resigned on August 22, and Emperor Bao Dai abdicated in favour of the Revolutionary Government set up under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi, who proclaimed the independence of Vietnam on September 2, 1945. French claims to reoccupy Indochina had been confirmed by the Potsdam Conference of the victorious allies. In denying to Ho Chi Minh's government the control of Vietnam, the French denied all national liberation movement groups their common goal of the independence of Vietnam. Nevertheless, Vietnam's national liberation and anti-colonial movements continued vigorously under the leading of Ho Chi Minh until a decisive battle in Dien Bien Phu that ended the Franco-Vietminh War in 1954 with the Geneva Accords signed in Geneva, Switzerland.

Division of Vietnam

One of the main provisions of the Geneva Accords was the temporary division of Vietnam into two zones at the Ben Hai River near the 17th parallel.

South Vietnam

The South was ruled under Ngo Dinh Diem supported by the United States. Diem made himself President of the Republic of Vietnam in a government-controlled referendum in October 1955 which removed Bao Dai as chief of State. Diem consolidated his political power quite effectively for the first few years of his reign. However, his early success did not continue. As time went on, he became increasingly dictatorial in dealing with the dissidents. His favouritism toward Catholics made him turn away from the Buddhist majority in the South. By 1959 internal dissent was growing and, as Diem became more isolated from his people, military leaders in the South, with U.S. approval, overthrew his regime on November 1, 1963. Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu were killed in the coup led by General Doung Van Minh (Karrow, 1991). Diem was known for his repressive policies. The last 12 years of the South Regime was under the rule of Nguyen Van Thieu (Storey, 1993). In 1975, South Vietnam fell to the North.

North Vietnam

According to the Geneva Accords, Ho-chi-minh ruled all territory north of the 17th parallel, in the name of Democratic Republic of Vietnam. With assistance from China, the Soviet Union and other communist countries, the Hanoi Regime was able to embark on an ambitious programme of industrialization. Although there were some revolts against the government's savage campaign to collectivise agriculture and the radical land-reform programme, no social or political

upheavals impeded the north's steady development between 1955-1965 (Nguyen, 1993).

The Vietnam War

One major provision of the Geneva Accords was to provide for the holding of a nationwide election to choose a single government for united Vietnam on the 20th of July, 1956. However, the election was destined not to take place, as Ngo Dinh Diem refused to implement the Accords; he was convinced that if the election were held, the North would win. Yet, unification of the country was the unique wish of Ho-chi-minh and the leaders of the North. Fighting was renewed between the North and the South. From 1961, in an attempt to stop the spread and expansion of Communism, the United States increased its aid to South Vietnam and decided to send its military Assistance Advisory Group there. In 1964, when South Vietnam was in political chaos, on the excuse of a North Vietnamese attack on U.S. ships while sailing off the north Vietnam coast, President Lyndon Baines Johnson ordered retaliatory bombing of North Vietnam; from the time of the bombing the United States' involvement in the war escalated. Although the U.S. Congress did not declare war with North Vietnam officially, it passed the 'Gulf of Tonkin Resolution' Act which authorised U.S. Forces in southeast Asia to repel any armed attack and to prevent further aggression from North Vietnam. U.S. bombing of North Vietnam continued, and by December 1965 the United States soldiers numbered 184,300; by December 1967, almost half a million American

troops were in the country (Karnow, 1991). As the conflict dragged on, victory against the elusive communist guerrilla forces seemed to be far from attainment.

Anti-war demonstrations rocked American university campuses and spilled out into the streets. Within the United States, opposition to the war badly divided the country, and pressure mounted to bring the conflict to an end at any cost. When Richard Nixon was elected President of the United States in 1968, he started his 'Vietnamization' programme and began to gradually pull American troops out of Vietnam. While the fighting raged, the Nixon Administration pursued talks in Paris with representatives from North Vietnam.

The Paris Agreement was finally settled and was signed by the United States of America, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Viet-Cong on the 27th of January 1973. The agreement covered a cease-fire, the establishment of a National Council of Reconstruction and Concord, the total withdrawal of U.S. combat forces, and the release of 590 American prisoners-of-war. However, the agreement did not mention the approximately 200,000 North Vietnamese troops still remaining in the South.

Fighting in Vietnam continued after the signing of the Paris Agreement. The Saigon Regime made a determined attempt to eliminate the Communist power in the Mekong Delta, and by late 1973 the northern leaders decided to resolve the situation through military means. Fierce fighting went on during 1974, and the

Communists made significant advances in the highland region of southern Vietnam. In early 1975, the Saigon Regime still had control of the coastal plain from north of Hue to the Mekong Delta, but the strategic balance soon tipped sharply against the Saigon forces. The fall of Ban Me Thuat in the highlands was followed by the loss of Hue and Da Nang in March. Xuan Loc fell to the hands of Communists on the 21st of April, and the Communist troops entered Saigon on 30th April, 1975.

As Karnow said, “The Watergate Scandal and the disgraceful stepping down of President Richard Nixon was indeed a ‘bonus’ to the Communists of North Vietnam. The significance of the Vietnam War will be left to the comments of historians” (Karnow, 1991, p.274).

Vietnamese Language

Language can be used to unite or divide, clarify or obfuscate. It is seldom passive, and it is certainly a factor common to literature, society and the individual. Yet it hardly can be denied that language forms have changed greatly in many Asian societies in recent years, and that these changes reflect larger social transformations. More than that, however, language has often assumed a dynamic role in making, as well as mirroring, history. Language obviously has influenced ethnic and national identification and alignments. It has also helped define social classes. Modernization has often been linked to both the sharpening and the expansion of communication skills. Words that pour off the printing press and

that fill the airwaves of Asia have considerable political and social significance (Marr, 1981).

Among the historical forces that have shaped the modern state and nation of Vietnam many have influenced the formation of its language and in this, too, the Chinese have played a predominant part. Possession of a common language, whether exclusively or not, is usually regarded as one of the more obvious marks of nationhood. The capacity for internal cohesion of a nation-state is often measured by the volume and quality of its literature. In the case of Vietnam, the form of its language is a mirror reflecting closely the extent, the intimacy and the subtlety of the links that have bound it to China over a wide cultural field.

Language Families

Similarly the mixture of races in Indochina has given rise to a confused distribution of languages – so much so that speakers of all the big language families of Southeast Asia (Burmo-Tibetan, Mon-Khmer, Malay, Thai, and Chinese itself) are to be found in every one of the modern countries into which Indochina is divided politically. Inevitably, the dialects spoken today have influenced one another, especially by the adoption of common vocabularies for cultural elements they share; e.g., in the spheres of magic and of religion. All the languages of the region, with the partial exception of the Malay group, are monosyllabic and most are tonal, though not the Mon-Khmer and Malay groups, which, in Vietnam, account between them for Cham and all the hill dialects of

Annam (Lawrence, 1965). The hill dialects of Tonkin are almost universally Thai. So probably is Vietnamese, at bottom, despite the smallness of the Thai element in its vocabulary and its much more extensive use of the Chinese characters. Every word contained in the vocabulary can be used in Vietnamese whose strictly native vocabulary, even when the few words taken from Cham and Khmer are counted in as native, makes up only a third or so of that whole. Chinese words make up what might be called the learned vocabulary; thus two words for the same idea often exist side by side. However, quite a few of those in the popular vocabulary are no more than deformations of the same Chinese roots as occur in the learned vocabulary, representing in some cases perhaps an earlier stratum of influence. The criteria by which French linguists have classed Vietnamese with Thai are; firstly, the tone system of the older non-Chinese elements and, secondly, the rather characteristic word order, which places the attribute after the substantive – a characteristic shared by other Southeast Asian languages, not only Thai – and consequently is the opposite of that found in Chinese (Maspero, 1937). Phrases composed of all-Chinese elements get incorporated into Vietnamese sentences, sometimes in their original Chinese order. As word order is the basis of the grammatical relationship in monosyllabic languages, this hesitation presents great problems for modern educationists developing a system of education in which Vietnamese is used up to the highest levels in preference to Chinese or French (Lawrence, 1965).

System of Writing

Writing reached Indochina as part of the general influence from India on the one hand, and from China on the other. For a long time the only modes of writing practised in the area were the derivatives of Sanskrit, or else Chinese. It is an indication of the general level of civilization reached by the native peoples that it was not until about the twelfth century that a need arose to write about anything but the abstractions of religion or government for which those classical languages provided all the ideas. But by A.D. 1150 adaptations of the classical script and the writing of the Indochinese vernacular became general: Khmer, Cham, various branches of Thai, and Vietnamese all began to develop their writing systems about the same time (Fishman & Ferguson, 1968).

In the case of each of the Indianised languages, a new script was evolved from the phonetic writing of Sanskrit, developing a distinct form for each language; but a phonetic writing for Vietnamese had to await the first contacts with Europeans (Pham Koi, 1932). Until then Chinese ideograms continued to be used for learned words which were of Chinese origin. During the Chinese domination the Chinese language held sway in Vietnam. Chinese political domination lasted until A.D. 939, but a Mandarin education system prevailed under Vietnamese independence until 1883 when the French colonial rule was instituted. Although Chinese fulfilled high status functions in the society, Mandarin was not ever used colloquially by the Vietnamese. Formal education was conducted in Chinese

using Chinese textbooks. Very few of these were written by Vietnamese educators (Bianco, 1987).

During the 13th century the Vietnamese devised a written form for their language based on Chinese characters – new ideograms were made up for popular words of non-Chinese derivation; this was done by putting two Chinese ideograms together – one to suggest the order of ideas and the other the pronunciation as indicated by some already-existing and well-known Chinese ideograms. Occasionally a non-Chinese word would be read to a Chinese character, as is common in Japanese which is faced with the same basic problem. Since the great majority of Chinese characters are already composed on this radical-cum-phonetic principle as it is called, the resulting ‘Chu Nom’, southern script of Vietnamese, as distinguished from the ‘Chu Nho’ Confucian script of pure Chinese, made up of two such characters, looked very complicated indeed. In short, ‘Chu Nom’ is a separate ideographic system devised to accord with sounds and syntax of spoken Vietnamese (Marr, 1981).

Nom was the form for the composition of Vietnamese literature while the standard Chinese characters were required in official discourse. This resulted in a linguistic division of labour: an oral and written diglossia; most parts of the culture were rendered in Vietnamese utilising the Nom, whilst all official and governing domains of life required the use of Chinese. The paramount literary work in Vietnam was written in Nom. It is called the ‘Story of Lady Kieu’ and

was written by Emperor Nguyen Du probably between 1802-20. However, the system became even more cumbersome in practice because no definite usage prevailed as between possible options; its inadequacy was certainly one of the factors accounting for the comparative poverty of Vietnamese literature before the modern period. No Vietnamese authors ever compiled a dictionary of 'Chu Nom' that might have established a standard, and very few writers in this idiom were prepared to adapt the forms worked out by their predecessor and build further developments of the national language upon them.

The chaotic state of written language had serious disadvantages for the mass production of books, for though it would matter less when printing was done by carved wood blocks in which the whole page had to be incised specially anyway, lack of standardization precluded the use of moveable type and so of modern presses. At the beginning of the 19th century it appears there was only one printing press in the realm, at Hanoi – with a prospect for one at Hue – and that only official publications had yet been printed in Vietnam; works of literature by private authors circulated at that time solely in hand-written manuscript (Pham, 1932).

Both the Chinese characters and the Nom were formally abolished in 1918 in Vietnam's cultural centre and the capital of Hue and, in 1916 in the present capital of Hanoi when the final tertiary examinations were abolished. This date

signifies the formal end of the need for the classical Mandarin System of education.

Romanization

Thus, the search began for a more sensible language strategy. In this search elite Vietnamese were particularly impressed by what they heard, read and saw of European and Japanese mass literacy efforts. They also began to sense the value of linking the primary written and spoken mediums for the first time in Vietnamese history. The necessity of accommodating the character to moveable types favoured the eventual adoption of the Romanised system of writing, known as ‘Quoc Ngu’ (National Language). Originally Romanization was an invention of the Jesuits early in the 17th century; they found that, as with Chinese, they needed a system for their private use by which to recall the pronunciation of the ideogram. The great French missionary of their Order, Alexander de Rhode (1591-1660), realised the scope of Romanization in catechising peasant converts: it bestowed an effective degree of literacy more quickly than the traditional way of writing (Chinese), and furthermore a literacy that did not extend beyond the tracts and prayer-books composed on it; it made the compilation or translation of these very much easier for the missionaries. Rhodes’ system, since his day, has undergone some small modifications to accommodate changes in pronunciation, but in all essentials, including a remarkably precise indication of the tones – it is the system which, between about 1880 and 1920, finally superseded the

ideograms throughout Vietnam except for use on monuments and good luck charms and for a few religious purposes (Coyle, 1963).

Modern Vietnamese

Although created in the early 17th Century the Quoc Ngu was used by the Catholic church for more than 200 years, only for its internal purposes of rendering Vietnamese into a comprehensible form. The Quoc Ngu was extended to school use from 1861 when the French conquered three eastern provinces of the South of the country. Vietnamese students were introduced to writing in this form although the Nom continued to be used (Bianco, 1987). The French had the effect of ending the Chinese influence on Vietnamese education, and eventually, Quoc Ngu was more broadly used throughout the society. From 1925 there was indeed an explosion in 'Quoc' publications. Until 1930 most Vietnamese scholars and intellectuals considered that their society could be transformed largely by means of newspapers, journals, pamphlets and books. Even during the worst years of colonial repression, from 1930 to 1933, a degree of intellectual momentum was still maintained in creative poetry and short story writing (Marr, 1981). By this time a clear majority of the Vietnamese intelligentsia was committed to the development of a single, multi-functional, modern standard Vietnamese language.

The adoption of the romanised script to write Vietnamese followed pressure from the French Administration, but it furthered the interests of a national education system. On the other hand, it did not put an end to the traditional dependence of

the Vietnamese for new words on Chinese coinage: the links remained as strong as in the days of the 'Chinese characters'. The interpretation lies in the problem of modernization common to all the languages within the cultural orbit of China: the choice for these languages lies between bodily incorporating foreign words in speech and text, where they will be hard to pronounce and frequently misunderstood, and trying to absorb them by translation as living elements of the language. The Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese have all chosen the latter course (Maspero, 1930). The remarkable intellectual achievements of translating Western concepts in philosophy, politics and science into an entirely unrelated vocabulary is the work of writers in China and Japan, but Korea and Vietnam have shared in the general enrichment of the common stock. In the case of Chinese, language reform has extended to grammar as well, and the decades from 1860 to 1930 saw the progressive substitution for the laconic obscurities of the classical style, comprehensible only to a small educated class, of grammar closer to the spoken language and comprehensible to all classes (Phan, 1957).

For the Vietnamese language the corresponding reform has involved, firstly, romanization, and secondly, not so much a change of grammatical style for which there were not the same grounds, as a change of taste in vocabulary. Too much use of Chinese words where non-Chinese ones were more available came to be regarded as pedantic, like preferences for Latin roots to Anglo-Saxon in English. On the other hand, the strict monosyllabism of Vietnamese has, if anything, reaffirmed the necessity of taking the vocabulary for modern concepts from

Chinese. In some cases that meant ultimately from Japanese – since European words could not be digested and few alternatives were available within the native stock of Vietnamese itself. By and large, therefore, the Chinese influence has regained on balance almost as much as it has lost through romanization in the reform of Vietnamese. The Vietnamese form, even of French names, passes through the Chinese crucible first, and we read ‘Ba-li’ for Paris, as being the Vietnamese pronunciation of the ideograms used in Chinese, despite the fact that the Chinese themselves say “Pa-li” and Vietnamese actually possess both ‘Pa’ and ‘ri’ in its phonology; in this instance it would have no difficulty in reproducing the French pronunciation exactly, yet it prefers a Chinese garb (Nguyen Van Duc, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

EARLY EDUCATION: STATE LITERARY EXAMINATION SYSTEM

Background Study

The Oral Language

The present-day Vietnamese language is spoken throughout the country with only minor dialectal variations that do not impair mutual intelligibility. The northern and southern dialects, represented respectively by the speech of Hanoi and Saigon are distinguished chiefly by relatively minor phonological and lexical differences, such as six tones in the former and five in the latter. Differences in grammar between the two dialects are slight.

The Written Language

The basic features of the Vietnamese language such as outlined above, presumably characterised the language when its speakers first entered recorded history after contact with the Chinese language and writing. Undoubtedly the greatest changes that have taken place are in the area of phonological change and lexical expansion. The latter was strongly influenced by the long centuries of close contact with the Chinese. Nguyen Van Huyen (1944) estimated that Chinese words make up one third of the Vietnamese vocabulary as a whole, whereas Nguyen Dinh Hoa (1961) estimated that in formal writing up to sixty percent of vocabulary may be of Chinese origin. As is true of languages generally, the Vietnamese language

possesses a wide range of linguistic repertoires, from the very informal such as colloquial slang to the very formal when at funeral orations. There is a corresponding range in the amount of Chinese that enters into each repertoire.

When the Vietnamese borrowed words from Chinese, they naturally pronounced these according to their own speech habits. These borrowings extended over a period of something like two millennia. During this long period of time, the sounds of both Vietnamese and Chinese, of course, underwent some change. As a result the modern pronunciation in Vietnamese and Chinese of the same lexical item represents the complex end-result of phonological evolution in both languages. In the case of both Chinese and Vietnamese the spelling of a word, except in scholarly publications seeking to establish an earlier pronunciation, is usually given in an orthography of quite recent origin. To take a simple example, the Chinese pronunciation of the two characters [越南] is written in two ways - as 'Yueh Nan' in a Chinese transcript system developed in the 19th Century and, as 'yue nan' in the official Pinyin romanisation adopted by the Chinese in 1958; the current Vietnamese pronunciation is written as Viet Nam in the present day orthography used in Vietnam. The situation with respect to the divergent modern Chinese and Vietnamese pronunciations and the original pronunciation of words of early Chinese origin is analogous to the divergent French and Italian renderings of words derived from Latin of Justinian's time. In the case of Chinese and Vietnamese, the current spellings are of even more recent origin than in the case

of the European languages, since the latter acquired their present orthographies at a considerably earlier time (Nguyen Dinh Boa, 1961).

The changes of writing are due to the fact that Chinese has been traditionally written in ideographic characters and that the early speakers of Vietnamese had no writing before the coming of the Chinese. Troung Vinh Ky, a well-known writer of the 19th century, initiated the contention, which has been advanced by a number of other writers (e.g., Cordier 1933; Nguyen Van Lien, 1934), that a Vietnamese phonetic system of writing existed from a very early period but was suppressed and extinguished by the Chinese invaders (Truong Vinh Ky, 1976); but this contention is rejected by modern scholars as having no basis in fact (e.g., Nguyen Van Huyen, 1944). More recent scholarship is generally of the opinion that the people who came under the control of the Han Empire were at a proliferate stage of the so-called 'tribal' organization (Dang Thai Mai, 1961, p.75).

With Chinese writing came Chinese control. The Chinese writing has been variously designated as ideographic (i.e., representing ideas) or logographic (representing words), in contrast to phonetic (more properly, phonemic) writing as is the alphabetic or romanization system used for most of the world's languages. A Chinese general who ruled the area at the beginning of the second century BC, and who himself was a capable scholar and a convinced Confucianist, favoured the introduction of Chinese characters. A considerable impetus to the introduction of Chinese characters came about when significant numbers of Chinese refugees,

members of the scholarly bureaucracy and families of Han functionaries fled to the area as a result of the brief Wang Mang usurpation (A.D. 9 – 23) that intervened between the earlier and later periods of the Han Dynasty. With the encouragement of the Chinese governor at that time, schools were founded by the refugees to teach Confucian learning (Maspero 1918; Nguyen Van Huyen, 1944).

Chinese Policy and the Introduction of Education

Chinese administrative policy, which initially leaned toward indirect control utilising a loosely knit native aristocracy at the same time, with the flood of refugees shifted to one of outright cultural and political assimilation – i.e., ‘signification’. This shift is considered to have been a probable primary cause for the brief rebellion (A.D. 39-43) led by the famous Trung sisters and aimed at preserving local aristocratic privilege (Parr, 1971). The trend was accelerated after the reconquest of the area by the Chinese general Ma Yuan in the year A.D. 42-43.

A shift also took place in Chinese educational policy. At one time, according to Le Thanh Khoi (1955), higher education was denied the Vietnamese so as to hinder the development of a class of officials capable of administering their own country, and admission into the civil service was denied even to well-educated Vietnamese. After suppression of the Trung rebellion, which was accomplished by a policy of pillaging and burning aristocratic properties, survivors were given a choice of either inter-marrying with the Chinese or fleeing southward beyond the control of

the Chinese (Marr 1971). The Vietnamese people were eventually given access to education and admitted into the Chinese civil service.

Vietnam Education: Ancient History

Up to date, no comprehensive book about the history of Vietnamese education has ever been published. Nevertheless, there appeared some unpublished manuscripts on the educational system of Vietnam (Le Thi Hong, 1992) in the fifteenth to the sixteenth and the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

It is considered that the discussion of the history of Vietnamese education may be connected with the history of development in Vietnam. Based on this view, a brief account of Vietnamese education will be narrated through several periods of history: viz., the period of Chinese imperial domination and the period of national independence.

Chinese Imperial Domination: 111 BC - AD 938

From 111 B.C. to A.D. 938 Vietnam was under the rule of China. During this period of more than one thousand years, the Chinese administrators established both public and private schools, mainly for their sons, to cultivate them into functionaries of the state administrative machinery. These officials were responsible for implementing the policy of the feudal intelligentsia, which signifies that sons of the families who were traditionally belonging to the mandarin class could also be members of the power body regardless of their

scholastic achievements. This situation went on for some centuries and, finally, a limited number of Vietnamese from the gentry were allowed to attend the Chinese schools. No details of the educational system of Vietnam were recorded during the period. This pattern continued until the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618 - A.D. 907) when China substituted the competitive examination statute for the regime of the feudal intelligentsia, inaugurated the doctorate degrees and sent excellent Vietnamese students to take the state literacy examination in Beijing (Le Van Giang, 1985). In organisation, the Vietnamese system of education was a copy of the Chinese system whereby it was divided into primary education (under fifteen years old) and higher education (above fifteen years old) (Pham Minh Hac, 1995).

National Independence: A.D. 938 - 1850

Ngo Quyen defeated the Chinese troops at the decisive battle of Bach Dang in 938, which ended the period of Chinese imperial domination that had lasted over 1,000 years. An independent Vietnam was established by Ngo Quyen who initiated the period of independence; the independence continued until the French invasion of Vietnam in the late 19th Century.

During this period reigns changed from dynasty to dynasty, the most notable ones being listed in Table I.

Table I: Major Dynasties AD 938 – 1945

The Ngo dynasty:	939 - 965
The Dinh dynasty:	968 - 980
The Early Le:	980 - 1009
The By dynasty:	1009 - 1225
The Tran dynasty:	1226 - 1400
The Ho dynasty:	1400 - 1407
The Later Le:	1428 - 1778
The Nguyen Hue:	1788 - 1802
The Nguyen Dyn:	1802 – 1945

Leaders of each dynasty had to struggle for survival, national independence and the existence of the Vietnamese people. The invasion by Chinese was continuously repulsed with such victories as those by Le Dai Hanh over the Sung troops in 981, by Tran Hung Dao over the Mongolian army in 1258, 1285 and 1288, by Le Loi over the Ming troops in 1428, and Nguyen Hue over the Tsing troops (a force of 400 French deserters recruited by a French Bishop) in 1789.

Under the Ngo, Dinh, and Early Le dynasties (939-1009), education was rendered to the people in private and Buddhist schools, and it was not extensively developed (Pham Minh Hac, 1995). More attention was given to education during the By dynasty (1009-1225). Educational activities were concentrated at the Capital Thang Long (now Ha-noi) by the Ly Court. The Royal College was built in the Temple of Literature in 1076, where the sons of families with high social

status received moral education and training in decency. In 1253, the Tran dynasty also established the National Institute of Learning in the Temple of Literature, where selected princes and outstanding commoners were trained to be mandarins (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). The Royal College and the National Institute of Learning are acknowledged as the first public schools in Vietnam (Pham Minh Hac, 1995). The Royal College existed in Thang Tong (Hanoi) from the eleventh century to the end of the eighteenth century, when it was removed to Due, capital of the Nguyen Dynasty. The school continued there until the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1397 the Tran Dynasty proclaimed the establishment of public schools in the administrative divisions, and in the fifteenth century the Ho Dynasty established public schools in the provinces for the sons of commoners. During this period there were three types of school: the Royal College in the capital under the direct management of the Court; a small number of provincial schools established in the provinces and selected districts; and many private schools set up by the people and the communities. The people, generally, were committed to improving the education of those who wished to learn, and the state was committed to organizing the competitive literary examinations (Le Thi Hong, 1992). The educational system in the first few centuries of the feudal dynasties focussed on the examination of persons who were training as officials and administrators at all levels.

The By Dynasty organized the first Literary Examination in the history of Vietnamese education in 1075. However, it was not until the end of the Tran Dynasty and the beginning of the later Le Dynasty (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries) that the State Literary Examination was implemented fully.

The curriculum for the imperial or state literary examinations was common for all types of schools (private schools, provincial schools, and the Royal College). All teaching materials were written in Han, Chinese classical characters known as ‘Chu Nho’.

Imperial Education System

Teaching Materials

Education at that time was a type of ‘reproduction education’; therefore, teaching materials provided were books containing short sentences, with good rhyming designed to help children memorize easily. Also, teachers explained the meanings of each character. The most frequently used textbooks included:

1. Nhat Thien Tu (literally, a text with one thousand characters) which was written in Chinese classical poetic rhyming format. Characters were given in such order that the following ones were either used to interpret the preceding ones or had some connection/connotation with the others.

2. Tam Thien Tu (literally, a text with three thousand characters) with characters were composed in rhyming short sentences. Neither themes nor implications were found in the text.
3. Ngu Thien Tu (literally, a text with five thousand characters) which was written in Chinese classical poetic rhyming format. Characters were composed in varied categories or themes such as astronomy, physiography, national administration, human relations.
4. So Hoc Van Tan (Learning for Beginners) was a textbook containing 270 sentences without rhyming or connection with each other. The book was divided into three parts – viz.,
 - a. a summary of Chinese history in 130 sentences, starting from the very beginning to the period of Emperor Tao Quang (Dao Guang); 1821-1850 of the Ching Dynasty.
 - b. a summary of Vietnam history in 64 sentences, starting from the period of Emperor Hong Bang to the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945).
 - c. some advice and guidance to students on learning and behaviour in social life (in 76 sentences)
5. Au Hoc Ngu Ngon Thi (A Five-character poem for children): This was a long poem of 278 lines, each composed of five characters. The theme of the poem was about the pleasure of learning and the happiness of achievement of a scholar.
6. Hieu Kinh (A Book of Filial Piety): a book compiled and edited by Confucius' disciple Tang Tu (Tseng Tsi) with contents of the book being the teachings of Confucius on 'Filial Piety'
7. Minh Tam Buu Giam; an anthology of mottos taken from the great sages in China.
8. Minh Dao Gia Huan; a four-character narrative poem comprised of 500 lines. It was the teaching of Minh Dao (aka Trinh Hieu) within his family. The theme of teaching was about ethical behaviour, human relations and self-cultivation.
9. Tam Tu Kinh (Three-character Classic): one of the Chinese classics for children. It was a book comprised of 356 sentences each composed of three characters. There are seven paragraphs in the book, each with a different theme:

Paragraph 1 - Human nature and the basic teachings for children.

Paragraph 2 - Rites, filial piety, and responsibility of children.

Paragraph 3 - Common knowledge, some physical features or the phenomena of the universe.

Paragraph 4 - Introduction to the Chinese classics, the Filial classics, the Four Books, the Five Classics, the Five philosophical schools, and the histories.

Paragraph 5 - Narratives of the emperors of different dynasties in the history of China.

Paragraph 6 - Encouraging children/students with diligent scholars as models.

Paragraph 7 - Encouraging children to attain honourable achievements in life through hardworking.

The above mentioned are the textbooks or teaching materials used at schools by young students under age of 10. Application of modern pedagogy was out of the question at the time, as the contents of teaching materials was beyond the understanding of students of that age range. It was only effective when they were grown-up enough to recall their past learning experiences (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993 Khoa Cu va Giao Duc Vietnam, Vietnamese version).

Students over ten years old started to study Chinese classics, ancient writing style and the appreciation of Tho Duong (Poetry of Tang Dynasty of China). They needed, then, to learn how to write essays and official documents. When they were really mature mentally and physically, on top of the above studies, they had to learn 'Nam Bac Su' (History of China and History of Vietnam).

As the teaching of these materials was aimed at preparing for the State Literary Examinations as the unique accessible means to power, studies concentrated on the following:

The Five Classics (Ngu Kinh)

The Confucian canon comprising the Book of History or Documentation, the Book of Odes, the Book of Changes, the Book of Rites, and the Spring-Autumn Annals. They all have been attributed to Confucius, as editor or chief author, although the authenticity of such is still dubious. These Five Classics probably had their origins in groups of texts predating Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and acquired their present forms during the centuries which followed his death (de Bary, 1960).

1. The Book of History (Kinh Thu)

This book is also known in the West as The Book of Documents, recording all the teachings and instructions of the kings and emperors since the period of Nguu Thuan (about 4,600 years ago, before the recorded history of China) till the period of Dong Chu (1122 B.C. - 771 B.C.). Confucius supposedly was the person who edited the texts and wrote a short introduction to each document explaining the circumstances of its composition. It is a collection of short announcements, counsels, speeches, or similar oral reports said to have been made by the various rulers and their ministers of the time.

2. The Book of Odes or Poetry (Kinh Thi)

China's oldest music and odes, popularized for the common people, were later compiled and edited by Confucius and comprised 305 pieces, whereby the readers may perceive Chinese customs and traditions, social and political situations, together with individual personalities of the princes and the features of the states during the ancient feudal periods. Some of these collections are folk songs, while others are songs used by the aristocracy in their sacrificial ceremonies or at banquets.

3. The Book of Changes (Kinh Dich)

This is a book of astrology, in a way; it is also a philosophy or a logic for interpreting the changes of the universe, whereby men learn how to live ethically and on principle in the world of changes. Its contents included laws of natural changes, celestial phenomena, astronomy, evolution, physiography, fortune telling, and the teaching of a man in search of harmony with nature.

4. The Book of Rites (Kinh Le)

This book is comprised of 49 chapters recording all the requirements of decorum, rites and decent behaviour within the family, in society and at court. Also, it teaches about human relationships based on varying degrees of formality. It is uncertain when the collections assumed their present form, though the texts themselves appear to date from middle or late Chou (12th - 8th

century B.C.) times down to early Han Dynasty. Again, Confucius is vaguely ascribed the role of compiler and editor for some of these texts.

5. Spring and Autumn Annals (Xuan Thu)

It has been asserted that Confucius and his disciples edited and compiled this brief laconic chronicle of events in, or affecting, the State of Lu for the years 722-481 BC. It is a demonstration to the readers as to how the moral and respectful rulers administered a state in the ancient times (de Barry, 1960).

The Four Books (Tu Thu)

1. The Great Learning (Dai Hoc)

This is a short essay of some 1,750 characters. It seeks, first of all, to establish the value of self-cultivation in terms of accepted social ends, showing its relevance to the problem of good government which underlines much of the thinking of the time. One must be aware that it is addressed to the rulers and his officials, rather than to any ordinary man in search of moral guidance. No doubt, it appealed greatly to the Chinese taste for a balanced, symmetrical, and hierarchical view of things. It served, moreover, as a formulation of those attitudes which are at the very heart of Confucian teaching; the primacy of the moral order, and the delicate balance which must be maintained between individual and social ends.

2. The Golden Way of the Mean (Trung Dung)

This is composed of the elements 'centrality' (Trung) and 'normality' (Dung). The translation of 'The Mean' suggests the fundamental moral idea of moderation, balance, and suitability. But the essay concepts go much deeper, denoting a basic norm of human action which, if comprehended and complied with, will bring man and his actions into harmony with the whole universe. The second significant concept of this essay is that of 'sincerity' or 'genuineness' (Thanh). In one sense, 'sincerity' represents the fullness of virtue corresponding to Confucius' concept of humanity; sincerity being that moral integrity whereby the individual becomes a genuine or a real man. He is 'genuine' with others, but also 'genuinely' himself, a true human being. The purpose of 'The Mean', however, is to relate precisely what is most essential and real in man to the underlying reality or truth of the universe. The contents of 'The Mean' are varied. Portions of it deal with the character and duties of the true gentleman, the moral responsibilities of rulership, the performance of social obligations, and the ideal institutions of the sage kings. The tone of the work is lofty throughout and breathes the pure Confucian spirit.

3. Mencius (Manh Tu)

This is compiled from the sayings of the Chinese philosopher Mencius (372-289 B.C.) who was born in the State of Chi (now Shantung Province), China.

The teachings of Mencius concur with most of the basic ideas of Confucius, and elaborate on several themes. First of all, Mencius assigned great importance to the common people. In what can only be called a reversal of the usual political and social priorities of the time, he argued that the King who wins the people would win the empire. By this he meant that kindness to the people and attention to their welfare would assure the king of their loyal support, as well as spread his fame abroad.

In Mencius, the Confucian ideal of a humane and righteous king as the fundamental answer to all questions of government began to take definite shape. Mencius insisted that the King concern himself with the people and have a religious motive as well; he connected the king's behaviour in this respect with the old idea of Mandate of Heaven. No more than Confucius did he questioned the right of hereditary rule, but he emphasized that the ultimate authority was that of Heaven. If the people were acquiescent, presumably the king possessed the Mandate. If they were rebellious, it was a sign that Heaven might withdraw its mandate. In this, Mencius did not imply any doctrine of human rights; he merely said that Heaven could express itself through the people's action. Yet his stress on the importance of the people was radical enough to make kings uneasy.

4. Analects (Luan Ngu)

The Analects is a slim collection of brief sayings of the great Chinese sage Confucius (551-479 B.C.), part of which was put together by his disciples perhaps a century after his death. Confucian comment on society and politics begins with the assertion that conditions had once been much better in the old feudal periods. Although Confucius asserted that he was no innovator, merely a transmitter of the past, he seems to have created a splendid character for this past in order to contrast it with the inglorious present. He was reinterpreting the past, as have others for whom history has held some timeless principle. His attempt to re-establish the cohesion and harmony of earlier times seems to impart new meanings to old forms.

Although Confucius clearly regarded kinship as a crucial social bond, emphasizing filial piety and other family-centred virtues, his interpretation was new. Merely providing material necessities for one's parents no longer could be considered a sign of filial piety; that was done by everyone. The important thing was the attitude of love that accompanied the prescribed behaviour. Similarly, in other relationships Confucius stressed the emotional and ethical contents. The same core emphasis was applied to the whole ruling class. Government would continue to be led by the aristocracy, the 'gentlemen' (Quan Tu); but the true 'gentleman' was no longer simply a man of noble pedigree. He was a cultivated and moral man, a 'gentle man' in every way. In this idea was the power to change the very character of society and government.

For Confucius, 'Rites' (Le), which included everything from sacred ceremonies to good manners, were signs of an inward attitude and were the forms of harmonious and graceful human relationship. The following excerpts from Analects are illustrative of Confucius and his teaching:

A Portrait of Confucius

- a. In his leisure hours, Confucius was easy in his manner and cheerful in his expression. (VII: 4)
- b. Confucius was gentle - yet firm; dignified but not harsh, respectful yet well at ease. (VII: 3)
- c. When the stables were burnt down on returning from court, Confucius asked: "Was anyone hurt?" He did not ask about the horses. (X: 12)
- d. When Confucius was pleased with the singing of someone he was with, he would always ask to have the song repeated and would join in himself. (VII: 31)
- e. The Duke of She asked Tzu Mu about Confucius, and Tzu Mu gave him no answer. Confucius said: "Why didn't you tell him that I am a person who forgets to eat when he is enthusiastic about something, forgets all his worries in his enjoyment of it, and is not aware that old age is coming on?" (VII: 18)
- f. Confucius said: "Having only coarse food to eat, plain water to drink, and a bent arm for a pillow, one can still find happiness therein. Riches and honour acquired by unrighteous means are to me as drifting clouds." (VII: 15)
(de Barry, 1960, p.20)

Confucius on 'Gentleman' and Learning

The 'gentleman' gained virtue and knowledge through education; therefore, education was considered to be of great importance in Chinese and Vietnamese

society. This importance is well reflected in the following extracts from the

Analects:

- a. Confucius said: "By nature men are pretty much alike; it is learning and practice that set them apart." (XVII: 2)
- b. Confucius said: "In education there are no class distinctions." (IV: 38)
- c. Confucius said: "Those who are born wise are the highest type of people; those who become wise through learning come next; those who learn by overcoming dullness come after that. Those who are dull but still won't learn are the lowest type of people." (XVI: 9)
- d. Confucius said: "learning without thinking is labour lost; thinking without learning is perilous." (II: 15)
- e. Tzu Kung asked about the 'gentleman' Confucius said: "The gentleman first practices what he preaches and then preaches what he practices." (II: 13)
- f. Confucius said: "The gentleman makes demands on himself; the inferior man makes demands on others." (XV: 20)
- g. Confucius said: "If a gentleman departs from humanity, how can he bear the name? Not even for the lapse of a single meal does a gentleman ignore humanity. In moments of haste he cleaves to it; in seasons of peril, he cleaves to it." (IV: 5)

(Sources of Chinese Tradition, 1960: 23-31)

Confucius on Rulers and Government

The great teacher was convinced that man in himself was not bad, that he could be led to follow a just good life by the virtuous example of his rulers. To the Confucianists those who governed others should constantly endeavour to personify all the Confucian virtues - in particular a love of humanity and a basic commitment to society rather than to oneself. If the rulers were worthy and just,

then the people would be good. The term 'rulers' applied to all who exercised authority, not only the Emperor, princes and members of their court but all magistrates and officials no matter how high or lowly their position. Confucius said:

"Lead the people by laws and regulate them by penalties, and the people will try to keep out of jail, but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and restrain them by rules of decorum, and the people will have a sense of shame, and moreover will become good." (II: 3)

"If a ruler himself is upright, all will go well without others. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders they will not be obeyed." (XIII: 6)

"A government is good when those near are happy and those far off are attracted." (XIII: 16)

(de Barry, 1960, pp. 32-33)

The Victory of Confucianism as a State Philosophy

Much speculation has been devoted to the question of why Confucianism, of the major schools of thought that flourished in Chou times and continued into the early Han, should have triumphed over its rivals and attained a position of sole authority. Some scholars have suggested that Confucianism supplies a philosophical basis for the divine right of the emperor, a justification for absolutism, and for this reason was enthusiastically supported by the Han rulers (Chen, 1989). Confucian thought is based firmly on the concept of a hierarchically ordered society with a supreme ruler as its head. Yet if it accords the emperor a divine mission, it also hedges his power with moral restrictions and qualifications;

thus strong-minded emperors such as Emperor Wu Ti, while a patron of the Confucianists, found it necessary to act in ways quite contrary to their tenets. Confucianism, in its political thought, is much more the philosophy of the officialdom, the bureaucrats, accepting the hierarchical form of imperial government and of society as a whole but insisting upon the moral qualifications of rulership, as well as upon the right to criticize and restrain the exercise of absolute power (Levenson, 1964). In this endeavour it makes full use of the appeal to tradition, curbing imperial lavishness by constant reminders of the simple-life of old, insisting upon the importance of ministers and counsellors in government making not noble birth but scholastic achievement the requisite for entrance into official positions, effectively wrecking measures of which it does not approve by declaring them at variance with ancient practices, and even reserving to itself the right to judge whether a ruler is morally fit to hold the throne. The literati, moreover, as the only men capable of handling records, regulations, edicts, and the other necessary papers of a highly organized central government, were indispensable to any ruler. As a famous Confucianist pointed out to the founder of the Han, though he might have won the empire on horseback, he assuredly could not rule it from horseback.

Consequently, Confucianism was the teacher and guardian of the ancient literature. Although not exclusively Confucian, originally it included the best of China's entire literary heritage; a mass of writings incorporating ideas borrowed from many different schools and philosophies which had been absorbed into

Confucianism (Frankel, 1964). Thus, Confucianism gained supremacy not by extinguishing its rivals but by adapting much of their thought to its own system. Once established as the state philosophy, with the examination system and the imperial university to ensure continuance of its teachings, its position was so well consolidated that it was not displaced until the imperial system was discarded in 1911.

State Literary Examination System

The Origin of the Imperial Examinations

The abolition of feudalism in the third century B.C. set the stage for the emergence of the civil service system in Chinese government but did not automatically bring it to full flower. Through the Han Dynasty and for some centuries thereafter, the men who dominated the government were, in large part, direct or indirect representatives of powerful, wealthy 'great families' which maintained aristocratic traditions and privileges. Newcomers to the state service were generally appointed on the basis of recommendations submitted by existing officials. But such nominees began to be subjected to qualifying written examinations in the second century B.C., and the notion gradually developed that educational achievement was a better basis for appointment than social status and contacts. During the Tang Dynasty, in the eighth century, the full transition from aristocracy to 'meritocracy' finally came about, and from then on the typical successful civil servant was the examination graduate.

In its fullest development the civil service examination system functioned as follows. Every year educational intendants representing the provincial governments travelled about their jurisdictions giving examinations to the students in state-supported schools and to private scholars who presented themselves.

Those who came up to the educational intendants' standards were given titles certifying them as state-recognized men of talents, or *literati*. They were entitled to wear distinctive costumes, their families were granted certain tax exemptions, they were honoured as local heroes, they became confidants and social equals of local officials, their views on private and public matters were heard with respect, and they were sought after as tutors of the next generation.

Passing the local examination qualified a man to participate in provincial-level examinations in competition with candidates from all over the province, often numbering up to several thousands. These examinations were prepared, proctored, and graded by high-ranking scholar-officials sent out from the central government. The candidates faced a grueling ordeal; three full days spaced over a week of writing examinations on Confucian ideas. Those who passed were very few, perhaps one in twenty and the passers became provincial heroes overnight. They were given new titles, new costumes, and new privileges. They could be considered for low-ranking government appointments, and their new status need not be renewed at intervals. They were assured of social and economic success.

To be certain of a fully successful career in government, one more hurdle had to be surmounted. This was an empire-wide metropolitan examination conducted at the national capital several months after the various provincial examinations every third year. It also stretched out over a week, but was even more difficult, and those who passed were still relatively few, totaling two or three or perhaps four hundred. The graduates (generally called Chin-shih) had a final ordeal, a palace examination presided over by the emperor himself; but this was a brief examination for the sole purpose of ranking all of the Chin-shih in order of their excellence, and no one failed.

All new Chin-shih, and especially those who ranked first, second and third in the final list, were lionized both at court and in their home towns to a degree that even all-Australian athletes of our time would envy. They were accepted into the fraternity of the supreme literati to whom the state looked for leadership, with prestige and access to power and wealth to which no other group in society could aspire. Winning such status was the ideal goal of every filial son, and having a son or a grandson win such status was the dream of every father and family.

For all its glory, becoming a Chin-shih merely opened the door to a civil service career. Graduates became part of the pool of literati from which the Ministry of Personnel called men to fill official vacancies when they occurred. All posts in the officialdom were ranked on a scale of eighteen degrees, ranging from 9b to 1a at the top and all qualified civil servants were comparably ranked, new graduates

naturally falling low in the scale. When a 6b post fell vacant, an unassigned 6b official was appointed to it. His performance was evaluated by his administrative superiors at the end of three, then six, and finally nine years on the job; and he was also evaluated irregularly by touring censorial officials. All these evaluations went into the records of the Ministry of Personnel, which retained a man in one post and in one rank up to a maximum of nine years after which he was demoted or promoted as circumstances warranted. Progress up the ladder of ranks, through a succession of varied posts, was normally slow and erratic, so that those few officials who ultimately emerged at the top echelon of highest ranking officials who were the executive advisers to the throne ordinarily attained such distinction only when they were very mature and experienced, widely acclaimed for their erudition and probity, and sufficiently awesome to deserve respect and deference from even the most arrogant emperor (Nivison & Wright, 1959).

The great prestige of the civil officialdom throughout the last millennium of the empire was based in considerable part on the traditional Chinese respect for learning, but it also derived from very real power exercised by the officials. The civil service was largely self-regulating and conducted its own recruitment examinations. Although all appointments within the service were made by the emperor, he was constantly and customarily bound to accept nominations from the Ministry of Personnel or in the case of very high-ranking posts, to choose one of two or three qualified men nominated by the Ministry. Moreover, although the

emperor established state policies, the size of the empire and the complexity of its affairs made him almost totally dependent on the factual information and recommendations provided by the officialdom; this tended to limit the alternatives from which the emperor could choose his policy decisions. The fact that the emperor, as Son of Heaven, had unchallengeable power to punish any official on any pretext in any way, was a restraint on officialdom's sense of independence. On the other hand, emperors of the most despotic inclinations had to realise that there were clear limits beyond which they dared not antagonize the officialdom or any substantial segment of it. The civil service, in short, had become a relatively autonomous and self-perpetuating power bloc in the state system. Balazs (1964) suggests that the emperor had no choice but to share his power with it and to accept the principles on which it insisted the state must function.

The above account gave a vivid sketch of the development of the imperial literary examination system and the procedure of selecting officials in the bureaucratic government in China. This system and selection procedure, following the historical track of China, was duplicated in Vietnam a few centuries later.

The State Literary Examinations in Vietnam

The State Literary Examinations had their origins in the classical Confucian examination in China, and survived from their inception in 1075 up until the early 20th century. For a short while toward the end, the examinations adopted an

alternative format, since the French colonial authorities recognized a need to better familiarize students with the requirements of a modern Western colonial administration. In 1918, these Vietnamese-French language examinations were discontinued altogether.

The main purpose of the classical examinations, of course, was the elevation of the educated classes to various levels within the mandarin hierarchy. Encompassing Chinese philosophical and literary works and exclusively in the language of the Chinese Mandarinate, 'Chu Nho', the examinations were always difficult. They required a powerful memory virtually to the exclusion of all else, including creative and independent thinking. This, of course, mitigated against an administration imbued with any substantial intellectual and creative momentum, favouring instead the more stable Confucian inertia bred in men of classical learning and honour.

The contents of the examinations were based on the five ancient books, Ngu Kinh and the four classical ones, Tu Tho along with Confucian works as well as Vietnamese historical annals (Su Ky). However, contents of the State Literary Examinations varied with the changes of dynasties in Viet Nam, although the main content remained unchanged throughout the course of the history of state examinations. The following skill areas or topics were subject to examinations:

Kinh Nghia

Testing on the knowledge and understanding of the Five Chinese Classics and the Four Books commenced about 1396 during the period of Emperor Tran Thuan Tong (1388-1398). Skill of writing in 'eight-legged style' (A literary style prescribed for the Imperial Civil Service Examination during the Ming and Ching Dynasties in China) was also required of all candidates.

Van Sach & Van Juan

The test on writing essays; a specific topic was given to test candidates' talent, ability, and wisdom in their individual stratagems, manoeuvres, general knowledge, and insight in regard to social, political, and educational problems. Essays required a point-by-point response to questions, and commentary on ancient or contemporary political events.

Thi Phu

The setting of a task for writing a poetic description on different historical events or famous themes of certain writers of the past. Writing of 'Phu' was restricted to poetic regulation in the form and diction of the Tang Dynasty (Luat Duong).

Bai Thu

Composition of verse wherein candidates were required to show their skill and talents in composing verse according to set form and regulations; or to compose a poem in a noted verse style, such as song, lament, or hymn.

Chieu

Imperial edict. A test on the skill of writing imperial announcements to the mandarins as well as to the people. Candidates had to position themselves as an emperor to make such announcements as set in the examinations.

Che

Inscription awarded, or dedicatory address, to a distinguished scholar or a merit-achieved mandarin by an emperor. Candidates were required to write such an inscription or words of praise as set in the exams.

Lieu

Documentation submitted to the emperor. Candidates were required to demonstrate their skills of writing in expressing congratulations, appreciation or suggestions to the emperor.

Doi Lien

Matched inscription. Examinees were required to write a special composition in parallel verse.

There were five different levels for the State Literary Exams in Vietnam. A pass at each successive stage of these extremely difficult examinations meant the opportunity to progress further in life and in society, perhaps entering service as a village teacher or minor official, and if one were particularly clever and lucky, into high public office.

Khao Khoa

This was the lowest examination given; a country exam held annually. The relatively few who entered and passed did not receive a title, but were exempted from military service, forced labour, and taxes.

Hach Thi

Like the Khao Khoa, this was a provincial examination, though it was held only every three years, and served as a qualifying round for the higher regional examination.

Huong Thi

The regional exam, too, was held every three years. Based on their scores candidates were awarded different titles and ranks in the mandarin hierarchy. Thousands of prospective mandarins (no age limit) sat for this test, though only 200 or 300 reached the bachelor grade (Tu Tai), and only a handful (12-15 candidates) made it to the graduate level (Cu Nhan).

Hoi Thi

A biannual affair, this Capital Examination was the qualifying round for the final and most prestigious test, the Palace Examination (Dinh Thi).

Dinh Thi

The Palace Examination was taken at the Imperial Palace, and the Emperor himself chose the content of the exam and the final cut of candidates. Those lucky enough to pass earned the title of Doctor (Tien Si) or Associate Doctor (Pho Bang) and stood to be elevated to the position of provincial judge. The difficulty of the Palace Exam is evident from the few Doctorates awarded: from 1075 to 1918 there were less than 2,000. Those who failed nevertheless became private tutors to the court, teachers in private schools, writers, or public officials of lower rank (Cao Xuan Duc, 1993).

The Examination Centre

Examinations were usually held in Scholar's Quarters (Truong Thi), huge sheltered enclosures divided into two areas. Monitors, who worked the inner area (nod lien), were appointed by the Minister of Rituals (Bo Le) to remain at the centres for the six-week duration to ensure against cheating. The candidates sat in the outer area (ngoai lien), and arrived the day before the exam began. They were provided with a light tent, a mat, paper, brush pens, and a writing desk.

The Examinations

Each different section, or paper lasted 12 hours. Candidates had to be successful in one paper to move on to the next; thus the field was gradually and systematically eliminated. There were five different subject areas: Van Chuong (literary writing), Van Sach and Van Juan (writing documents and essays), Bai Tho (composition in verse) Bai Phu (writing a poetic description on different themes) and Doi Lien (matched inscriptions). In addition to these exercises, the Palace Examination included writing of essays on imperial training, tributes to an important mandarin in the court and other difficult tasks (Nguyen Quoc Thang, 1993).

The Results

After the results of the Palace Examinations were announced, the most successful scholars (the Doctors) attended the banquet given by the Emperor, during which they received a gown, a cap, and a blue parasol. They were then authorized to receive a horse in the imperial garden (Tinh Tam) and parade in their new outfits

through the streets of imperial Hue. In addition, their names were inscribed on a plaque in Van Lieu at the Temple of Literature, the oldest school in Vietnam. Upon their return home they were entertained at the homes of other Mandarins.

This was how a 'gentleman' was cultivated and a scholar gentry society was formed with this group of men of scholarship and courtesy, educated to rule. They were expected to display the Confucian virtues and, in particular, to have a strong commitment to the welfare of the whole society. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, members of this class comprised less than 1.5 per cent of the population in Vietnam, so they were obviously a highly exclusive group (Nguyen Quoc Thang, 1993). They had special status before the law and certain humiliating punishments could not be inflicted upon them. They wore special kinds of clothes (buttons of gold or silver denoted their gentry rank), and if they were officials, servants cleared the way for them as they passed through the streets. Examinations for entry to the scholar gentry class persisted up to the beginning of the twentieth century in both China (1911) and in Vietnam (1918).

The Scholar's Narrative

Here is an extremely interesting account written by one who undertook the examinations and was successful.

Early one morning as the time for the State Literary Examinations drew near, I started for Shaoshing where the examination was to be held for our district. The luggage man slung his bamboo pole over his shoulder with my suitcase and bamboo basket roped to one-end and bedding outfits balancing the other.

The examination began with roll call at the entrance of the Examination Hall at about four o'clock in the morning. The early autumn morning was chilly. A large crowd of literate, several thousand strong and each wearing a red tasselled hat ... and carrying a lantern, gathered around the spacious courtyard. At the entrance to the hall the Prefect sat in stately dignity at a long desk... With a vermilion pen in his hand he began to call the roll.

The candidate was let in then. His hat and clothes were searched to see that he carried no notes with him. Anything found written on paper would be confiscated.

The candidates moved on in files to their respective seats which were numbered. The names on the examination papers were written on detachable slips to be torn off before the papers were handed in. Each paper was also numbered in a sealed corner, which was not opened until the papers were marked and the successful candidates selected, so as to prevent any favouritism. Toward the end of the Manteau Dynasty, when corruption was rampant in many branches of government office, the State Examination system remained independent and free alike of external interference and internal corruption. This was one reason why the degrees conferred were so much honoured in China.

Questions were limited to the Confucian classics and this was why a candidate must commit to memory all the texts in the classics. This I had done through years of laborious conning in my country school and in the Sino-Occidental School in Shaoshing. Questions were shown to the candidates by means of cubic lanterns, on the screens of which the questions were written; they were lighted with candles so that the black letters on the white screens could be distinctly seen at a distance. Bearers raised their lanterns high above their heads and carried them up and down the aisles several times, so that none could miss them.

About noon officials went around to check on how far the candidates had gone with their essays and set on each paper a seal at the spot to which the line had run. At about four in the afternoon cannon began to roar, marking the first call for the collection of papers.

The gates were flung open and the band began to play. Candidates who were able to answer the first call hand in their papers and made their way out slowly through the gates with music playing and an anxious crowd waiting. After everyone had made his exit the gates were closed again. The second call was made about an hour later with the same ceremony. The third or final call was made about six, with both cannon and band remaining silent.

We had a week or ten days to wait for the results of the examination. In the interim there was plenty of time for amusement. Books stores, large and small, were found everywhere near the Examination Hall. There were chess stands, temporary restaurants with famous Shaoshing wines and delicious dishes at moderate prices, and travelling theatres where we would go and enjoy ourselves.

On the day when results were to be made public a large crowd waited anxiously in front of a high spacious wall opposite the entrance of the Examination Hall. Cannon and band announced the moment when the list of names, or rather numbers, of the successful candidates was issued. The numbers were set down in circular formation instead of in a column, so as to avoid having a top and bottom to the list.

I was pleasantly surprised to find my own number in big black letters among the others in the circle on the enormous oblong paper posted on the wall.

The second session of the examination came within a few days. Everyone who had passed the first one had reasons to worry, since some would be eliminated. I was lucky in the second trial. In the list of names which was posted on the wall I found mine somewhere in the middle rows.

The third and final session was merely perfunctory. In addition to an essay we were supposed to write down from memory a section of the 'Imperial Instruction on Morals'; in reality each of us had with us a copy of the text, which we were allowed to carry into the Exam Hall and which we copied outright. The Imperial Examiner appeared in person to supervise the final examination.

Early in the morning, some days later, I was awakened from slumber by the rapid beating of a 'tom-tom' outside my window. It was an official reporter coming to announce the award of the First Degree - 'Wu-shen', popularly known as Hsiu-tsai. The official announcement which was printed in bold block prints on a piece of red paper about six feet by four, read as follows:

His Majesty's Imperial Vice-Minister of Rites and Concurrently Imperial Examiner of Public Instruction for the Province of Chekiang, etc. wishes to announce that your honourable person, Chiang Monlin, is awarded the Degree of Wu-shen and entitled to enjoy the privilege of entering the District Government School as a government scholar...

(Chiang, 1947, pp.54-7).

Dr Chiang was later educated in the United States and graduated from the University of Michigan. Tides from the West was originally written in English and has been translated into 14 languages. His autobiography narrates some striking and significant changes in Chinese transitional modern history from Imperial political and social status into a republic established in 1911.

Modern Critiques of the State Literary Examination System

Chinese Scholars

During the late nineteenth century, and thereafter, China was shaken politically and psychologically by Western intrusion. Chinese intellectuals commenced a soul-searching questioning of the country's cultural heritage, particularly Confucianism. It was regarded generally by the educated as a weight *and* burden - intellectual shackles on the mind preventing the country from advancement and modernization.

Hu Shih (1890-1962), a graduate from Columbia University, particularly criticized the late Sung Confucianism “which had become fossilized as a state orthodoxy in pre-Republican days” (Chou, 1959, p.445).

Lu Hsun (1881-1936), one of the greatest modern Chinese novelists, whose first short-story *The Diary of a Madman* (1918) was followed by others equally famous, attacked Confucianism as ‘the cannibalistic ritual religion which stifled

human freedom and individual initiative in the name of passive, conformist virtues, and tradition" (Chow, 1960, p.304). The novelist's critiques satirized the dehumanizing elements in a fossilized tradition until then inextricably bound up with a political-social establishment concerned only with the survival of its own power interests. His anti-Confucian writings were extolled and distributed during some political campaigns within China during the Mao period. His biting criticism of the Confucian tradition continued to echo in the Chinese communities overseas, especially for those having had personal experience with the disadvantages of the Chinese clan system which was a direct product of Confucianism, its authoritarianism and its tendency to quash individual initiative.

The Confucianism coming under fire was that which supported the hated 'status quo', but was not necessarily the teaching of Confucius himself. As Chow Tse-tung (1960, p.311) pointed out:

Whether the spirit of Confucius himself is precisely the same as the spirit of the later Confucianism attacked by the intellectuals still remains debatable. Confucius' doctrines are not free from ambiguity and limitations. Varying emphases or distortions will certainly paint a different Confucius.

The materialist interpretation of history regards the study of the past as a means toward the attainment of political ends in the future - the construction of a utopian socialist society (Heisted, 1968). In that light, it is interesting to note that Kuo Mo-jo, the most venerated Chinese Marxist historian, 'lauded' Confucius and his disciples as political revolutionaries, appealing for support for his arguments to

those passages in the book attributed to Mo-Tzu. He warned against the substitution of Confucius and Sons with Mo-tzu and Sons and he was strongly critical also of other ancient Chinese Legalists. However, Kuo carefully noted at the end of his book, Shih P'i - P'an Shu (The Ten Critiques), that while he stood firmly on his position as a historical materialist, and regarded Confucius as progressive in his own times, he did not regard Confucianism as being useful to modern China (Kuo Mo-Jo, 1950).

Vietnamese Scholars

It can be said that the most ambitious attempt to state a coherent, contemporary Confucian doctrine was that of Tran Trong Kim, Vietnamese scholar, educator, and historian; the same man commissioned by the French to write primary school texts on morality. In his writing of a two-volume study on Confucianism (Nho Giao), Tran argued that there were two different types of knowledge, one obtained through 'intuitive insight' (truc giac) while the other was achieved by 'reason' (ly tri). The scholar claimed that Confucian metaphysics was almost totally the preserve of intuition (Marr, 1981).

As a protectoral vanguard of Confucianism, Tran Trong Kim (1962) warned that Confucianism would not survive in modern times if supporters merely restricted themselves to the argument of 'outer' or 'public' knowledge. Tran actually encouraged the use of designs of Western origin for taking the lead in such areas as social control and economic development, since 'reason' had obviously

perceived better conditions for historical development and improvement in the commercial and industrial West. Nevertheless, he considered that '*reason*' must not be permitted to intrude on the intuitively derived '*inner spirit*' of Vietnam, which had to remain the domain of those few scholars of Confucian philosophy who understood Confucius' metaphysical teachings and who still conducted their lives according to the harmonious Doctrine of the Mean (*bung dung*), rather than losing their equilibrium and bending down to Western preferences for struggle and survival of the fittest.

The Vietnamese writer and scholar Phan Khoi (1887-1960) was the first person to attack Tran Trong Kim's concept of Confucianism, which was essentially the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279); the texts were hardly the same as the original teachings of Confucius, a matter extremely focussed on by Chinese scholars, whereas very little discussed in Vietnam. Even Confucius, the sage himself, regarded the Doctrine of the Mean as idealistic and hard to attain when he first proposed it; therefore it should be regarded as entirely out of place in the more difficult circumstances of today (Phan Khoi, 1930).

Khoi (1930) thought that the failure to meet contemporary needs for a Confucianist Revival could be ascribed to two causes; spiritualism and occultism were running against the stream of science and the attempt to defend the ideal of aristocracy of the scholar-gentry was not compatible with democracy. Besides,

Confucian scholars took too much time in telling people what to do, while ignoring the uncovering, analyzing, and explaining of reasons why a particular action or behaviour was correct or decent.

Khoi himself was basically a Confucian scholar who set a high value on moral self-cultivation and self-improvement (Tu Than); he considered that while religion and morality were separated elsewhere, it was unscrupulous for Vietnamese to ignore the Confucian heritage, since it was a part of them and would remain so. He concluded that, “although you live in this Westernized environment (colonized Vietnam), to not know Confucianism is not to be Vietnamese” (Khoi, 1930, p. 13).

Pham Quynh, another interesting Vietnamese scholar who achieved brilliantly in the area of translation and introduction of Western writing into Vietnam, speaking in defence of the continued relevance of Confucianism, chose to rely on translations by a French oriental writer named Edovard Chavanner instead of the recent Vietnamese or Chinese interpretations. Both writers, Quynh and Chavanner, agreed that hierarchy and obedience were the core of the genuine teachings of Confucius; that the father was undisputed master of the family, just as the emperor was master of the state, and that equality was a meaningless concept because one's first responsibilities were to maintain social order and to respect those who personified that order. To sum up, “conservatives like Pham Quynh

were convinced that secularized Confucianism, stiffened with some compatible Western ideas, was the most effective means to social stability and popular discipline in contemporary Vietnam. In their opinions, certain canons of behaviour had been disseminated by precept and example so successfully for so long that it would be a crime to discard them now" (Marr, 1981, p.112).

It is also interesting to note that, in the early twentieth century, two Vietnamese scholars and patriots commented on the situation of Vietnam with completely different attitudes. Phan Chu Trinh strongly opposed Confucian studies and the utility of the Chinese Language and argued that Vietnam cannot be saved without getting rid of Chinese characters (*Bat phe Han Tu, bat tuc di cuu tram quoc*). The statement was full of nationalism and determination to walk out of the shadow of China's cultural influence and also indicated Phan Chu Trinh's genuine intention to promote the usage of 'Quoc Ngu' (Vietnamese National Language). Phan Boi Chau and his followers countered with the view that 'Vietnam can not be saved without invigorating, improving Chinese studies' (*Bat chan Han Hoc, bat tuc di cuu tram quoc*). Although these scholars came to a consensus that the State Literary Examination system should be abolished, they still insisted that only Chinese Studies could stimulate the Vietnamese people to patriotic sacrifice and bravery (Marr, 1911, p.169).

Western Scholars

The Western critiques of Confucianism were articulated, especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when missionary efforts brought China within the scope of the Westerner's knowledge. The missionaries themselves were divided on Chinese teachings. Some of them were admirers of the Chinese culture and ready to accommodate Christian evangelization into Confucian teachings. They believed that they found in early Confucianism articulation of their beliefs and of the immortality of the soul. Treadgold (1973) points out that they became the earliest Western Sinologists, and introduced to European readers the picture of an independent and non-Christian culture of high antiquity, with a rich and vibrant moral tradition which compared very favourably with the ethical teachings of Christianity.

The Jesuit writers on China and Confucianism made the greatest impact in Europe, giving rise to theological controversies regarding the origin of the Chinese religions, the antiquity of the Chinese historical chronology when compared to that of the Holy Bible and the question of compatibility between Confucian rites and Christian faith. It is against such a background that the Western critiques of Confucianism are to be understood.

Some of Europe's best minds were led to the study of China and to philosophical and theological reflections on Confucianism. G.W. Leibniz visited and

corresponded with many Jesuits, including Father J. Bouvet, from whom he derived knowledge of The Book of Changes and Neo-Confucian philosophy. He had written and left behind a collection of documents, *Novissima Sinica* (c. 1700), which gives his position regarding the Chinese rites. In his letters and other writings, Leibniz also expressed his high appreciation of Chu Hsi's teaching of Li [理] and Ch'i [氣], insisting that the Chinese were not materialists, but had a real understanding of God and of spiritual beings. C. Wolff, another famous Jesuit writer of the time, shared Leibniz enthusiasm, and showed his admiration for the moral and political philosophy contained in the Chinese classics (Leibniz, 1968).

On the whole, eighteenth century European intellectuals were delighted with their discovery of China and Confucianism. Marverick (1946) describes how Voltaire spoke with admiration of the country where reason and harmony reigned supreme, without the interference of superstition. First in Essai Sur Les Moeurs and then in Mistoire Universell, Voltaire (1740), attacked the historical authority of the Biblical Chronology by reference to China's antiquity, and also made claims for an ethical system independent of revealed religion.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1772-1778) made some favourable comments on China in an article *On Political Economy* (1755). His own ideas on the noble savage

offer echoes of an affinity, probably unconscious, with Mencius' doctrine on human goodness.

The German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) affirms reason and order in China, as well as the wisdom contained in the Confucian classics. However, in his *Philosophy of History* he commented that China, like the rest of the orient, lacked the spiritual freedom and dynamism of Europe, and remained immune to change and transformation (J. Sibree, 1956).

Legall (1923, p.83) reported that another Jesuit Sinologist, L. Wieger, gives some idea of a learned missionary's opposition to Chinese culture in general and Confucianism in particular; the latter refers to Confucianism as a *peevish conservative sect* which demands of its followers not charity or devotion, but a *neutrality of mind and coldness of heart*.

Of the internationally known Western philosophers and scholars who visited China in the 1920s, the names of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and John Dewey (1859-1952), particularly, are unforgettable. Russell stunned his Chinese admirers with his positive appreciation of much that he found in the Chinese traditional thought systems in Taoism and in Confucianism. However, he pointed out the difficulty posed by the rigidity of the Confucian value system. He observed that the insistence on filial piety and the excessive strength of the Confucian family

were barriers to social change and national reconstruction (Russell, 1992). Dewey made quite similar observations. His emphasis on logical methodology, as well as pragmatism, increased the Chinese awareness of the inadequacies of Confucianism (Dewey, 1973).

Joseph Buttinger (1970, p.373), a scholar on Asian Studies gave his fair comments on the scholar-officials in Vietnam as follows:

There can be no doubt that the Mandarins, whose authority derived from the acquisition of knowledge, were the country's only wielders of power, nor that as a class they were firmly opposed to technical process and social change.

Thus, if it is true that Vietnam could have avoided the loss of her independence by changing and progressing, the Mandarins must be held largely responsible for the failure of Vietnam to defend herself against the West.

The Mandarins indeed have been blamed by their critics for almost everything that went wrong in nineteenth-century Vietnam. Vietnam's alleged intellectual stagnation, social immobility and suicidal policy of isolation from the West were directly ascribed to the conservative attitudes of the mandarins, and to a Confucian governmental system that gave them control of the State. Western observers saw that the Mandarin mentality rejected the idea of change and progress, and consequently they connected the Mandarins' intellectual habits with the state of stagnation found in Vietnam. The Mandarins' peculiar

intellectual training being restricted to Confucianism, was responsible for their habits of mind and diagnosed as the whole system's basic fault. Buu Bong (1958) considered that in a manner quite typical for the Mandarins' own intellectual predisposition, Vietnam's economic backwardness and political inflexibility in the face of colonial aggression were explained by the intellectual matter that fed, and the educational methods that formed, the mandarins' minds.

From the West's scholastic point of view, perhaps Professor Kenneth S. Latourette's (1972, p.171) comments on the Imperial Exam System are quite pertinent. He remarked:

The defects of the system were obvious: the absorption in purely verbal matters, and the premium upon memory and upon ability to write according to the standards of an arbitrary literary style, rather than upon originality or vigor of thought and promise in administrative skills. In many scholars too, there were arrogance, a narrowness of outlook, and a stereotyping of thought which discouraged all progress. The educated class, trained in this uniform fashion, enjoyed a prestige greater than that accorded to scholars in any other nation: they dominated society. Their ideals and manners were, accordingly, largely taken over by the masses and tended to permeate the entire nation. The Confucian dream of a society moulded by the example of an educated ruling class had to no small extent become an actuality. Political division was seldom more than temporary and never permanent.

The State Literary Examination System and Its Influence Over The Vietnamese Society

Background

In 221 BC the State of Ch'in was able to unify all China into the imperial pattern that predominated thereafter by utilizing legalist ideas. However, the regime's harsh and totalitarian policies provoked great resentment, and popular rebellions overthrew the Ch'in in 201 BC. Subsequent Chinese rulers, while perpetuating the Ch'in imperial structure of government and many legalist-like attitudes that were inseparably associated with that structure, dared not openly espouse legalist doctrines. Under the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-A.D. 9) it was specifically ruled that no adherent of legalism could even be employed as an official, and Confucianism was accepted as the orthodox philosophical justification of the State. It has been argued (Latourette, 1972) that from that time on, Chinese dynasties practiced Confucian-approved ceremonies and entrusted administration to scholar-officials versed in the literature of classical Confucianism.

Nevertheless, the Confucianism adopted as the state ideology was not identical with classical Confucianism. It was an interpretation by the Han Dynasty scholar Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.). For one thing, his Imperial Confucianism is more strongly theistic and metaphysical than the original: it glorifies the ruler almost to the point of negating the anti-statism of the classical doctrine; that is to

say, it comprises the unavoidable fact that the Chinese had to live with, and under, an autocratic, centralized government on the Ch'in pattern. Consequently, it is an amalgam of classical Confucian and Legalist ideas. "Perhaps we can say that Imperial Confucianism in all its verities represents a compromising of certain basic principles in classical Confucianism" (Balazs, 1964, p.73).

The one thousand years occupation of Vietnam by the Chinese naturally had a strong and lasting impact on Vietnamese culture. The Chinese political system, including the bureaucratic hierarchy, was simply transferred intact from China to Vietnam. Equally influential, and similarly transported, was the Confucianism which perpetuates the stability of the state; however, it prevented all social and economic mobility and controlled the nation with its strict moral codes.

Influence on Society

The Confucian social order consisted of two main classes: the peasant masses who produced food and clothing and provided soldiers and corvee labourers as the state needed them, and a numerically small elite which had a monopoly of literacy, statecraft, and administrative skills gained through an educational system designed for Imperial Literary Examinations. This elite group was intensely jealous of its prerogatives and sought always to prevent new classes or groups from attaining power in society. Small intermediate classes were grudgingly allowed; merchants, artisans and the military. But the elite repeatedly

insisted on the economic primacy of agriculture (for land income), and on the subversive and parasitic character of other occupations.

These members of the scholar-gentry, early in the development of the imperial order, had entered into an alliance with the monarchy which provided the symbols and the sinews of power; throne, police, army and the organs of social control. The literati provided the knowledge of precedent and statecraft that could legitimize power and make the state work. The monarch and the literati were committed to a two-class society based on agriculture. This alliance often was uneasy and sometimes broke apart, but since each party was absolutely necessary to the other's welfare, it was always renewed (Wright, 1975). The division of labour and the division of power aforementioned were norms to which society and state perennially returned. However, this order was subject not only to the tensions between monarch and elite, but also to challenge from other social groups; ambitious men such as great landlords, religious leaders, warlords, eunuchs, merchants, great and small, fought their way to power and wealth. Even the normally docile peasantry could be goaded into explosive rebellions that cost millions of lives and decades of chaos. As the Stanford scholar Arthur Wright (1975, p.8-9) commented:

The imperial Confucian order was more an ideal than a reality. The bland and static picture of Chinese society so often served up to Western readers is a myth. Such periods of tranquillity as we do encounter in Chinese history (as well as in Vietnamese history) represent no more than a momentary equilibrium among all the forces at work in the society.

The Confucian scholars, under the cultivation of an educational system based on literary examinations, were never the inactive beneficiaries of a changeless social order. As members of the scholar-gentry, they had special privileges and exemption from certain obligations, but they had to strive hard to maintain them; each generation had to encounter with disruptive forces. Fairbank (1968) describes situations such as a wilful emperor who defied the authenticated elite and relied on eunuchs or upstarts to put his policies into practice; the power of the regional magistrates, enthusiasm of religion in the masses, moral flabbiness and corruption in the scholar officials were all elements that might pull the empire apart and restore the chaos of ancient feudalism.

Harmony, universal and unalloyed, was perhaps the highest sense in term of the good society. The good society was seen as a past utopia, a golden age, and the ideally frictionless holistic order that had existed in remote antiquity. That order was a hierarchy: state and society were interwoven into a seamless whole, and every man knew his place and was content. An emperor presided over the whole, next in rank came the elite, and at the base of the pyramid came the peasantry but the order was not in equilibrium. The Confucianists insisted that the scholar-gentry be open to those of moral worth, and the entry was by the State or Imperial Literary examinations. They viewed the natural and human worlds as an organism made up of multitudinous interconnected parts. When any one of the parts fell from its place or was disrupted in its functioning, the harmony of the

whole then was impaired. Heaven, which was neither deity nor blind fate, presided over this organic whole and was a force for harmony and balance. But man was the principal agent of both harmony and disharmony. Out of ignorance or perversity, man could cause serious disruptions. By the application of knowledge, wisdom, and discipline, men could restore harmony. Either man in the mass or an irresponsible elite might destroy harmony, but only the learned and the wise could restore it (Ching, 1972). The learned and the wise were to be found among the Confucian scholar-gentry. Wright (1964) considered that it was their wisdom which was the key to harmony and that it came from two sources: from the Confucian classics, and from the histories and other writings that contained the past experiences of the Confucianists.

The well-ordered family, essentially, was the basic unit that formed the Confucian society and was seen as a microcosm of the social-political order. Destruction of family leads to destruction of society; qualities of strong and unselfish family units are reflected in the society at large. Family was the closest and most intimate society that an individual would ever experience and, therefore, the very best setting in which social roles could be learned (Mahony, 1977). Living in society requires relationships with others; members of families, friends and acquaintances, older people, younger people, teachers, officials, employers. Such relationships form the social fabric. Of all these myriad relationships, Confucius considered five to be the most important, three of them which concern relationship within the family: viz.,

Between
 Ruler and subject
 Father and son
 Husband and wife
 Elder brother and younger brother
 Older friend and younger friend

Later, his followers evolved the Ten Attitudes which they felt should govern the Five Relationships: viz.,

Love in the father, filial piety in the son
 Gentility in the older brother, humility and respect in the younger
 Righteous behaviour in the husband, obedience in the wife
 Humane consideration in elders, deference in juniors
 Benevolence in rulers; loyalty in subject

Source: Mahony, 1977, p.18

It was a society in which the family was clearly seen as pre-eminent with three of the five relationships and six of the Ten Attitudes dealing with family relationships. The husband was head of the family, sons took their place within the family according to their age; women are mentioned only in a wifely role - nothing is said of daughters and sisters. Outside the family, emphasis is placed once again on age, authority and members of the male sex. It is easy to see, therefore, whom the Confucianists regarded as the most important members of society. At the same time, those who had authority over others had particular responsibilities to them: while the son had to treat his father with the utmost respect, the father in turn had to show love to his son; the wife was expected to obey her husband but he, in turn, was to behave fairly towards her.

In the society of the West, a family unit is seen as consisting of husband, wife and usually two or three children. The Chinese and Vietnamese, by contrast, had a wider and deeper concept of family than this. Relatives, particularly the close relatives, were seen very much as members of the family and, ideally, they resided together in a compound of dwellings. This was an extended family situation as opposed to the small 'nuclear' family of the Western society.

The family in Imperial Vietnam was responsible for training its members, providing for the formal education of sons (where affordable), finding employment and helping those who had fallen on hard times, and caring for the sick. It was also responsible for disciplining its erring members. These duties were carried out by the immediate family but, where necessary, kinsmen or clansmen could be asked to help. Therefore, the family in China and in Vietnam carried out many of the functions that are now considered to be the responsibility of the government in Western society.

General Comments

As taught at the Confucian schools, the wise father was a model for the wise ruler or minister, and dutiful children were the models for properly submissive subjects who knew where they were, the role they played and the obligations due to others. Both the family and the state were governed by the 'Li' (Le) rituals and the norms of proper social behaviour (Mahony, 1977). The Li, spread by fathers, village

seniors, Confucian scholars, government officials, supplemented by the discipline of a decent and well ordered family life, in turn would nourish social virtues such as filial submission of the children, brotherliness among sons, righteousness between husband and wife, good faith among friends and loyalty between the monarch and the subjects. The power of example in models of conduct had been extolled by the Confucian scholars and was a fundamental principle of child rearing and education in imperial China and Vietnam for centuries.

The prime living exemplars for any age as the Confucianists saw it, were the best of the scholar-officials. “Steeped in the classics, moulded by literary-exam-oriented education, bathed in history, shaped by severe family discipline, tempered by introspection, and sobered by their vast responsibilities, those men were thought to have the power to transform their environment and society, to turn ordinary folk into the path of virtue” (Dubs, 1927, p.88). When opportunity came, they were even expected to foster the same virtues in their official colleagues and in their emperor. They were also to serve as interpreters and transmitters of the heritage, and as artists and thinkers who adorn and enrich it

The State Literary Examination System and its Influence on Government

The Confucian King

Kingship, in the Confucian idea, was associated with charisma and merit. In reality, the ideal was hardly ever attained except by the sage-kings of legendary ancient times. In the view of Ching (1977, p.188) "Confucian China shares with Christian Europe the idea of vicarious authority. Unlike ancient Egypt or even Japan, China and Vietnam never entertained the idea of a God-ruler." According to the Confucian conception, the political ruler was regarded as Bearer of Heaven's Mandate, Son of Heaven and Father and Teacher to the people. In fact, this was the consecrated aura surrounding the ruler's office that the all-wise and all-humane qualities of the 'sage,' i.e., qualities of a charismatic personality, came gradually to be attributed to the ruling emperor in the Court rhetoric and etiquette, even if his moral and intellectual mediocrity was known to all, including himself.

According to the Confucian classics, the King is the one man, son of Heaven, mediator between the powers above and the people below; he governs by Heaven's Mandate and his ruling is carried out according to the will of Heaven. Based on this theory of Mandate, the king or the ruler's authority is given by the Lord-on-High and is to be used for the good of his subjects. If the ruler commits sins against Heaven by personally violating the law and by misrule, he may be penalized with the loss of his mandate, which will then be given to someone else

with the virtues expected of a king. Tung Chung-shu offers his own interpretation of the Chinese word 'king' by saying:

Those who in ancient times invented writing drew three lines and connected them through the middle, calling the character 'King' (Wang 王). The three lines are Heaven, Earth and Man, and that which passes through the middle joins the principles of all three. Occupying the centre of Heaven, Earth and Man, passing through the joining all three - if he is not a king, who can do this?

(de Bary, 1964, Vol.1, p.163).

The “doctrine of the Rectification of Names, as enunciated by Confucius himself, has contributed to the understanding of the Mandate of Heaven theory” (Ching, 1977, p.189). The great sage sees the need for good government in that the ruler must be a good ruler, the minister a good minister. Besides, the Confucian teaching that every man can become a sage assures the dimension of freedom in history, and encourages aspiration to sagehood itself. Thus, the Confucian Messiah is an Elect One, not only of God, but also of Man, with the people confirming the divine choice.

The Confucian Minister

The minister's duty as the king's important adviser raises an interesting problem: that of political loyalty (chung 忠). How must he impersonate his role as a subject toward the discreditable monarch, who turns off his antenna to his advice,

and drives the kingdom into chaos, the people into misery? Should he start a rebellion, particularly when he sees himself or some other man as a worthier ruler? Should he rather try his best even when he recognizes the country's coming end, and die with the ruler? Mencius (The Four Books, p.3) on the reciprocity of the ruler/minister relationship, said: "If a ruler regards his ministers as his hands and feet, then his ministers will regard him as their belly and heart. If a ruler regards his ministers as dogs and horses, the ministers will regard him as any other man. If a ruler regards his ministers as dirt and grass, the ministers will regard him as a bandit and enemy." Mencius' approval of tyrannicide had a decisive influence on Chinese and Vietnamese history. Generations of rebels and dynasty founders had appealed to this doctrine (Ching, 1977). In this regard, Confucian China and Vietnam experienced many dynastic changes, each justifiable according to a leader's own political ethics.

However, in the conception of the Confucian scholars, "authority is meaningless except in dialectical relationship to some form of obedience and loyalty" (Ibid., 1977, p.42) The Confucianists' response to the problem of political authority has usually been articulated in terms of 'loyalty,' which differs from the more Western notion of 'obedience.' Obedience has an impersonal aspect, and may be applied internally to the conscience and externally to laws. On the other hand, loyalty "remains deeply personal, whether directed to a cause - in the name of moral conviction - or to another person, or group of persons" (Royce, 1909, p.17).

In the Great Learning and the Doctrine of Means of the Four Books, the word 'loyalty' usually occurs in connection with 'faithfulness' and on one occasion refers to the ruler's devotedness to the subjects. In fact, 'loyalty' in Confucian politics is an absolute virtue by which a subject must demonstrate his respect for and devotion to the ruler, whose duty is defined as "serving Heaven above and Earth below, and the ancestral temple in the middle, in order to face and govern the people." His ministers must "forget themselves in the service of the ruler, forget their families in the service of the country remain upright and direct in their speech, and even give up their lives in fidelity to the ruler at the time of calamity" (Ching, 1972, p.40). This is the Chinese and Vietnamese philosophical tradition which has demonstrated that politics is inseparable from ethics.

In theory, the Confucian minister is entitled to rebel against a tyrant; in practice, he usually prefers to articulate protest rather than take up arms and risk a violent revolution.

Conclusion

The Vietnamese emperors were not only the chief administrators, but also the only lawmakers of Vietnam. As Confucianist philosophers of the State, they would have regarded the so-called 'division of powers' concept as an absurdity, like a family run on a parliamentary basis, or an Almighty God with no right to dispense justice. The emperor was the first judge of Vietnam for the same obvious reasons

that required him to be the commander-in-chief of the country's armed forces (Buttinger, 1970). But the right of the emperor to make or unmake all officials, exclusive as was that power, was subject to one limitation. The emperor could make a mandarin only out of a certain type of man; the educated man, or 'man of letters,' as he was called at the time. Even the educated man could become a mandarin only if he passed a number of officially prescribed examinations. This Chinese invented system had been in operation in Vietnam since the Ly Dynasty had introduced it in the year 1075 (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). Study in order to qualify, to compete in examinations to determine a candidate's degree of knowledge and resultant official rank, was the road for a Vietnamese wishing to pursue a public career. The Nguyen Emperors, and in particular Gia Long (1802-20) and Minh Mang (1820-41), recruited all their officials from the intelligentsia through competitive examinations. This resulted in a curious sociological and unique historical fact. If only the educated could enter the ranks of the mandarins, and if the Mandarins had a monopoly on political power, the educated minority of Vietnam was in fact the country's 'ruling class.'

The mandarins' character as a governing elite was emphasized both by the nature of the training they received and by examinations they had to undergo. These examinations were competitive and strictly impartial, making sure that only the fittest among all students received their diplomas as 'men of letters', and that the best of these men, in terms of the already established criteria, could obtain the

highest official degrees. However, before a Vietnamese youth could compete for the highest honours, the years of study and the passing of preliminary examinations might well have made him a middle-aged or elderly man. Only the very brilliant were able to get to the summit as young men, after absorbing no less than all the knowledge that existed, or was recognized as existing, under the prevailing Confucianist views. No other road to public office existed in Vietnam, and no dispensations from the labour of study and the trials of exams were granted either to the wealthy and noble or to a mandarin's own sons. The office of mandarin was neither hereditary nor for sale, and since education was always free in Vietnam, theoretically the mandarinate was equally accessible to the poor and the rich. To conclude, the selection of the country's officials was based on a democratic principle long before anyone in the West could dream of such governmental advancement (Tran Trong Kim, 1962). Thus it came about that the country's ruling class, after the seedbeds of feudal power were destroyed, became identical with the country's educated minority. Vietnam was administered and ruled by its intellectuals, and no Vietnamese intellectuals existed who were not either members or associates of the country's ruling elite.

In fact, a closer examination of Vietnamese society during the first half of the nineteenth century reveals a surprising historical phenomenon. A state had come into being in which the ancient dream of a government by philosophers was literally fulfilled; the training of the mandarin was philosophical in the fullest

sense of the word (Tran, 1962). There was no special course in administration; no instruction in any kind of technical skill was required for the official examinations. The subjects to be mastered were exclusively literary, and the skills to be acquired purely rhetorical and scholastic. The bulk of the curriculum consisted of ancient Chinese philosophy, with history and poetry as mere handmaidens of Confucianism. The aim of all studies was to absorb the accumulated wisdom of the past, in order to achieve the moral perfection that qualified a man to rule. Minh Mang himself, the most scholarly of the Nguyen emperors, expounded these views in his remarkable political and poetic writing (Nguyen Q. Bien, 1991). He was the truest mandarin emperor Vietnam has known, a king who based his own qualifications for the government and his right to exercise absolute power not on royal blood but on his role as moral philosopher and head of the nation's intellectual elite. Under the first Nguyen emperors whose dogmatic Confucianism promoted a strictly mandarin-made scale of social values, the main feature of mandarin ideology reached its climactic form (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). When considering the honours and privileges bestowed by the State upon the scholars who passed a difficult examination, knowledge had a social value in Vietnam for which it would be hard to find a parallel in the history of human civilisation. Here, for once, 'knowledge' was 'power' in a very literal sense. The concept of power as a derivative of knowledge convinced all children and primitive people in Vietnam during the Confucianist regime; it was deep-rooted in their education.

Minh Mang's views on government, which had been part of mandarin ideology since the system had been in force, came close to answering the question of why a philosophical education was regarded as essential for all governmental tasks (Buttinger, 1970). To be the emperor's prolonged arm at the lower levels of administration, and to exercise local political power in the name of the state, did not depend on special knowledge or a training in particular skills. The functions of government in Vietnam's pre-industrial and pre-mercantile society were still too simple to require the kind of abilities that only a technical training could provide. The mandarins, obviously, were men who studied for their vocation as no government official had studied ever before them or after, but *what* they learned was hardly related to their specific tasks which were essentially political.

What the mandarins needed was not technical proficiency for complicated governmental functions but a claim to authority that no one would dare to attack. To give such authority was the purpose of their endless studies and difficult examinations. This made the mandarins' seemingly quite irrelevant intellectual training as practical a preparation for the exercise of power as ever was designed. It was more than a systematic ideological indoctrination. Above all, it was a profound and immensely successful system of justification of governmental authority, erected upon the only universal and indestructible foundation for any man who learned thoroughly and could pass. The learned alone, Confucius had established, travelled the roads of wisdom, which were also the roads that led to the moral perfection of man (Balaz, 1964). Only the wicked

would dare to object to a system of government under which the wisest and best of men were given the highest positions.

Thus, the possession of knowledge became inseparably connected with the right to exercise authority, and intellectual capacity became the only sure basis for a man's claim to an office of the state. In this close association of knowledge and power, the prestige of learning was always greater than that of mere force. To acquire knowledge, after all, was the only accessible gateway to power; knowledge, at least in principle, also determined an official's degree, which was the measure of status in Vietnamese society (Duong Thanh Binh, 1995). This alone could explain why intellectual achievement became the yardstick of individual greatness and posthumous reputation. But there were other reasons. The country's restricted economic activity kept the number of wealthy and the size of their fortunes relatively small, and the contrast between the miserable masses and the luxurious few was less relevant than in other civilisations; the difference in status between the wealthy and the poor was smaller than that between the ordinary citizen and the official. Besides, public office led as safely to the modest material welfare that was customary for the upper classes as did the pursuit of wealth through economic activity. Elsewhere the ambitious wanted to be rich; in Vietnam they preferred to become officials (Nguyen Xuan Nham, 1995). In effect, it was easier for a mandarin to extract a favour from a well-off man than for the wealthy to make a mandarin bow to his wishes.

Indeed, for a Vietnamese mandarin or even a mere 'man of letters' it was quite possible to combine the condition of a beggar with the standing and dignity of a king. The best of this class never abused their power to add material comfort to the enjoyment of status. The moral authority of the mandarins was great, and it transmitted a puritanical streak to their political grandsons of the twentieth century that is as noticeable in the Communist Ho Chi-minh as it is in the Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem.

CHAPTER 3

VIETNAM EDUCATION: THE COLONIAL PERIOD 1885 – 1954

Historical Background

The expansion of the Vietnamese state towards the South in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries coincided, for the most part, with the appearance of a new powerful political and cultural force on the Southeast Asian scene. In 1511, a Portuguese fleet landed at Malaca (Malaka) on the West Coast of the Malay Peninsula. In Duiker's (1983) view it was the first sign of the new age of Western adventurism emerging in the region. In 1516, these adventurers initiated the modern era of Western penetration into Vietnam. They were followed, in 1527, by visiting Dominican Missionaries and, in 1535, by the first military man, Antonio da Faria (Hoi An) who landed some twenty kilometres south of present-day Da-Nang.

The Portuguese were soon followed by Dutch, English and, finally, French traders in the 17th century. However, the first stable mission in Vietnam was founded by Portuguese and Italian Jesuits in 1615 at Fai Fo. Within a decade, the French, under the leadership and vigorous efforts of an ambitious Jesuit scholar Alexandre de Rhodes, soon became the leaders and French Catholics set up the Paris Society of foreign missions to propagate Christianity in Vietnam in 1659. de Rhodes arrived in 1624 and within three years had baptized more than 6,500 adults. However, the success was short-lived. The work of Catholic Missionaries was so

successful that the Vietnamese Court became alarmed. The Emperor and the mandarins, “feared, with some justification, that Christian doctrine would subvert Confucian institutions and beliefs and, public loyalty to the Court” (Duiker, 1983, p. 21). Consequently, missionary activities were eventually barred in the south in 1631 and a similar authoritative order was given in the North in 1661. Persecutions began, and in 1750 nearly all the missionaries were expelled, and a few were executed. Commercial contacts also declined in the same way: most Western factories were long closed, for Vietnam had relatively little to offer foreign traders.

Trager (1966) has argued that those who study the history of Southeast Asia are agreed that European commercial relations with Vietnam were initiated with the establishment of missionary influence. Religion, trade, and political interest remained confederated, despite a ruling by French King Louis XIV that missionary activity should not be carried out for such ends (Trager, 1966). French bishops and apostolic vicars who succeeded Alexandre de Rhodes, particularly Francis Pallu and Pierre de la Motte, continued to seek official support for their activities from their government; an opportunity arose with the Tay Son rebellion of 1765-1802.

In 1765, a rebellion against misgovernment broke out in the town of Tay Son near Qui Nhon. It was led by three brothers from a wealthy merchant family: Nguyen Nhao, Nguyen Hue, and Nguyen Lu. By 1773, the Tay Son Rebels as they were

known controlled the whole of central Vietnam and, in 1783, they captured Saigon and the rest of the South, killing the reigning prince and his family as well as 10,000 Chinese residents in Cholon. Nguyen Lu became king of the South, and Nguyen Nhac became king of Central Vietnam. When Nguyen Anh, a scion of the Nguyen House in the South, fled to Thailand and requested military assistance from the Thai authorities, he made the acquaintance of Pierre Pigneau de Behaine, a bishop and a great French missionary-political figure who established Ha Tien Island in the Gulf of Thailand. Intending to use his friendship with the young prince to restore French Catholic influence in Vietnam, Pigneau sought financial support from the Court at Versailles for a military mission to bring the Nguyen House back to power. A treaty was signed in 1787 calling for French aid in return for trade and missionary privileges. The plan failed and the authorities, “acting either on their own or under instructions from Paris, refused to honour the treaty” (Trager, 1966, p. 27). Nevertheless, Pigneau on his own initiative helped form a “small military force and a fleet” (Trager, 1966, p. 27) that assisted Nguyen Anh in overthrowing Tay Son. In 1802, Nguyen Anh set up the Nguyen Dynasty at Hue with himself as Emperor Gia Long.

Pigneau de Behaine’s hope that his efforts would lead to a restoration of French influence in Vietnam was misplaced. Since the French government had not honoured the treaty of 1787, Gia Long had little, if any, difficulty in fending off the few official trading ventures proposed during the time of Napoleon and his successor Louis XVIII. However, the Vietnamese emperor was rationally tolerant

and permitted French missionaries to propagate the doctrine of Christianity in Vietnam during his lifetime. This was a gesture to show his gratitude to the French for their help.

Gia Long died in 1820. His successor Minh Mang who reigned from 1820 to 1841 was a strong and devout believer in Confucianism and continued to practise the policy of restricting contacts with the West for fear of the effects of European ideas on traditional culture in Viet-nam, though he himself was interested in mastering Western technology (Duiker, 1983). Under his strong anti-Western policy, all French advisers kept at the Court by his father Gia Long were dismissed. Subsequently, efforts by Paris to establish trade and diplomatic relations with Vietnam were politely rejected, and the persecution of the missionaries and their followers was intensified. After these events, France abandoned its efforts to get into Vietnam by diplomatic means. From 1840 on, French Catholic missionaries openly requested the French government for protection. In 1867 the French seized the remainder of Cochinchina (South Vietnam). By then, southern Indochina was largely in the hands of French.

The steady increase of French influence in the 1860s and 1870s provoked mounting concern in China. In the eyes of the Court at Peking, concern was “not merely in relation to affairs in Tonkin on the southern border of China proper, but in relation to the whole realm of China” (Davidson, 1979, p. 28). Nevertheless,

preoccupied with the Formosa (Taiwan) crisis and the Augustus Margary murder case, China took no positive action to stop the French advance.

The seizure of Cochinchina and Cambodia did not satisfy the French expansionists. They had taken more than eight years to make themselves masters of Cochinchina, and it would take them double the time to extend their control over Tonkin (North) and Annam (Central) and complete their conquest of Vietnam. They made a first attempt to enter the Red River Delta in 1873 after a young explorer and adventurer named Francis Garnier had indicated in a dangerous expedition that "the conquest of the South had not opened up the vast potential market of South China to French commercial exploitation" (Duiker, 1983, p. 25). Garnier was sent to Hanoi with the reluctant consent of the Vietnamese Court at Hue, to resolve a conflict between the local authorities and a weapon-smuggling French trader heading a band of hirelings. He arrived at Hanoi in November 1873 at the head of a small force supplied by Saigon. In his arbitration, he was in favour of the French trader and, after getting reinforcements from Saigon, assaulted the fortress of Hanoi. In a short time, Garnier had control over all the important cities of the North through his rash and careless use of artillery. But in a battle with the Chinese pirates (The Black Flags) hired by the Vietnamese Authorities, he was killed in December 1873. Thus, the first attempt to conquer the North was unsuccessful. As France was scarcely recovering from a defeat in the war with Prussia in 1871, there was no enthusiasm for immediate action to maintain French control over Tonkin. Besides, the anti-colonial officials

argued that it was more important for France to rebuild her strength in Europe than to attempt uncertain colonial undertakings.

Ten years later when France's economy had progressed remarkably, she was again ready to join the race of the Western powers for colonial expansion. In 1883, in a battle near Hanoi, the Black Flags defeated a French column led by Captain Henri Riviere of the French navy. The reaction of the French Government under Jules Ferry was prompt. A large expeditionary force was dispatched to Tonkin under the command of the eminent Admiral Courbet. At the beginning, all went reasonably well for the French, and in combat at Son Tay, further north of Hanoi, the Black Flags were losing the battle badly (Davidson, 1979). While the French fleet fiercely attacked Hue, they were not aware that the Emperor Tu Duc had died a few weeks earlier. With Tonkin occupied, and the capital Hue wholly in the power of the French, the imperial mandarins, feeling they had no choice, decided to yield. They signed a treaty assigning France a protectorate over the North and Central parts of Vietnam.

At this stage there were some negotiations between France and China. France agreed to recognize the southern frontiers of China proper. China, in return, undertook to recognize all existing and further treaties between France and Vietnam without clearly expressing her withdrawal of suzerainty. In spite of certain differences on the matter of financial indemnity demanded by France, a draft agreement between the two countries was signed at Tien-jin in May 1884

(Davidson, 1979). This action turned out to be only another step toward the establishment of direct French rule over the whole country.

The Setting: Culture and Education

Culture

Few contemporary Vietnamese can deny that, historically, their country has been strongly influenced by China. For one thousand years not only was Vietnam under direct governing by the Chinese, but even after regaining their independence in the tenth century, the Vietnamese turned to China as a model for their literature, arts, architecture, religious beliefs; they seemed to style themselves as a carbon copy of China. As Bui Xuan Bao (1907, p. 118) wrote in his literary work 'The Contemporary Vietnamese Novels':

“Our nation has been influenced by Chinese in all regards, with regard to politics, society, ethics, religion, and customs. As far as literature is concerned, we studied Chinese characters, practised Confucianism, and gradually assimilated the thought and art of China. The scholars in our country studied Chinese classics and histories, read Chinese poetry and prose, and also used Chinese characters when reciting and composing. Even in literary works written in Vietnamese, authors could not escape the influence of Chinese literature. Some of the literary forms were distinctly ours, but most were borrowed from China. Even the characters used to write Vietnamese – Nom Characters – were made up elements of Chinese characters.”

When the French embarked on the conquest of Vietnam in 1858, it was a long standing independent nation-state where Confucian institutions and values had been established, and a Chinese classics educational system was well developed.

The introduction of Western culture, culminating in the imposition of a French colonial regime in Vietnam had a traumatic effect on the traditional society of the nation. Major conflicts were found between the traditional East and the West. “Where Confucianism emphasized the subordination of the individual to the family and the community, Western belief focused on the concept of individual freedom as a key element in human society. Where Sino-Vietnamese tradition preached harmony with nature and lacked a coherent doctrine of progress, the West glorified the conquest of nature and openly sought change and the improvement of man’s material surroundings. Where Confucian thought was hierarchical and preached the superiority of the male sex, Western belief contained strong egalitarian tendencies and, by the early twentieth century, progressive circles began to preach the equality of the sexes” (Duiker, 1983, p. 281).

The imposition of the French governing of Vietnam in the late nineteenth century had a remarkable shattering effect on traditional Vietnamese culture. To a certain extent this was the result of French colonial policy which, “in the hands of activists and modernizing administrators like Governors-General Paul Beau and Albert Sarraut, took dead aim at Confucian traditions and sought the transformation of Vietnamese society through introduction of Western values and institutions” (Duiker, 1983, p. 287).

Education

In regard to the existing education in Vietnam, “rudimentary education (Confucian system) was well-developed and widespread, taught in village schools, staffed by Vietnamese who aspired to become civil servants in their nation’s bureaucracy. A national academy situated in Hue trained those who had passed the provincial examinations. The Vietnamese monarchy had traditionally controlled education through a Ministry of Education and Rites which administered examinations and ran the national academy” (Kelly, 1987, p. 77).

In theory, the Confucian educational system possessed some charming features when compared with others. The stress on merit accommodated an access to the gentry for poor but intelligent young men, and reduced the dominance of the inherited aristocracy in Vietnamese society. The emphasis on the significance of capability and morality of a man, together with the training by classical Confucian texts, also helped strengthen the sense of professionalism and integrity in the civil service and enhanced a sense of loyalty and dedication to the community and the state.

However, Confucian theory was not without defects. Although schools existed in most Vietnamese villages there was no system of universal education and many families, due to poverty, could not afford to send their children to schools. The Confucian system, apparently, was in favour of the rich or those families with a tradition of education and service in the bureaucracy. In practice, “Confucian

education often degenerated into formalism and a ritualistic concern for recitation of texts rather than a comprehension of and dedication to the content. It was an education for rote learning. If in theory the Confucian gentlemen was wise, compassionate and fair, in actuality he was often an arrogant pedant who paraded his learning and exhibited more contempt than compassion for his intellectual inferiors. Still, on balance the adoption of Confucian institutions probably represented a net advantage to the Vietnamese state" (Duiker, 1983, p. 66).

Education Under French Rule

During the prolonged period of colonial warfare, Vietnamese village schools were abandoned in Cochinchina (Osborne, 1969). The village teachers had organized their students and other villagers to fight for the Court against French encroachment. When the Monarchy ceded Cochinchina, Vietnamese scholars retreated to the North to continue the struggle; however, the battle was a losing one.

When the French consolidated their power in Cochinchina, native village schools were all disbanded and the French built their own schools at the village level to substitute for the abandoned ones. Nevertheless, when the French took over in Tonkin and Annam, indigenous schools remained intact, and the Court carried on administering the imperial examinations to select civil servants (Kelly, 1987).

The basic intention of the French was to rule with a rod of iron over the newly gained colony so that the colonial Government could pursue its political and economic purposes without difficulty. Not until 1917 did a clear-cut French educational policy come to light when Albert Sarraut, the Governor-General of Indo-china announced a comprehensive educational system. His set of decrees, then, was put into practice to serve the youth of the three states of Annam, Cochinchina, and Tonkin (Hanoi: Imprimerie d' Extreme-orient, 1921).

From 1918, ten years after the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc Incident (see page 139), a new, comprehensive colonial educational system was introduced to Vietnam comprising:

- A. SO HOC – Ecole Elementaire
(Primary Education): six years
 - 1st year – Cours enfantin (lop nam)
 - 2nd year – Cours preparatoire (lop tu)
 - 3rd year – Cours elementaire (lop ba)

When they had finished studies of the third year and passed the examination, students were conferred a certificate of Primaire Elementaire (Bang Yeu Luoc) and promoted to:

- 4th year – Cours Moyen
- 5th year – Cours Moyen 2^{eme} annee
- 6th year – Cours Superieur

Upon graduation, students were given the Certificat d' Etudes Primaire Franco-Indegene (CEPFI) : Bang So Hoc Phap Viet.

B. CAO DANG TIEU HOC - Primaire Superieure

(Higher Primary Education) : four years

- 1st year – 1^{ere} annee (equivalent to French classes de Sixieme)
- 2nd year – 2^{ere} annee (equivalent to French classe de Cinquime)
- 3rd year – 3^{ere} annee (equivalent to French classe de Quatrieme)
- 4th year – 4^{ere} annee (equivalent to French classe de Troisieme)

Upon graduation, students would be conferred with Diplome d'Etude Primaire Superieures – Franco Indigene (Bang Cao Dang Tieu Hoc).

Except for Chinese and Vietnamese language classes, the Primary Curriculum was conducted in French and included the following subjects:

- French & French Literature
- Mathematics
- General Science (Chemistry & Physics)
- Biology
- Geography
- History
- Chinese
- Vietnamese

Until 1928, the total number of Higher Primary Schools (some co-education national) was twelve throughout Viet-nam. They were:

In the North

- Truong Bui (at Hanoi, later renamed Chu Van An)
- Truong Nam Dinh (in Nam Dinh)
- Truong Lang Son (in Lang Son, for boys)
- Truong Dong Khanh (in Hanoi, for girls)

In the Central

- Truong Quoc Hoc Vinh (in Nghe An, established 1920)
- Truong Quoc Hoc Hue (in Hue, established in 1896)
- Truong Dong Khanh (in Hue, for girls, established 1917)
- Truong Qui Nhon (in Binh Dinh, established in 1921)

In the South

- Truong Petrus Ky (at Saigon, for boys)
- Truong Gia Long (at Saigon, for girls)
- Truong Nguyen Dinh Chieu (at My Tho)
- Truong Phan Thanh Gian (in Can Tho)

In parallel with the general programme at the Primaire Superieure (Cao Dang Tieu Hoc) level, there was also another section providing a teachers' training programme: Ban Su Pham (Section Normale). The programme was aimed at developing primary school teachers for teaching in the counties and in the provinces.

It is interesting to note the dramatic increase in numbers of enrolments at public schools in the following appropriate statistics:

1900 – 1, 595 students
 1915 – 2, 442 students
 1920 – 30, 394 students
 1925 – 41, 062 students
 1930 – 62, 558 students

During the academic year 1930–31, the total enrolments of girl students was only 1,986; 47 attended the Teachers' Training programme (Section Normale), 495 attended Cao Dang Tieu Hoc (Primaire Superieure) programme, while the rest attended So Hoc (Ecole Elementaire) (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993).

C. Ban Tu Tai (Enseignement Secondaire)
Secondary Education: 3 years

During the colonial period, Vietnamese Secondary Education consisted of two parts: Cao Dang Tieu Hoc (Primaire Superieure) and Tu Tai (Baccalaureat). The new school system was put into practice by the Colonial Regime in 1917. There was little change until 1945 when Hoang Xuan Han was appointed as Minister of Education and Fine Arts in the Cabinet of Tran Trong Kim (Nguyen, 1993).

According to the new system, the Tu Tai Programme (Enseignement Secondaire) was actually modelled on the last three-year studies in French high schools:

- 1st year – 1^{ere} annee secondaire (equivalent to French Classe de Secondaire)
- 2nd year – 2^{ere} annee secondaire (equivalent to French Classe de Premiere)
- 3rd year – 3^{ere} annee secondaire (equivalent to French Class Terminale)

The curriculum of the Secondary Schools was divided into three sections / groups:

- Group one – Sciences (Ban Khao Hoc)
- Group two – Mathematiques (Ban Toan)
- Group three – Philosophie (Ban Triet)

The school system was a certifying one instead of crediting. Students were issued with Certificate of Tu Tai Phan Nhat (Tu Tai I) when they had completed their two-year studies and passed the examinations. This certificate was a permit to enter the studies of the last year at high school. Graduates of the third year of high school were conferred with Certificate of Tu Tai II.

During the colonial period there were, in addition to the Franco-Vietnamese schools, two purely French Schools serving the French community in Vietnam: the Lycee Albert Sarraut in Hanoi and the Lycee Chasseloup Laubat in Saigon.

These schools provided study programmes leading to the Baccalaureat Metropolitain certificate. The College Marie Curie at Saigon was established in 1917, providing a junior high study programme for girls. On top of all these, there were some famed private and Catholic Schools, of which the Pellerin at Hue and the Taberd at Saigon were very prestigious and influential.

Generally speaking, the academic standing of the French Schools was somewhat higher than that of the Franco-Indigenous ones. Therefore, diplomas or certificates issued to graduates of these schools were considered more valuable. Outstanding and intelligent students attending Franco-Indigene schools were usually capable of obtaining both the local diplomas or certificates and the French ones through successes in the Con-course examinations; the language for teaching was French and the curriculum was quite similar, except at the local schools where students were required to take additional courses such as Chinese Philosophy and Vietnamese Literature. Obviously the curriculum at the local schools was much heavier than that of the French schools.

In the South, both the political system and the educational administration were modelled on policies of the French colony where the power of the Imperial Court

at Hue was out of reach. The educational system in this region, therefore, was purely French. Nevertheless, even in the French schools such as Chasseloup Laubat at Saigon, the curriculum was divided into two parts: Quartier European teaching purely the French programme, and Quartier Indigene with additional teaching of a certain number of hours in Vietnamese Literature.

Not until the school year of 1927-28, when the two quartiers merged at Lycee Petrus Ky, were students of this school allowed to take the Con-course examinations for certificate of Bac Local as did students in the Central and North Viet-nam. This was the first time that the Con-course examinations for Tu Tai Ban Xu (Bac Local) were held in the South (Nguyen Quoc Thang, 1993).

In the North, the Colonial Government established the College du Protectorate (Truong Bao Ho) early in the 20th century. It was a high school recruiting students from both north and central Viet-nam. Later the school was renamed as Truong Buoi in 1908 as it was located in the Village Buoi. Originally the school was set up in 1905 as the College des Interpretors (Truong Thong Ngon) aiming at training interpreters.

The first students attending the Cao Dang Tieu Hoc (Primaire Superieure) programme were actually students of the former College des Interpreses, such as College of Jules Ferry at Nam Dinh, and the Normal School (Ecole Normale) at Hanoi. During the 1925-26 academic year, Truong Buoi was upgraded to Lycee

du Protectorate (Truong Trung Hoc Bao Ho). Its first graduates took national Con-course Examinations for Certificates of Bac Local (Bang Tu Tai Ban Xu) in the schools in Viet-nam offering study programmes leading to Tu Tai II (Baccalaureat Local); viz., Truong Buoi (Buoi High School at Hanoi) and Truong Petrus Vinh Ky (Petrus Ky High School at Saigon). This situation continued until the academic year 1936-37, when the Khai Dinh School at Hue also started teaching the Baccalaureat Programme.

The Tu Tai Ban Xu (Bac Local) Programme had been in operation since the 1925-26 school year and came to an end in the 1937-38 school year. The termination of this programme was decided by Bertrand, Director-General of Education in Indochina. The decision to close was generated because of a drastic decrease in the number of students attending the programme compared with the steadily increase in the number of students in the French programme. Besides, the Bac Local programme was academically much heavier than that of the French programme. In fact, this slight change in the policy of education was made despite strong protests from all sides that the French were using the Bac Local programme to prevent the advancement of the youths of Viet-nam in their studies.

From 1938 on, there were only two programmes in the whole of Indochina leading to the Certificate of Baccalaureat; viz. The French (Tu Tai Phap) and the Franco-Vietnamese (Tu Tai Phap Viet). Certificates gained from the French programme were signed by the French Minister for Education and Governor-

General of Indochina. Based on the decree signed by the Governor-General on 12 October 1930, these two separate certificates had the same value and academic standing.

During the World War II years of 1943-44, the Truong Buoï (Buoï High School), under the frequent air-raids of the allies, first evacuated to Ha Dong province, then Ninh Binh, and then Thanh Hoa together with the Albert Sarraut High School. Until after the Japanese coup d'état in March 1945, Truong Buoï was renamed as Truong Trung Hoc Chu Van An (Chu Van An High School) with Mr Nguyen Gia Tuong as school principal. It was the first time that a Vietnamese was officially appointed as school principal (Nguyen, 1993).

The two tiered high school programmes, the French programme and the Franco-Vietnamese programme, were maintained until 1945 in North and Central Vietnam. In the South, they were prolonged until 1949 when the French returned Independence to the Administration of Emperor Bao Dai in the territories under French control. From then the French high school programme was no longer applied throughout the nation, except in Saigon where it ceased in 1995.

Secondary Education After 1945

The form and practice of instruction from French to Vietnamese as the teaching language in the pedagogy of Vietnam commenced after the Japanese 'Coup d'Etat' over the French Colonial administration on the 9th of March 1945 under

the banner of 'returning independence to Vietnam.' It was a good opportunity to facilitate the formation of a Vietnamese Secondary Education programme. The appearance of the Tran Trong Kim Administration, particularly the establishment of the Ministry of Education and Arts, helped materialize the formation of a purely Vietnamese programme. It was a turning point in the history of Vietnamese education. The use of Vietnamese as a teaching language was soon applied at Truong Quoc Hoc Hue (i.e. Khai Dinh High School) which was the only school offering the Tu Tai programme in Central Vietnam. The following teachers were responsible for the setting of the Vietnamization programme:

- Pham Dinh Ai (Chemistry & Physics)
- Nguyen Thuc Hao (Mathematics)
- Nguyen Duong Don (Mathematics)
- Nguyen Huy Bao (Mathematics)
- Nguyen Van Hien (Philosophy)
- Ta Quang Buu (Physics)
- Ung Qua (French Language)
- Ha Thuc Chinh (English Language)
- Ngo Dinh Nhu (History and Geography)
- Hoai Thanh (Vietnamese)
- Le Van Can (Natural Science)

These intellectuals dedicated themselves to the task under the supervision and encouragement of Hoang Xuan Han, Minister for Education and the Advisory Board of the government in Central Viet-nam. This project was later called the Hoang Xuan Han Project in the history of Vietnam education. Its influence was wide and profound. The accomplishment of this educational project restored the national dignity of Vietnam. It was put into effect under the Decretum no. 67 signed by the Emperor Bao Dai on June 3, 1945 and was applied immediately in

the Tu Tai examinations (National Secondary Con-course Examinations) for the 1944-45 school year. It was the first time that Vietnamese was used in the national examinations at secondary level.

During the uprising in August 1945 following the surrender of the Japanese to the Allies, and then the war against French Colonialism in February 1946, the Hoang Xuan Han project was still applied by both the Revolutionary Government (Viet Minh) as well as the Authorities in the territories under French control, although minor changes were made to meet the needs of the practical situation.

The National Government of Vietnam (Chinh Phu Quoc Gia Vietnam) was formed in July 1949, and Dr Phan Huy Quat was appointed as Minister of Education. The secondary education system was then revised and put into effect by Bill No. 9/ND on 5th September 1949. This system was practised in all areas under the control of the National Government (Vung Quoc Gia) until the 1952-1953 school year. In late 1953 when Dr Nguyen Thanh Giung succeeded Phan Huy Quat as Minister for Education, he revised the system again and put it into practice under Resolution no. 193 – GD/ND (Nguyen, 1993).

Each new Minister of Education brought with him some modifications of the secondary educational system in every change of cabinet. Nevertheless, the variations were all based on the Hoang Xuan Han Programme with some minor changes in the syllabus of Vietnamese Literature, History, Geography and Civics; the syllabus of other subjects such as Natural Sciences, Biology, Mathematics,

Chemistry and Physics remained unchanged. The Hoang Xuan Han programme was practised until 1954 when the Franco-Vietnamese war came to an end with the Agreement of Geneva.

Educational changes in Vietnam were extremely varied after 1954 when the country was divided into North and South.

Giao Duc Dai Hoc (Tertiary Education)

The Viet-nameese tertiary educational system traces its origins as far back as the imperial court-sponsored schools of Classical Learning (Quoc Tu Giam), and subsequently the establishment of the Colonial University of Hanoi.

During the Colonial period, the Vietnamese tertiary system, copied from the system of French Higher Education, consisted of two kinds of schools:

a. Truong Cao Dang (Ecole Superieure)

The Ecole Superieure provided professional training in disciplines such as engineering, teaching, medicine and personnel. Once students were accepted through competitive entrance examinations, they were entitled to scholarships covering tuition fees and boarding expenses, and the government was responsible for job placements for the graduates. Those who refused to accept jobs arranged by the relevant authorities had to repay all the costs of his/her studies.

b. Truong Dai Hoc (Universite)

Students with certificates of Tu Tai II (Baccalaureat) were accepted into the faculty relating to his/her study programme at high school. Scholarships were only offered to outstanding students with brilliant academic achievement. Disciplines were focussing on specific principles and knowledge rather than professional training. Graduates had their free choice of occupations and employees.

The first tertiary institution established by the French Colonial Regime was Truong Cao Dang Y-khoa Dong Duong (Ecole de Medecine Indochinoise) at Hanoi in 1904.

Following the years 1918 and 1919 there were seven tertiary institutions established at Hanoi. They later became part of Dai Hoc Dong Duong (Universite Indochinoise):

1. Truong Y Duoc (Ecole de Medecine et de Pharmacie)
2. Truong Luat (Ecole de Droit, School of Laws)
3. Truong Cao Dang Su Pham (Ecole Superieure de Pedagogie, Teachers College); note that this school was later renamed as The Normal University in 1950 and evacuated to Saigon in 1954.
4. Truong Thu Y (Ecole Veterinaire)
5. Truong Cao Dang Cong Chanh (Ecole Superieure des Travaux Publics, School of Public Administration)
6. Truong Cao Dang Canh Nong (Ecole Superieure d' Agriculture)
7. Truong Cao Dang Thuong Mai (Ecole Superieure de Commerce, Business College)

The formation and development of these institutions went through substantial changes after 1927. Before World War II (1939-1945) most of the Ecole Supérieure Indochinoise (Truong Cao Dang Dong Duong) at Hanoi were modelled on the structure and system of French tertiary education, particularly the administrative and curriculum systems of the University of Paris. However, the academic gap continued to be evident between the French universities and the universities in Indochina.

Truong Dai Hoc Dong Duong (The University of Indochina) was established during the colonial administration of Governor-General Paul Beau (Term period: 1905-1907); however, it was abolished by his successor Klobukowski (Term period: 1908-1911). Not until 1917 when Albert Sarraut was seated as Governor-General for the second term, was the university reorganized.

The original intention of the French colonial regime in establishing Truong Cao Dang Dong Duong (Ecole Supérieure Indochinoise) was to cultivate personnel to serve the Colonial Administration, or as assistants to the French officers in certain organizations; e.g. in the field of medicine, Vietnamese medical doctors were down graded to the position of medical assistants (*medicin auxiliaire*).

In 1938 two more universities were set up: University of Forestry and Agriculture and the University of Public Administration. Two years later, the University of Science was formed.

During the years 1935-38, the number of enrolments at the professional schools (Ecole Supérieure) was approximately 2,051 and enrolment at the University of Hanoi was only 547 (Vietnamese). In 1944, the total number of enrolments at Hanoi University was 1,500 of which Vietnamese comprised 77%, while the remainder were Cambodian and Laotian (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1993).

General Comments

Undoubtedly modern education was a copying of the French system rather than a development of Vietnam's indigenous system of the Village schools and national academies that had a long-standing history. All classes of the new school system were conducted in French and the teaching emphasized ethical education and vocational training. Teachers were all French trained and well acquainted with the new science of teaching. Educational quality was maintained by way of a newly established series of examinations.

The introduction of French education to the school system of Vietnam provoked a very controversial argument as to what kind of education the Vietnamese should have. Contending groups within the Colonial Society were basically against the introduction of the innovation into the colony. The Colons (French residents in Vietnam) considered that the natives should not be provided anything more than the most rudimentary education, and demanded that Vietnamese be prevented from obtaining a French education. The Colons disapproved of and "disliked the new schools because they were taught in French and because the 1917-18

Educational Code provided for post-primary education” (Kelly, 1917, p.97). These people (The Colons) were concerned particularly with the establishment of the University of Hanoi to train the Vietnamese elites; to them, it was detestable.

While the Colons were not happy with the 1917-18 Code, the traditional Vietnamese elite were even more scornful of the new code of public education. The Monarchy of Vietnam considered that the new schools were a threat to the national education and, in spite of the French pressure, had conserved the traditional system of village schools in Annam. The resistance to act on the decrees of education came to an end when the French Governor-General decided to abolish the Court’s Ministry of Education in 1919.

The new Vietnamese elite (mostly large landowners, civil servants, and entrepreneurs of Cochinchina) were skeptical about new schools for public instruction. They thought that the quality of education provided by the new schools was inferior to that of the French schools established in Vietnam to serve the French community. Therefore, they opposed strongly any attempts to make these schools the only route for educating the Vietnamese in general. “They argued that the new schools were good for the masses, but elite education was still French education and that the Vietnamese should have freedom of choice in matters concerning their children’s education” (Nguyen Phan Long, 1924, p.77).

To sum up, the Vietnamese context “was one in which educational policy was contested from all sides: by French Colons, Vietnamese elites and villagers. The new schools system was also being imposed on a society which already had its own schools, ones which the new system of education was designed to replace” (Kelly, 1987, p.101). The Court at Hue and its bureaucracy claimed that it had the unique legitimate power to decide the direction of Vietnam educational development. It is interesting to note that the Vietnamese still expected schools to provide them with access to power; such expectations had been attached historically to education and the new system was contrary to such notions, being developed as Governor Albert Sarraut observed, to provide “a simple education, reduced to essentials, permitting the child to learn all that will be useful for him to know in his humble career of farmer or artisan to ameliorate the natural and social condition of his existence” (Sarraut, 1954, p.44).

Conclusion

There is little doubt that the cruel encroachment of imperialism has become one of the significant crimes in the course of human history. Nevertheless, as Karl Marx commented in his article of the New York Tribune in 1853, “Imperialism, in addition to its savagery, is also serving as a senseless instrument for the forming of history. Britain has realized its double functions in India: Destruction and Rebirth. It destroyed an old, traditional society and, at the same time, had laid a strong foundation with Western material civilization in Asia” (Nan Fang-shuo, 1995, p.4).

Marx's point of view might be hard for some of the nationalists to accept. However, in many ways the contradictory double character of imperialism – destructive and enlightening – is something which appears only too true to deny. Nowhere was this truer than in Vietnam, where the French colonial regime was using every necessary measure to demolish the historical Confucian society and culture, while concurrently imposing French civilization on the region.

French Impact on Vietnamese Culture

The Franco-Sino war started in 1884 and ended in 1885 with a treaty wherein China renounced its claims to a tributary relationship with Vietnam, and recognised France as a protectorate over the country. When Western influences began to come to Vietnam, she met it with her civilization at the lowest ebb. It is not surprising the Vietnamese intellectuals turned their direction to the West in search of Western culture.

In the study of Confucianism, Chinese and Vietnamese thinkers in ancient times were enclosed in an atmosphere of morals, while in the West, the Greeks particularly, possessed the quality of all-piercing intellect. It is clear and convincing that some such striking contrast did exist between ancient Vietnamese and Greek thought and that, among other causes, this was probably the main reason for the divergence in development of Eastern and Western civilizations.

Chinese and Vietnamese Confucian thinkers see all things in their relation to man, to moral applications, to artistic or poetic sense, or to practical use (Dr Nguyen Xuan Nham, 1998).

In fact, Confucian thought is centred upon the development of human relations. Therefore, Confucian scholars are interested in natural laws only in so far as they are capable of serving as guides for human conduct. *The Great Learning*, one of the Confucian classics, taught a system of knowledge alluded to in an earlier chapter. It starts with the search for the truths in things, truths from which

knowledge is gained; and knowledge is the power by which the mind is developed. "So far the story is intellectual. But as it goes on the shading of moral sense begins to grow. Mental development is for personal culture, which in turn will serve as the foundation for a well-ordered family life" (Nguyen Duc Hiep, 1998).

That the Chinese and the Vietnamese are intellectual peoples needs no proof as it is so evident; but their intellect was exercised within the sphere of morals and practical uses. Thus, they set limits to their own intellectual activities. Like silkworms, they wove their moral cocoons with threads drawn from their own minds, as it were, to encase themselves. They loved their encasement and felt comfortable in it. The Chinese and Vietnamese life is a life of contentedness. Stability is aimed at in such philosophy. According to Duong Thanh Binh (1974) progress is not sought after by the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples, because it will create discontent, which will destroy stability. The Vietnamese are contented with their immediate world and have not produced natural science because it was not wanted or needed.

The Greeks were quite a different sort of people. Aristotle's mind ventured high up into the heavens, low down beneath the earth, and far away beyond the corners of the land. The whole universe was material for the exercise of the Greek intellect. To the Greeks the mere use of the intellect was a pleasure. They did not care much about whether it was practical or had anything to do with morals or human relations. Out of Greek ideas about nature and their love of intellectual

exercise in systematic thinking – flowing intermittently through the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the French Revolution and receiving great impetus from the Industrial Revolution, through which it gradually improved its instruments and technique – natural science has grown to its modern stage (Ching, 1972).

In the same way that modern science began to trickle into China after the opening of the commercial ports, western ideas also trickled into Vietnam after it had become a colony of France. Nevertheless, it was its practical value that attracted the attention of the Chinese and Vietnamese Scholars. They built arsenals and dockyards and only incidentally translated books on elementary science. Generally, they were not interested in whether the sun goes round the earth or vice versa; it was immaterial to them, since the alternatives had no practical consequence in their relation to man. However, “more than a century earlier, when the Jesuits brought mathematics and astronomy to the court of the Ming emperors, scholars were interested because these sciences would mend the deficiencies then found to exist in the Chinese calendar. For the calendar is indispensable not only for reckoning days, months, and years but also for sowing and harvesting” (Chen, 1977, p. 319).

Around the beginning of the twentieth century the theory of evolution was brought into the East. Vietnamese scholars at once saw the practical moral significance of it. With the application of a natural law of ‘struggle for existence’, ‘natural selection’ and ‘survival of the fittest’, they came to the conclusion that

nations in the world were struggling for existence, and through natural selection only the fittest would survive. Would Vietnam be the fittest and would she survive? She must struggle – struggle for existence. As to the validity of the theory, they had no particular interest and no scientific background to start an investigation, anyhow. Right away they threw a moral blanket over the intellectual undertaking of Darwin. At once they moralized it by saying, “The flesh of the weak is the food of the strong” (Nguyen Van Xiem, 1997). Being a weak nation, Vietnam had to worry about her flesh.

Another phase of the theory of evolution was taken in its application to history. History goes round in a circle, the Confucian scholars believed. Under the influence of Darwinism they recast their old beliefs into a new faith that history forges ahead, or else recedes, or remains stationary. This change in the conception of history exercised a paramount influence upon the minds of Confucian scholars in regard to progress.

The conceptions of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements undoubtedly grew out of naïve observations of nature. They were good enough for rationalizing the conduct of nature. They were good enough for rationalizing the conduct of nature and man. No minute calculations were necessary, much less the use of the hands. It was presumed that if the Confucian scholars were interested in manual work, they would apply it to making useful or beautiful objects of art rather than to experiments in the scientific laboratory. People would still think and do only

along the lines where their interests lay. The magnetic needle will only point in the direction of the magnetic pole (Chiang, 1948).

Such an attitude of mind, of course, is no fertile soil for pure science. However, slowly but steadily China and Vietnam were modifying their attitude – from applied science they had been led to pure science, from pure science to new ways of thinking, and finally to actual modification of their attitude of mind. They have opened windows in the walls of their moral universe and looked into the gardens of a new intellectual universe where the fruits of science and invention were in abundance (Nguyen Quy Bong, 1998).

This modification of mental attitude set a new value upon nature – nature as the pure scientist sees it and not only as the moralist or poet sees it. The universe to the modern Vietnamese is not only a moral one as the ancient Confucian scholar saw it, but also an intellectual one as the Greeks saw it.

The moralist is one who studies nature with a view to finding its laws for the benefit of human relations. The scientist studies it with a view to finding its natural laws for intellectual interest – knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Vietnam's absorption of modern science has penetrated through these moral bounds of her universe and the minds of the modern Vietnamese are reaching out further and further to search for truths. Their thinking has been becoming more adventurous, like a ship sailing in unknown seas and exploring for hidden

treasures. In other aspects this intellectual release has caused the minds of the younger generation to adopt a critical attitude toward traditional ideas – make critical inquiries into morals, government, and social customs – with far-reaching consequences. In contrast, men of the older generation have been very much alarmed at the possible destruction of their tranquil moral abodes and have lamented the building of a new intellectual edifice.

That is one of the most valuable contributions that the French have made to Vietnam through the introduction of her educational curriculum. Its greatest impact on Vietnamese culture has been the liberation of the Vietnamese scholars from the bondage of the Confucian way of thinking.

Educational and Reform Movement

Introduction

During the French Colonial period, one of the Vietnamese patriotic movements was the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc Incident (1907-1908). Essentially, the movement was very much an anti-colonial and anti-traditionalist phenomenon. Although it was short lived, it had a profound impact and meaningful implications for political as well as long-range cultural, educational, and social developments in the history of the modernization of Vietnam. Vietnamese educators and historians invariably refer to the importance of this incident which occurred in the early 20th Century.

A new generation of Vietnamese literati emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century, determined to work for national independence and to modernize Vietnamese society. Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 raised the hopes and intensified the resistance of the Vietnamese nationalists. The Reform Movement in China brought forth to Vietnam an intellectual strand of reaction to French colonial rule. The principal circumstances and the reactions to the intellectual movement in China essentially were reproduced in Vietnam (Duncanson, 1968).

Entering into the early twentieth century, "Phan Boi Chau and Nguyen Thanh were organizing the Duy Tan Hoi (Reforming Association), recruiting Prince Quong De (direct descendant of Emperor Gia Long) as royal pretender, and

Reform: Educational & Social

The new Vietnamese literati set up aims of reformation as follows:

- To advocate and promote learning Quoc Ngu (a Romanized Vietnam written language) and consider it as the soul of the country
- Learning the civilizations of other peoples in the world as an example for the state's advancement
- Pragmatic education: a new, revolutionary learning style – a combination of theory and practice leading to professional training.

In principle, the focus of studies should be balanced on both humanities and science. More specifically the aims of reforming education were to encompass some of the elements below:

- Follow modern world trends
- Following the ideals of
 - stress on the importance of people and nation
 - belief in Democracy, and
 - family to be placed second
- Give up the concept of using knowledge as a means to power
- Serve community and society
- Beware of the significance of physical education
- Believe in Science and Technology
 - making a clear sweep of superstition, mystery, and
 - work, organize, and study scientifically
- Stress the importance of applied learning
- Promote women and their role in society
 - Equal opportunity for education be given to females
 - Equality with men in society, and
 - Advocate the training of female teachers

(Ngyuen Q. Thang, 1993 – Khoa Cu va Giao Duc V.N., p. 138)

During the years 1905-07, Phan Chau Trinh put these new educational ideas in to practice in Duc Thanh School at Phu Thiet (Binh Thuan Province) and Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc at Hanoi, and the results were fruitful.

They affected profoundly the course of Vietnam education in particular, and social and political life in general. It also “brought about a new face for Vietnam and a new trend of thinking for the intellectuals” (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993, p. 139). News and discussions about modern learning, modern society, Western clothing styles, the setting of agricultural associations and commercial organizations, hair cutting, public speeches were heard and seen everywhere in the country. Literature and education had moved into a new, distinct direction, full of vitality!

In addition, it was a period when Quoc Ngu started to step into the literary arena to replace Chinese characters and the Nom characters. Thenceforth, this reforming trend turned out to be an ideal model for the contemporary and the subsequent educators such as Doan Trien, Duong Lam, Pham Duy Ton, Pham Quynh, Ngyuen Van Vinh, Nguyen Van to follow and develop (Nguyen Q Thang, 1993).

Following those persons, there were some brilliant and outstanding scholars such as Khai Hung, Nhat Linh, and Hoang Dao of the Tu Luc Van Doan (The Independent Literary Circle) who reformed to a certain extent their literary styles through applying these educational ideas, and generalizing them with other

current trends of thinking at the time. For instance, ‘Muoi Dieu Tam Niem’ (The Key educational ideas) became the mainstream theory for all institutions of both culture and education in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the eyes of the Vietnamese intellectuals during the Reform Period, some of the teachings in the Chinese books were not considered as motto; in fact, some of them were often bitterly opposed by the scholars of the time. Huynh Thuc Khang challenged the contents of two books ‘Ngu Kinh’ (The Five Teachings) and ‘Tan Li Dai Toan’ (The Book of Truth) and commented that “since these were not written by any of the respectful Confucian masters, what can we still anticipate to get out of them?” (Huynh, 1931, p. 77). He considered that the spiteful hands of the so-called wise emperors had brought forth the framework of Confucian ideas as models to guide the thinking of the Vietnamese intellectuals; now these out-of-date teachings were still transferring to their country to make their thinking narrower and narrower!

Many a Vietnamese scholar observed that the errors committed by the Chinese in establishing the system of Imperial Examinations to select public servants were not only dangerous but were also an obstacle in their development of education. It was unfortunate that the Vietnamese followed them blindly. The new scholars also criticized severely intellectuals who studied for the purpose of glorifying the family and as an access to power. Although the intellectuals and scholars of this period were strongly critical of the classical learning, they did not put themselves

in a position to totally deny the values and significance of the teaching of Confucianism and its educational system which had cultivated some scholars similar to themselves, and considered that such teaching was still the key to a man's mentality and soul. To conclude, the attitudes of scholars of the time, in general, maintained their admiration and reverence toward both classical and modern learnings. However, they also kept attitudinizing in commenting and scanning their truth. To them, the results of using any of this knowledge by any one with limited ability and lack of thinking would not be appropriate. Huynh Thuc Khang (1931, p.79) represented the modern view in his comments as follows:

“For decades Confucian Learning has been losing its importance gradually; while on the topic of high talk from people about this or that school; lower certificates or advanced certificates; however, in reality, the professions of these modern intellectuals are limited to hireling to write documents or to interpret for the ordinaries. How many of our scholars have approached the understanding of the essence of Western ways of thinking and philosophy, and at the same time, cultivated and established themselves as independent thinkers able to instill his own thinking and philosophy to their fellow-countrymen. We may well say that our intellectuals who, in running after the fashion of the time, change their conversation topics from Confucianism to the modern orthodox doctrine of Greek or Rome, Montesquieu, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau; replace their recitation from ‘chi ho gia da’ (rhythm of Chinese classic writing) into ‘a, b, c, d’”.

Phan Chu Trinh, as an intellectual of the time, in his letter to the French Governor General Paul Beau (1902-08), exposed frankly his attitudes and proposals which were taken as words from the hearts of the young intellectuals during this period:

“My countrymen's flesh and blood is being stripped away, to the extent they no longer can work for their living; people are being split up, customs

corrupted, rituals (le nghĩa) lost, ... a somewhat civilized situation degenerating into utter barbarity. Those with spirit and intelligence (tri) have perceived conditions, are worried about extermination of their people and are rousing each other to seek remedies. The French have been in Vietnam for sometime, have seen the greediness of the mandarins, the ignorance of the people, the corruption of the culture, and have concluded sneeringly that the Vietnamese have no sense of national identity.

Forgetting the Question of whether or not Vietnam is in truth barbaric or semi-developed, it is undeniable that we have studied the Chinese classics for several thousand years and know that loving the people is meritorious (cong), while harming them is a crime (toi). Today's mandarins all are literate, have all read the essential books, yet they dare to use their public offices as marketplaces, to regard the people as morsels to be eaten, and to declare those who are concerned with the people insane and developmental efforts traitorous." (The Nguyen, Phan Chu Trinh, pp. 81-100 Quoc Ngu Translation. Original Chinese Version, Nam Phong 103: 24-34)

Phan also told Beau of his travels around the country and reported bluntly "that everyone believed the French were tacitly encouraging the terrible parasitism of the mandarins as a way of turning the Vietnamese people against each other, weakening them, and hence making them easier to rule" (Marr, 1971, p. 127). The young scholar further proposed that if the French, right away, would direct their attention to upgrading the living conditions of the Vietnamese, allowing the scholars freedom of speech, opening newspapers to stimulate public opinions, abandoning the civil examination system, open schools, and encourage development of industry then, "with the people of Vietnam happy, there would be fear of the Frenchmen's leaving rather a continuing hatred toward them" (Marr, 1971, p. 163).

Phan's letter should not be taken simply at its face value. His subsequent life, in fact, was an assertion of the ideas expressed in it, right up to the last sentence, as he had been jailed several times by his proposed benefactor. Intellectually, Beau was more open to Phan's message than his predecessor Paul Doumer. However, exactly as Phan predicted, he was not a strong governor; his reforms were inconsistent and inconclusive. Furthermore, the political climate in North Vietnam was quite uncertain in late 1906, permitting some scholars and well-off businessmen to take initiatives on their own. Nevertheless, the French granted permission to open a school (Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc) in March 1907; it provided an educational programme within the legal restrictions of the Colonial Administration, with objectives and desires considerably different from those which most of the French and the mandarin collaborators had thought of at that time.

Eight levels of instructions were available, from primary through high school, with special classes in Quoc Ngu, French, and Chinese, depending on the students' background and interest. Science was a new item of curiosity for both teachers and students. Modern mathematics and geometry were included in the curricula, and some attempt was made at teaching hygiene and natural sciences in spite of the fact that qualified teachers were lacking and there were only enough texts to maintain the study at an elementary level. Sports were provided, but failed to generate any enthusiasm among the students and were soon deleted from the curriculum.

Teachers at the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc (Dong Kinh Tuition Free School) showed a surprising willingness to use Quoc Ngu in introducing new ideas and techniques in classrooms. They encouraged each student to remember using the romanized script which subsequently became a device for passing on modern knowledge to hundreds of their less literate fellow-countrymen.

The End of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc

In January 1908, the French authorities determined to order the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc to cease functioning. No one could clearly indicate whether the French Colonial Administration were disturbed more by their awareness of the covert activities of the scholars or, surprisingly, by the increasing number of public responses to the fact that during this period a lot of Frenchmen who were alert to the anti-colonial sentiments among the Vietnamese perceived that strenuous activist and reformist attempts could serve as two edges of one sword!

The Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc, as a movement, was vigorous but short-lived. It could be said that it was an anti-colonial, anti-traditionalist phenomenon. Its immediate political implications were soon clarified by the Vietnamese strong protests against a new tax system and some of the assorted conspiracies in 1908. The movement served several essential purposes for the young men who would constitute later generations of anti-colonialists. One was negative, a “chopping and clearing exercise in which they for the first time in Vietnam put much of the

official Confucian tradition on trial and found it wanting. The Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc definitely succeeded in forcing the traditionalists, the obscurantists, into a defensive posture from which they never recovered” (Marr, 1971, p.182).

Before 1907, the French overlords had, upon request, given political and economic refuge to the Vietnamese mandarins; after 1907, under circumstances existing, they would have to seek intellectual refuge from their overlords as well. However, there were some positive implications in the works of the scholars participating in the movement. It was perhaps, as David Marr (1971) observed, the first time in Vietnam that mere feeling against foreigners had been cut out of the political objections to colonialism, thus rendering large bodies of western learning psychologically respectable.

Before the movement of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc, the disgraceful barbarian image of western learning was deep-rooted in the middle of the Vietnamese elite. Now the scholars of the movement considered it a patriotic duty of the Vietnamese intellectuals to master some of the philosophy and thinking of the West.

The promotion and use of Quoc Ngu was indeed a major intellectual benefit in the movement. The romanized script had come to the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc with seemingly insurmountable colonialist and collaborationist affiliation. In addition the D.K.N.T. lecturers, essayists, and poets would refer to Quoc Ngu as the potential saving of their culture and their country. Its greatest advantage was seen

in the writing of the country's previously distinct oral and primary written modes of communication. Within three decades, Quoc Ngu had simplified the problem of mass education and indoctrination, bringing elite and popular experiences closer together. In fact, as most Vietnamese intellectuals agreed, the future of the Vietnamese people would be partly determined by on-going efforts to strengthen the connections between the spoken language, the written system, and the extant corpus of literature. In short, the reform movement taking the form of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc, had created some sort of iconoclasm which was so important that it stimulated a large number of Vietnamese intellectuals to liberate themselves from the traditional culture as defined by the mandarins and, thus, cleared the way for the general acceptance of modern nationalist sentiments. Its influence and effect on culture, education, and politics was profound and significant.

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION OF VIETNAM (1955-1975)

Background

Before the Coming of the French

“We have fought a thousand years,” the Vietnamese Nationalists once boasted, “and we will fight another thousand if need be” (Truong, 1914, p. 33). To war against foreign domination is an ancient practice in the land of Vietnam. During the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945) Vietnam seemed in many ways closer to the institutions of ancient China than China itself, where the arrival of foreign dynasties and alien peoples had served to modify the old ways (Nguyen Khac Vien, 1993).

In the Empire of the Nguyens, absolute power had been vested in the Crown, as with the Chinese Emperor, being mandated to govern the nation by Heaven. Nevertheless the emperor, no less than the officials and the common people, was bound by certain ethical norms, and the state was considered as founded on the people. The Emperor was ruling through a bureaucratic system formed by the “mandarins in whom, as in himself, both religious and civil power were vested” (Hammer, 1966, p. 60). The Mandarins were recruited by imperial examinations in the Chinese language and Chinese literature, for the education in Vietnam was exclusively a matter of literacy: “the Chinese training seemed to produce a corps of administrators who were able enough but it also helped

blanket Vietnam with the past, imposing an immutable mold upon its civilization and its society” (Ibid, p.62).

The Central Government kept a strong and unfailing control over the people only in religious and military affairs. Based on this, it may be said that most foreigners have been inclined to over-stress the localism of the Vietnamese society, whereas it was diffused by the concept of a unified nation wherein the emperor was merely ‘symbolic.’

Living within the village, the basic unit of the Vietnamese society, the life of the Vietnamese was regulated by custom and tradition. A man’s rights and obligations were determined by his position in the system of the society, and individual rights were minimized to almost none. The Central Government had no direct contact with the individual but only with the village in which he lived. Each Vietnamese village was formally recognized by the Emperor, having a council formed of a group of distinguished persons selected from the village oligarchy and responsible for running its own day-to-day affairs. To the Imperial Government, the village had to pay taxes, to provide men to labour on public works and to serve in the army.

On average, the villages raised a little more than enough food for themselves and, although there were quite a number of rural artisans and villagers who engaged in a single craft like carpentry or weaving, there was a limited trade among them.

Surrounded by a thick wall of bamboo, the villages were essentially self-sufficient units. A strong cooperative tradition existed within the village. Communal lands were kept and set aside for supporting the old and the poor. A storehouse for grain was maintained to provide rice against the time of need. The peasant's life was rooted in his village with little interest in what was going on in the outside world.

A big gap between the poor and the rich did not exist, nor was cruel and arbitrary rule seen in the Vietnamese society. Education was well developed and widespread throughout the country, and the imperial examinations for selecting the mandarins were open to everyone, poor or rich. Noble titles were not hereditary; one had to make his own place in life for himself. Most important of all, ownership of land was widely and evenly distributed. The village had a genuine autonomy to a certain extent, as expressed in the old Vietnamese saying, "The King's laws bow before the village custom" (Le Thanh Khoi, 1955, p. 179). The King referred to the Emperor of Vietnam, and his rule was built on an efficient system of checks and balances.

The French Setting

a. Introduction

Frenchmen came to Vietnam for various reasons. There were the missionaries and explorers, soldiers and administrators, planters and businessmen. A few came as Catholics and humanitarians. Some came to assert the position of France in the world and to enable their country

to hold its own, particularly against Great Britain, in the race for colonial empire. Others came in the hope of opening a large-scale trade with China and for other economic motives as well (Hammer, 1966).

As Jules Ferry, Premier of France in 1883-1885, who was in favour of a policy of industrialization at home and markets abroad, had said, "Colonial policy is the daughter of industrial policy" (Ferry, 1889, p. 312). Thus, Ferry was the prophet of a new economic imperialism, and in common with colonialism elsewhere, the French Authorities took to their new land with a 'civilising mission' of some zeal.

b. The Impact of French Rule

French scientists worked hard at the Pasteur Institute, doing remarkable research in tropic diseases, distributing vaccines, and dealing with problems of sanitation and hygiene in the cities; in addition, they built hospitals and dispensaries. The French also extended, substantially, the old dyke system, notably in the Red River Delta and in Tonkin. They irrigated hundreds of thousands of acres, and in the South they drained large areas, creating thousands of acres of new farmland. On top of this, the French established numerous infrastructures within the country.

In the aspect of culture, the French carried on a moderately large amount of cultural change in Indochina, which they considered as their 'mission civilization'. In fact, they were quite successful in implanting French civilization among the small upper class, many of whom sent their sons to study in French schools in Indochina, and even in France. These changes were all parts of the new French package.

"The French made an indelible imprint on Vietnam. They opened the country to the West; they brought in new science and technology, new patterns of living and thinking" (Hammer, 1954, p. 64). An alien rule and alien civilization were introduced into the closed and backward-looking society of Vietnam. "The effect, of course, was highly disruptive. The Vietnamese felt the shock of it in every part of their life – socially, economically, culturally, and politically" (Ibid, 1954, p. 65).

Thus, the pattern of land distribution changed, and the gap between the rich and the poor grew wider and wider. The development was not deliberate on the part of the French, yet it was none the less real. The French brought with them a Western economic and administrative system which disrupted the traditional framework within which the Vietnamese had regulated their lives. They destroyed the old localism through depriving communities of much of the autonomy of the

village. The old and traditional Vietnamese legal and social structures crumbled under French governing.

c. The Transformation of Vietnamese Society

The structural transformation of Vietnamese society resulted from the impact of developments in the Colonial era and World War I. Consequent changes can be seen between the two World Wars derived from four key sources:

i. Forming an Industrial Labour Force

For the duration of World War I, France's demand on her colonies fell heavily upon Indochina, which had to provide "more than half of the wartime loans and gifts made to France by her colonies, more raw materials than any other part of her empire except West Africa; and more than 43,000 Indochinese soldiers and almost 49,000 workers were sent to Europe" (Sarraut, 1954, p. 79). The size of this levy upon Vietnam could be measured by the fact that the total industrial labour force before World War I was only about 62,000 workers (Durrant, 1935). On top of exporting manpower, it was necessary to recruit increased numbers of workers for local production of raw-material exports as well as to step up the output of manufacturing goods which France could not supply. Therefore, it may be said that a thirty three percent wartime increase in the workforce in the field of mining industry – from 12,000 in 1913 to

16,000 in 1918 – was representative of the growth in other areas (Dumarest, 1935).

At the end of World War I, the industrial labour force continued to expand because of the economic growth resulting from the monetary stability in Vietnam. From 1913 the labour force expansion mounted up to four times as many, reached its pre-World War II climax in 1929, estimated at more than 221,000 workers in all of Indochina (League of Nations, Geneva, 1938, p.168). Although the figures indicate that the labour force of Vietnam did not represent more than one percent of the population, they do not reflect the overall social mobility resulting from industrialization. “Because of the high turnover in the labour force, there were more people mobilized to the modern industrial sector of the economy than was indicated by the figures for the workforce at any one time” (McAlister, Jr. 1969, p. 188).

The significance of this rapid turnover was not only that it swelled the percentage of the workforce of Vietnam, but also that it “developed the formation of a distinct, self-conscious working class and it postponed the establishment of a strict line of demarcation between the wage earner and the peasant. On the other hand, it extended the effect of the new way of life to a rather large portion of the population” (Robequain, 1941, p. 97).

ii. The Emerging Indigenous Wealthy Class: Land Owners

In regard to the opening up of new land, “the credit requirements to bring it under productive cultivation are always crucial forces for change in agrarian societies” (McAlister Jr., 1969, p. 189). In Vietnam, such factors brought forth some basic changes in the characteristics of landholding and production; during the period from 1880 to 1937, the French invested in a public programme in Cochinchina (South Vietnam) constructing a drainage and irrigation system enabling the cultivation of 4.5 million acres (Lancaster, 1961).

France took more interest in recouping the capital invested rather than in the social consequences of the ownership of this newly developed land (McAlister, 1966), as the land was sold in virtually unlimited amounts to a group of Vietnamese who were familiar with the requirements for participating in a commercial environment. The pattern of landholding that resulted in South Vietnam became different from that in other parts of the country. In the Central (Anam) and the North (Tonkin), small holders of land were the majority of the peasant population. In Anam, “those who owned less than 2.5 acres constituted 68.5% of the area’s landholders in 1930, while in Tonkin this portion of the landholders was 61.6% of the total for the region” (McAlister, 1966, p.70).

The emergence of this landowning upper class in South Vietnam as a clearly marked social group can be taken as another dimension with which to analyse the matter of naturalization of the Vietnamese as French citizens. Of the 2,555 Vietnamese who received French citizenship in 1937 more than one half, or 1,474, were from the South (Robequain, 1941, p.71). This indicated that the landowning class, which had taken advantage of French policies in land development, was even more identified with French rule by adopting personal citizenship of France.

Taken as a whole, there emerged the following social profile of the effects of French colonial rule on the transformation of Vietnamese society up to 1931 (McAlister, 1969, p.74).

Table 2: Social Profile of Vietnam: 1931

Approx. Numerical Portion of Population in Millions	Approx. Percentage of Population	Description of Social Category
1.6	9%	Mobilized into participation in the monetary sector of the colonial economy; living in towns with some degree of access to urban facilities for health, education, and information.
2.4	14%	Trent-farmer class located on newly developed land in Mekong Delta, producing about half of all the rice exported from Indochina, which at its prewar, 1929 high was 1.5 million metric tons (other source of export. Rice was from Cambodia since N. and Central Vietnam did not have surplus); tenants exceedingly vulnerable to 70% drop in price of rice during 1929-34 (McCall, 1961).
1.5	7%	Peasant proprietors in S. Vietnam also had advantage of new land, which resulted in their average holdings being almost nine times larger than that in Tonkin Delta (G. Britain, Admiralty, 1959).
4.6	25%	Peasant farmers in central VN, most tilling their own land, but with local concentration of tenancy and a regional absentee landlord group of about 10% of the total number of property owners.
7.5	45%	Peasant farmers in North Vietnam located in densely populated Tonkin Delta, with an average holding of roughly two tenths of an acre. Some localized tenancy but a minute part of total producers (Henri, 1932, p. 110)
<hr/> 17.6	<hr/> 100%	

iii. The Deterioration of Cohesive Social Institutions in the Rural Areas

From the social profile above, it would seem that the impact of French colonial rule had a limited effect on the 70% of the population who were farmers in North and Central Vietnam; nevertheless, this was obviously not the reality. The colonial impact on the rural society was certainly as pervasive an influence for Vietnam's prospects as was the mobilization of a minor upper class. When the French Colonial Government established in 1897 under the rule of Governor-General Paul Doumer (1897-1902) the levy of taxes in Indochina was, on principle, not only to support the superstructure of French administration, but also to supply funds to the metropolitan budget for French administration, and to supply funds in Indochina, where the existence economy of the peasantry was considered out-of-date.

Prior to the colonial period, the Vietnamese peasants produced, or tried to produce enough food for the consumption of their family plus a surplus to exchange for goods that they required and to pay taxes in kind; but under the French rule, cash was required for both taxes and staples. Nevertheless "the monetary sector of the economy was neither large enough nor sufficient enough to permit extensive peasant employment for wages or a market for an agricultural surplus at stable prices. This new situation produced

two important results: a decline in peasant welfare and, because communal institutions had been superseded in administration and tax collection, the absence of meaningful mutual assistance beyond the extended family. Both results led to deterioration in social cohesion and offered potential for political instability” (McAlister, 1969, p.78).

To sum up, this rapid imposition of colonial, economic and commercial priorities set off a process of fundamental and profound consequence for Vietnam. First of all, a system of taxation designed for the infrastructural development was levied on the peasantry, accelerating their poverty and causing widespread dislocation of the rural economy. The expropriation of lands by the government for taxes, mining, and other purposes further contributed to the breakdown of the land ownership system so centralized in the traditional Vietnamese social organization.

The mounting poverty finally left only two alternatives for the growing rural outcasts. The first was to enter a form of indentured labour in the newly established coal, tin, and zinc mines, or on the rubber, tea, and coffee plantations, where thousands died from malnutrition and related diseases. The second was to join the burgeoning landless underclass, most of whom were landowners

before colonialism, and wander about the countryside looking for space in the unproductive highland soils (Jumper & Nguyen Thi Hue, 1962).

iv. The Creation of an Educated Elite

The purpose of a comprehensive education programme, launched by the French colonial administration at the close of World War I, which trained a small number of Vietnamese to a sophisticated level far beyond their peers, was set forth in the Regiment General de L' enseignement Supérieur of December 25, 1919 "to train an indigenous cadre for both governmental and commercial administration" (de Galember, 1931, p.77).

It is noteworthy that the introduction of this French language education programme for Vietnam coincided with the ending of the traditional education system. The last purely classical learning schools were theoretically abolished by an imperial decree of July 14, 1919, and the last imperial examination for the selection of mandarins was given in Annam (Central) in 1918, and in Tonkin (North) in 1915. The promotion and adoption of Quoc Ngu, the Romanised Vietnamese written language, was another radical change prior to the end of education in Confucian learning (Coyle, 1963).

“The system of instruction established for the Vietnamese by the Colonial Administration was never intended to offer wide education opportunities. However, during its existence it did experience a significant expansion” (McAlister, 1969, p. 79). The number of students receiving primary instruction throughout Indochina increased from approximately 164,000 in 1921-2 to 370,000 in 1930 and 731,000 in 1942. But the 1930 level of primary school attendance represented only 1.7 percent of the total population of Indochina, and at the high point of the primary education expansion in 1942 the school population was only three percent of the entire population of the three countries (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam). The ratio for Vietnam was somewhat higher than for all of Indochina, but it never exceeded four percent (Coyle, 1963).

The outcome of the French colonial policy in generating a Westernised upper class by means of education can be understood more clearly by viewing the number of persons who passed the degree examinations set by Colonial educational authorities. The *Certificat d'études Primaires Elementaires* was the lowest award which was granted after three to five years of studies, and was a prerequisite for all subsequent education; the number who received such Certificates was 149,452 between 1919 and 1944, and this was a reliable indication of the size of the elite (Coyle, 1963).

McAlister (1969, p.82) has argued that “the impact of the newly educated elite on Vietnamese politics can be assessed on the basis of its numerical profile.

Table 3: Education Graduating Profile: 1931

1,200 (Approx)	opportunity for some form of technical or professional training at University of Hanoi.
305	Received <u>baccalaureat</u> from one of the Lycees (three in Vietnam, one in Cambodia).
4,146	Received diploma after successfully completing approximately nine years of primary education.
39,223	Received certificate after successfully completing about five years of primary education.

But that year the depression had made its full imprint on Vietnam and the discontent of segments of the population from this and other causes had been felt widely, yet the upper class was still a very tiny fraction of the population.”

It can be concluded now that a number of well over 39,000 people had received some forms of training in the French educational system in Indochina. Not only was this elite noteworthy because of its limited size, but the sharp contrasts within divisions of this

educated class were as striking as its remarkable difference from the population as a whole.

The result of this sophisticated upper class being prepared for leadership in the Vietnamese independence movement can be looked at from several perspectives. Nevertheless, the source of political discontent arising from the lack of social status, viz., the rare advancement to high positions of authority through intellectual employment, is the most significant factor for the study of revolution in Vietnam. "The structural transformation of Vietnam society brought on by the French in the years following World War I produced a potential for political instability. The potential resulted from the creation of a small modern social sector without the establishment of institutions for eventual mobilization of the whole society into a modern framework. The exploitation of this potential awaited a political leadership which the French had in large measure helped to create" (McAlister, 1969, p.83).

v. The Division of the Country

Throughout their rule, the French were faced with a seething nationalism expressed plainly in the form of sporadic violence against the colonial administrators. The Vietnamese middle class, receiving western education and taking to genuine western democratic ideals including anti-colonialism, formed a nationalist

party in 1927; the Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang was modelled basically on the fundamental doctrine of China's nationalist Kuomintang. Within three years of its founding, the Yen Bai Uprising took place in 1930. This abortive outbreak against the colonial authorities cost the lives of many of its leaders, and weakened the party.

The Vietnam Revolutionary Youth League was founded by Ho Chi Minh, in 1925, as the country's first Marxist organization. The new anti-colonial movement, addressing itself to the peasantry and their resentment, was most successful. During the following two decades, the 1930s and the 1940s, the League underwent a number of transformations; in 1941, the creation of the League for the Independence of Vietnam was of great importance. This nationalist coalition, better known as Viet Minh, and dominated by Ho's communists, was formed to resist the invasion of the Japanese and their occupation of Vietnam in the early days of World War II.

In the extension of their Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, the Japanese were content to let the French Vichy Collaborationist Government oversee the exploitation of Vietnam's raw materials and the organization of agriculture for the war effort.

By March 1945, under U.S.A. funding, Viet Minh guerrilla offensives achieved increasing success. The beleaguered Japanese forces overthrew their French caretakers and installed Bao Dai, the Nguyen's last emperor, as head of State. But this interlude was brief. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki left a gap which appeared to be an excellent opportunity for Ho Chi Minh to fill up. He instigated the 'August Revolution' and on September 2, 1945 declared the establishment of the new Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi.

Although World War II had come to an end, Vietnam was still in chaos. According to the decision of the post-war Potsdam Conference for the part north of the 16th parallel, the Chinese Kuomintang would accept surrender of the Japanese; South of it the British were in charge of the surrender affairs. This proved to be a disaster for the country. In the South, the embattled British had to call on the surrendered Japanese to help restore order. In the North, the pillaging Kuomintang, once again were attempting to raise the apparition of renewed Chinese rule over Vietnam. At the same time, the French were eager to regain their colonial control over the country.

At the height of the chaos, when the country was in their hands again, the French ignored their treaty obligations with the Viet

Minh and began a more severe reimposition of their rule. Ho Chi Minh and his followers retreated to the mountains, commencing their long post-war independence struggle in the form of guerrilla warfare. They fought against the French for eight years and finally the Viet Minh besieged French troops at Dien Bien Phu, where France's colonial hopes in Indochina ended in blood at a climactic battle. The ensuing peace negotiations in Geneva brought the fighting to a halt, and the country was divided at the 17th parallel in 1954.

Education in the North

Communist Philosophy and Background

A particular characteristic of Marxism as a philosophical school is its specific brand of historical and dialectical materialism. From this structural framework of the Marxist epistemology, pedagogical concepts were formulated (Hawkins, 1974).

In its most primary sense, this brand of materialism originated from the recognition of the existence of nature separate from man's consciousness. According to Marx (1967), man is part of nature and acts to change it, thereby changing himself. Hawkins' (1974) view is that the Marxists also believe the question of the relation of the human mind to material being is the fundamental question of all varieties of philosophy. In interpreting this

concept, Marx (1967, p.805) remarked that "...the idea is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought." This commitment to materialism is the remarkable feature of Marxist educational theory.

In regard to the concept of dialects to materialism, Marx differs from most of the earlier theorists. For example, Hawkins' (1974, p.16) opinion is that "although Marx and Engels drew much from the dialectical thought of Hegel, they disagreed completely with his theory of the relation of thought to matter. Whereas Hegel sought to put thought before matter, Marx and Engels drew the opposite conclusion." Lenin later expressed this as a case where materialism and idealism differ in their answers to the question of the source of our knowledge and of the relation of knowledge to the physical world. "The question is decided in favour of materialism, for the concept matter epistemologically implies nothing but objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it" (Lenin, 1962, pp.260-261).

The concept of the unity of theory is another aspect of Marx's thought relevant for education; he believed that all knowledge came into being in response to the requirements of man's practical life. Lenin contended that, "the central point of life and practice is their primacy in the theory of knowledge" (Lenin, 1962, XIV, p.142).

Marx differed from other materialists by containing practice in the theory of knowledge, and regarding practice as the underlying principle and purpose of the cognitive process. It follows that knowledge can only be truly attained in man's relation to his environment, and that this is reflected especially through his labour. Persistent practice makes it possible for man not only to know the world, but also change it. The constant interaction of theory with practice, therefore, provides the conditions for society's material and technical progress. In regard to the elements that constituted the act of cognition, Lenin remarked:

Cognition is the external, endless approximation of thought to the object. The reflection of nature in man's thought must be understood not 'lifelessly', not 'abstractly', not devoid of movement, not without contradictions, but in the external process of movement the arising of contradictions and their solution (Lenin, 1962, XXXVIII, p. 498).

In fact, Marx pointed out that the reflection of the objective world in man's cognitive thought was comprised of many aspects and steps, "beginning with sensory perception, moving to abstract thought (a qualitative leap), and concluding with practical action represents the movement of knowledge" (Lenin, 1962, p.171). All social relationships and institutions come into being from this fundamental relationship of man to the material world, including the educational system that constitutes the superstructure of the society.

Few writers appear to have extrapolated from the works of Marx and Lenin the specific suggestions or proposals for educational reform to reconstruct a viable theory of education. Nevertheless, from the implications and primary orientations throughout their writing, their main ideas can be categorised into three major categories:

- a. Education and social class
- b. Polytechnical education
- c. Education and social change

Their essential principle is related to the relationship between education and social class. The problem of education and social class, in fact, has wide implications in terms of practice; for instance, it involves admission policies, curriculum, text content, and selection of teachers. All are dependent on the way the educational system relates to the various strata of society. Whatever one may talk about education, the question as to the function the schools serve in socialising a community is asked continuously. Marx's assertion was that there could never be 'universal' or 'free' education as long as social classes continue to exist; for him, educational policy and practice always favour one class or another (Marx, 1938). Education, in his view, was simply a reflection of the politics of whatever class happens to be in power.

The question of polytechnical education embraces the entire organisational structure of the school, and the curriculum programme in particular; Marxists considered it a combination of knowledge accumulation with industrial

production. This view is clearly explained by Easton and Guddat (1967) and accounts for the simple fact that only being at school for one half of the day means students are always mentally fresh, and nearly always ready and willing to receive instruction. The system whereby they work half a day of manual labour and half a day at school renders each form employment a rest and relief from the other. "It is clear that a boy who has been at school all morning, can not cope with one who comes fresh and bright from his work" (Easton & Guddat, 1967, p.304).

From the factory system grew the germ of the preferred education of the future; a schooling system linked to productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, as the only method of producing fully developed human beings.

The relationship between mental and manual labour that Marx expressed later became a major pedagogical principle at the centre of Marxist discussions on individual differences, of intellectual ability, "specialization versus non-specialization, and other pedagogical problems" (Hawkins, 1974, p.122) concerning the areas of instruction, curriculum, and learning.

With reference to the problem of education and social change, both Marx and Lenin stressed the importance of viewing the role of the education structure in a dialectical way; that is, its significance in having an impact on the economy. Marx, in his early writing, discussed the importance of education in transforming man and society. He conceptualised that education was a force

for social change. It may be that Mao Tse-Tung, the Chinese Marxist, went farther than Marx in applying education as a power to effect social change. He believed it was one of the most important dynamic change agents in society. Hawkins (1974, p.18) reported Mao Tse-tung as saying that, "The materialist doctrine of the change of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and the educator must himself be educated."

Under Communism, "there is no question for Marx about the liberating role of education, but even in class society, state controlled education can have a transformational effect on the individuals living in that society" (Easton, 1951, p.508). Lenin, as well, was asserting that while the economic base determines the basic form and structure of the educational system, in turn, it acts as a force to realign the material base and in this way transforms the basic elements of society (Shore, 1947).

These educational problems, as articulated by Marx and practised by Lenin, had their primary practical test when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics appeared in 1917. "A firm consensus was never reached, but the relationship between Soviet social, political, and economic realities and the theoretical propositions of Marx and Lenin provides a historical comparison with similar experiences in China" (Hawkins, 1974: 14); the same can be said for Vietnam and other Socialist countries.

Educational Philosophy

i. The Strategic Role of Education

The Vietnamese Communists, following the pattern of Russian and Chinese communists, called their regime a proletarian democratic dictatorship. According to communist leader Ho Chi-Minh, the dictatorship was directed toward the 'enemy', that is, those who oppose the Communist revolution, while democracy is applied to the 'people' and particularly to the 'members' within the Workers' Party (Communist Party). The methods of dictatorship are suppression and coercion, while the democratic methods used to win over the people are 'education and persuasion'. There are different degrees of persuasion which at times become quite coercive, but the communists prefer, whenever possible, to hold force in abeyance while education and persuasion are given a chance to produce the desired results. Education, therefore, occupies a strategic role in both the ideology and the practice of the Vietnamese Communists.

From another point of view, education must be considered an essential part of the Communist programme. The programme goes far beyond economic and political changes and demands the establishment of a new society and calls for new customs, new habits, and new patterns of thought and behaviour, even new emotions; it calls for a 'new type of man'. Changing man and the remoulding of heart and mind are, essentially, the work of education. However, how this is achieved differs from the Western notion of education (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1995).

ii. A Broad Concept of Education

Within the Communist doctrine, education is considered to be synonymous with persuasion. It is far broader than what goes on in the schools. Indoctrination and propaganda are seen as forms of persuasion and are inseparable from education (Nguyen Van Duc, 1995). Whatever makes an impact on the hearts and minds of people performs an educational task.

Therefore, there is no distinction between formal education and informal education within Marxist education. The important thing to note is that for all agencies of education, indoctrination, and propaganda are centrally directed to pursue the same general goals and the same immediate objectives. The museum, the theatre, the storyteller, the cinemas, the newspapers, the play, the novels, and all products of arts and literature, as well as parades, demonstrations, and mass campaigns of all sorts, are designed to serve the same persuasive purposes.

Thus, there is no hesitation in suspending regular schoolwork in order to send students and teachers to the farm or factory for the ideological benefits to be obtained by participation in labour and production. There is no feeling of loss when classes are dismissed to enable students to take part in the fertiliser (manure) collection campaign, or, in anti-colonialism (during the 1950s) and anti American Imperialism (during the Vietnam war time 1960s and 1970s) parades and demonstrations. It is deemed as educational to engage in political tasks inside the classroom or outside the school as it is to study in the library.

Education, as maintained in Marxist theory, goes on everywhere; its value is not to be judged merely in terms of academic learning or of knowledge alone. Indeed, there are times when the 'bourgeois' concept of academic learning must be set aside in favour of practical experience in 'revolutionary work' or character-moulding in the process of the class struggle.

This is a revolutionary concept of education. Past traditions are not important and scholarship 'divorced from politics' goes out of the window. Rather than on academic results, students are promoted on the basis of their ideological fervour and political activism, or what is valued in 'bourgeois society' as systematic scholarship. Education is a direct instrument of the revolution, and its success is judged according to its direct and immediate contribution to the revolutionary programme (Nguyen Duc Hiep, 1995).

The guidelines for education are spelled out in the three Ps; namely, politics, production, and Party (The Workers' Party) control. Firstly, politics is the soul of all educational activities in and out of the schools. Political subjects dominate the curriculum; political activities are expected of all students and teachers; even in literacy classes and technical institutes, political study occupies the central place. Secondly, production and labour must be an integral part of the school programme. Thirdly, all education must be under the firm control of the Workers' Party (Communist Party) (Duong Thanh Binh, 1993).

As would be expected, as soon as the new regime was established in North Vietnam in 1955 its leaders moved rapidly to reform the educational system. They realized that Vietnam was a backward nation and that to transform it into a strong nation required the development of a mass education system.

Conferences were called to discuss necessary changes. The early aims developed from these meetings were to provide more educational opportunities, to provide equity for girls and women through the establishment of more co-educational schools, to increase the emphasis on modern scientific education, and to organize a mass educational system that could eliminate illiteracy (Pham Minh Hac, 1995).

The Illiteracy Campaign:

In fact, immediately after the August Revolution of 1945, the Vietnamese Government and its President Ho Chi minh proclaimed:

An ignorant race is a weak one; we must launch the anti illiteracy campaign to overcome the obstacle of having twenty five (25) percent of the population illiterate. At the same time we have to lay down as a policy, the educational reform and the construction of a people's democratic educational system by keeping to three principles: that education be national, scientific, and popularised.

(Nguyen Khanh Toan, 1965, p.17)

According to the official records of the Government, the anti-illiteracy campaign began in July, 1948. The literacy and complementary education programme in 1947-48 had a four-level structure developed as follows:

- a. Elementary literacy – aiming to train the illiterate in the ability to read and write
- b. Preparatory literacy – aiming to provide an education equivalent to the first two grades of primary education
- c. Complementary Education – First Stage – aiming to provide an Education equivalent to primary education
- d. Complementary Education – Second Stage – aiming to provide an education equivalent to lower secondary (Junior High) education

Source – Hanoi: Vietnam Courier and Ministry of Education, 1983.

As has already been stated, the Communist concept of ‘persuasion’ is just another term for education, and it is far broader than schooling. The success of indoctrination and propaganda as forms of persuasion depends, in large part, on a literate population. In order that they might be more easily reached by the extensive network of mass media carrying the messages of the State to the towns and villages, as well as cities, the masses had to be taught to read posters, handbills, propaganda sheets, and even the newspapers

The reduction of mass illiteracy became a task of paramount importance. The political purpose of education was not forgotten even in the literacy classes; political indoctrination went hand in hand with reading and writing. There was

no time for organized programmes in the schools. Instruction was given in special classes conducted in temples, neighbourhood meeting places and bare rooms that had no resemblance to a classroom. No standards were set, no length of course prescribed. The main aim was to reduce illiteracy. However, the problem of massive adult illiteracy continued because of the peasant's suspicion of education (Nguyen Quy Bong, 1993).

The Communist leaders had to get to grips with this massive problem by encouraging and supporting a variety of adult education enterprises. The basic function, in this attempt at adult education, was the 'night school' where peasants could attend literacy classes following the day's work. The students in these classes were largely working adults who were either totally illiterate or were only able to recognize a few letters or a few words. In some of the villages, each school had one or two educated teachers who undertook the primary teaching responsibility together with a principal who was not necessarily literate but possessed some sort of leadership capacity; he or she attended classes along with the students. As teaching materials were short, the students, sometimes, had to supply their own reading materials.

In addition to literacy training, techniques of calculation were taught for the purpose of enabling peasants eventually to keep their own village records and statements of financial affairs. This approach to the adult population and their peculiar educational needs became a basic part of the Vietnamese

Communists' educational strategy following the official establishment of the Vietnam Democratic Republic in the North in 1955.

The anti-illiteracy campaign was launched again for two years, 1957 and 1958. At the commencement of this campaign, the literacy rate was seventy percent and it ended in 1958 being over ninety percent in the cities, low land, and midlands. It was a very successful campaign (Pham Minh Hac, 1991).

Training of Cadres for Nation-Building

A second urgent task for the newly established Communist Regime in North Vietnam was to produce the cadres and personnel needed for the numerous phases of nation-building and social reconstruction.

The new agricultural reform and industrial development projects required hundreds of thousands of trained workers and administrative personnel. In all these undertakings, the Vietnamese Communists wished to place in responsible supervisory positions specially trained cadres who were politically loyal and ideologically motivated. The members being selected were mostly from a strong revolutionary background, or belonging to the peasantry or the labour working class. The ordinary schools could not provide the personnel required by the government.

During the academic year of 1957-1958, while the second anti-illiteracy campaign was in progress, the system of complementary education was

developed. Also, the Central School of General and Labour Education was established in the school year of 1955-1956, providing for selected cadres, activists of the revolution and the heroes of labour.

The Central School for complementary education, established for workers and peasants, was set up in 1956. It provided a teaching programme of general education at Level II and Level III (corresponding to schooling years 5-9), preparing young cadres, young workers, and peasants to further their education at the tertiary level in universities, colleges, and professional schools. From 1958, the Schools of Complementary Education for cadres in villages were established at the district level; and from the academic year 1959-60, schools of the same kind were set up at the provincial level and in the inter provincial areas (Pham Minh Hac, 1990). Thence, new agencies in the form of short-term institutions and training classes were created.

In regard to the training of the cadres, the leaders of the Workers' Party (Dang Lao-Dong) emphasized the necessity of instituting a vigorous programme of internal party education. The focus point of this educational effort was the Party Cadre (Can-bo Dang) who held a responsible position within the party and, as such, made decisions affecting others. Since the Cadre was the backbone of the Party it required a particular form of educational training. In general, the Workers' Party formulated this training on two levels; Theoretical and Practical. Once a cadre achieved literacy, the main purpose of his study was to gain a theoretical and working knowledge of the basic principles of

Marxism-Leninism. According to an anonymous ex-cadre of the Communist regime, courses given in the Party Schools were generally on Vietnamese history (its glorious history of anti-Chinese, anti-French resistance), social change efforts (a practical study of propaganda techniques, party policies, basic needs of the local community), nationalism (cultivation of hostile feeling and attitudes toward colonialism and imperialism), and current affairs (Mr X, 1992). In short, this was a training almost totally ideologically oriented.

Ideological Remoulding

Ideological Remoulding is an important segment in Vietnamese Communist education. It aimed to change ideas, attitudes, and loyalties, and to establish patterns of emotionally motivated behaviour befitting the so-called 'valiant warriors of the proletarian revolution.'

The entire population had to be remoulded, but a major target of ideological remoulding were the intellectuals who were, and still continue to be, distrusted as products of the 'old society' and condemned as transmitters of 'bourgeois ideology.' What was attacked as bourgeois ideology consisted of such ideas and attitudes as 'individualism', 'liberalism', aloofness from politics, aversion to the all-important class struggle, lack of class consciousness, and pro-French Colonialism and later pro-Americanism. The intellectuals were publicly denounced and required to make public confessions of their 'guilt'. They were pressured to practise 'criticism and self

criticism', to examine their past, and to pinpoint their specific errors. It was hoped that through the process of 'thought reform' the intellectuals would be remoulded and made fit to serve the new society. It is noteworthy that the same method was applied in the South when the Communists completed their conquest there in 1975.

Physical labour was believed to have a therapeutic value in ideological remoulding. Many intellectuals, as well as capitalists, army officers, ex-government officials and other 'doubtful elements,' were sent to the labour camps for 'reform through labour'. Labour service for reform was performed in detained houses, in prisons, on farms, in mines and industries, as well as at other production enterprises. Making the 'new man' was certainly a process of education, and labour was considered a valuable vehicle to bring it about (Thelim, 1976).

The School System

The development of the school systems of the Communist Regime in Vietnam can be traced back to the period of the war and resistance against the French Colonialists between 1949 and 1954. At this time there was a partition, essentially and effectively, of the whole country into two sorts of areas: viz., the French-controlled areas and the 'liberated' areas. In the French controlled colonial areas the old educational system was maintained much as it was prior to World War II, while in the 'liberated' Communist-controlled areas, the aim of the educational system was to serve patriotism, anti-colonialism and

national construction. The latter education system developed a five-tiered structure, as follows:

1. Literacy and complementary education for adults
2. Pre-school Education
3. Primary Education: Including four school years from the fourth grade to the first grade (starting from 1947-48 school year)
4. Lower Secondary Education: Set up in the district and provinces, including four grades, from the seventh to the fourth secondary grade.
5. Upper Secondary Education: Established merely in some provinces and inter- provincial areas, including three grades, from the third to the first secondary grade.

(Phan Minh Hac, 1995, p.50)

In the Communist occupied areas educational reform was completed early in 1950, and in July of that year the Government Council decided to adopt the resolution of the reform. In principle, it was concluded that education belonged to the people, was established by the people, and that education was aimed at developing useful citizens for the nation.

It was the first time that the 'quality' of the people's lives was taken as the goal of education in Vietnam. Thus a nine-year general educational programme was formed with a two to four year 'vocational' education; viz.

- Pre-school Education (kindergarten): one year in the pre-primary class
- General Education: Level I Four years, Grade 1 to 4
- General Education: Level II Three years, Grade 5 to 7
- General Education: Level III Two years, Grade 8 & 9
- Vocational Education:

- a. Elementary Vocational Education -with a training period of two years
- b. Secondary Vocational/Professional Education - with a training period of two to four years

The vocational schools recruited students who had already completed general education at Level II. Between 1947 and 1950 there were approximately nineteen schools established to produce vocational training at the secondary level; of these, six provided teaching training programmes, eight provided an agricultural curriculum, and five were teacher training institutes. After 1950, there were only seven professional schools at the secondary level remaining in North Vietnam.

In fulfilling these goals, the Vietnamese Government had been making efforts in their controlled areas to develop tertiary education. They set up two classes of general Mathematics in Nghe-An Province, and between 1947 and 1950 the following were established:

- Inter-provincial of Viet Bac: Mathematics Classes (1947)
- College of Foreign Languages: Chinese & English (1947)
- College of Law: 1948
- College of Civil Engineering: 1947
- College of Fine Arts: 1949
- College of Medicine and Pharmacy: developed in the early 1950s

"These classes and colleges have been active continuously since their establishment in those years of struggle for independence" (Hac, 1995, p.52).

Up to 1950, three university centres were promoted and developed:

- Centre at the Province of Thanh Hoa

where a university preparatory programme and a teachers training programme were provided to prepare teachers for general education at Level III.

- Centre in the inter-provincial area of Viet Bac

where the College of Medicine and Pharmacy was developed.

- Centre in Nam-Ning at Province of Guang-xi, China

where there were a College of Sciences at the fundamental level and a Teachers College providing a training programme for teachers at a high level of general education (Level III).

The three Centres were places where the intellectuals of the time flocked, and graduates of the general education higher level were further trained and educated. These intellectual products later spawned the core intellectual circles which became the backbone of the faculties of the universities in the North. After 1954, these university centres were integrated into the University of Hanoi.

To conclude, during the period from 1945 to 1954, North Vietnam's education system was taking shape and developing at all levels, from pre-school

education to higher education. As Hac has suggested (1995) it ushered in a period of educational development which had the aim of enhancing comprehensively the quality of life of the population, and began to pay more attention to the training of manpower and to the fostering of talents.

Table 4: Vietnam Educational System: 1951-1954

Years	Levels
3	Higher Education (Specialized Degrees)
3	Higher Education (General Degrees)
2-3	Secondary Professional Education
2	General Education: Level III
3	General Education: Level II
4	General Education: Level I
1	Pre-School Education

Source: Adapted from Phan Minh Hac, 1995, p.53

The 1954-1975 Period

According to the Geneva Accords signed in 1954, Vietnam was divided into two parts; the North and the South. The North belonged to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In South Vietnam all the cities and, in large part, the countryside were controlled by the Saigon regime headed by Ngo Dinh Diem

(1954-1963); however, certain areas were still regarded as ‘liberated’ areas under the control of the Communists. In the areas under the control of the Republic of Vietnam (Saigon Regime), the educational system was basically maintained as it was as a Western-based system, although later it was reformed gradually into a purely Vietnamese system. In the so-called ‘liberated’ areas controlled by the Communists, classes for eradicating illiteracy, classes of complementary education, of primary education, and some teacher training classes were still organized and conducted.

In the North, during the years from 1954-1956, two educational systems co-existed: the old one, similar to the French system, provided a twelve-year programme of general education; and the new one, which took shape in the formerly ‘liberated’ areas of the North, offered a nine-year learning programme of general education.

In 1956, educational reform was implemented for the second time. It was decided by the Workers’ Party (Dang Lao Dong) that “education should serve effectively reconstruction in the North and liberation of the South” (Pham Minh Hac, 1995, p.59). These two systems were reconstructed into a new ten-year system viz:

Level I -	Four years:	Grade 1 to Grade 4
Level II -	Three years:	Grade 5 to Grade 7
Level III -	Three years:	Grade 8 to Grade 10

The first grade students were taken in at the age of seven years. The pre-primary class was for children of an age range from six to seven. The pre-school education enrolled children from age of four to six years old. The entire range of the educational system of North Vietnam from 1954-1975 has been articulated in the table below:

Table 5: Educational System of North Vietnam: 1954-1975

(Source: Phan Minh Hac, 1995, p.60)

Year	Level
	Higher Education Doctor of Science
	Higher Education Junior Doctor
4 to 6	Higher Education Undergraduate Degrees
3	General Education Level III
3	General Education Level II
4	General Education Level I
1	Pre-School Class
1 - 5	Kindergarten
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graph TD
    A[General Education Level III] --> B[Secondary Professional Education]
    A --> C[Vocational Education]
    B --> D[Higher Education Undergraduate Degrees]
  
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Special education had neither been ignored nor excluded from this educational system. From 1965 the University of Hanoi had offered special classes for talented students in general education at Level III. The Teachers Training College I and the Teachers Training College of Foreign Languages also provided some programmes preparing excellent students to enrol at universities and colleges.

The urgent need for restoring the country's economy had been one of the key factors to expedite the development of secondary vocational and professional education. The number of secondary professional schools increased considerably from just over 100 in 1965 to about 200 by 1975. Of these, over one half were national schools and the remainder were local ones. The number of vocational schools also increased amazingly, from 50 in 1965 to approximately 200 by 1975; and over 100 classes of vocational training or on-the-job training were operated in the various state enterprises.

Higher Education

In 1954 when the Geneva Accord was signed, most staff members moved to the South forming the core of the University of Saigon, while the University of Hanoi was reconstituted in 1955. The majority of the faculty (approximately forty teachers) and the student body (approximately 500 students) were Viet Minh intellectuals returning from resistance zones. Priority was given to training teachers and medical doctors (Marr, 1988).

In 1956, in addition to the University of Hanoi, and the aforementioned three University Centres in the 'liberated' areas being used as a base, two more educational institutions at tertiary level were established. They were the University of Technology of Hanoi and the Teachers' Training College of Hanoi. By the end of the year, the Hanoi College of Medicine, Hanoi College of Agriculture, the College of Economics, and the College of Fine Arts were set up one after another, making seven institutions for higher learning (Pham Minh Hac, 1995). These institutions came under the firm control of a Workers' Party Committee.

During the next five years, with substantial assistance from the Soviet Union and China, fourteen additional tertiary institutions were established in Hanoi under various government ministries (Nguy Nhu Kontum, 1984). By 1960, one of the most striking accomplishments in the development of higher education in the North was the transformation and replacement of all college textbooks, lectures, classroom discussions, and writing from the French language to Vietnamese (Nguyen Khanh Toan, 1967). This process was completed at the University of Saigon in the early 1970s.

During the late 1950s and 1960s, Socialist countries, including China, offered several thousand places per year to students from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Because of the situation of war between 1965 and 1970 all tertiary institutions in northern cities were forced to move to the countryside to avoid American air-raids, and many of these institutions had to operate on a reduced

scale. The Teachers Training College of Hanoi was divided into the Teachers Training College Hanoi Number 1, the Teachers Training College Hanoi Number 2 and Teachers Training College of Foreign Languages. The University of Technology of Hanoi was divided into some technical colleges such as the College of Civil Engineering, the College of Mining and Geology, and the College of Light Industry. Some higher education institutions with different study fields were also established in this period (Hac, 1995).

During the years 1970-1974, tertiary enrolments in the North dropped from 69,902 to 55,701; however, as Tran Phuong (1974) suggested, this simply might reflect a solid increase of the acceptance of Vietnam students by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) countries.

In the 1974-1975 academic year, the number of tertiary institutions in North Vietnam rose to thirty (Pham Minh Hac, 1995). As of 1974, about 85,000 individuals in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam possessed tertiary degrees (Tran Dai Nghia, 1977) while the South of Vietnam had about 70,000 (Vietnam Statistic Year Book, 1980).

Aid from Foreign Countries

On top of the efforts made by the Communist Regime, foreign aid was an important element contributing to educational developments in the North. According to the government's records, the first group of Vietnamese students

was sent to the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) for undergraduate studies in 1951; thus Le Van Giang (1985) noted that this commenced the cooperative relationship in education and training between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and other former Socialist Countries.

But it was not until 1955 that postgraduate education for Vietnamese students began in such Socialist countries as the USSR, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, China, and Romania (Nguyen Tien Dat, 1995). Some years later, the first holders of postgraduate degrees came back to Vietnam to serve in various disciplines.

During the period of 1961-1970, there were twelve Vietnamese students attained doctoral degrees from the USSR and five from East Germany (GDR). Between 1971-1980, these numbers increased respectively to twenty-five (USSR) and eighteen (GDR); and in the same period, the first group of highest degree holders returned to Vietnam from other Socialist countries: four from Poland, one from Bulgaria, and one from Hungary (Education Sector Review, Hanoi, 1992). In the period reviewed, there was no standardized form of post-graduate training in Vietnam's higher education system; and in Vietnamese titles used to identify these overseas degrees are 'pho tien sy' (Associate Doctorate) and 'tien sy' (Doctorate). In fact, before 1955, a small number of Vietnamese intellectuals holding post-graduate degrees or diplomas from France returned as well and worked in Vietnam (Nguyen Tien Dat, 1995).

In short, thousands of Vietnamese scientists and technicians were trained in the former Socialist countries; some of them becoming very good scientists, key economic leaders, and managers of governmental and local organizations throughout the country.

According to Nguyen Tien Dat (1995), between 1955 and 1975 Socialist countries accepted postgraduate students from North Vietnam, while Western countries did the same for students from the South. During these years, citizens from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had received the following varied forms of postgraduate training and educational programmes overseas:

- Short or long-term practical training from a few months up to three years for Bachelor Degree holders; this was not aimed at attaining any award of postgraduate diploma or degree certificate.
- Three years of postgraduate study for first degree holders to attain degrees equivalent to Pho Tien Si (Associate Doctorate); prerequisites for this program were at least five years of work experience in their specialized fields plus an admission examination.
- Two years of refresher postgraduate study or training for scientists and Associate Doctorate holders, which was not aimed at attaining any doctoral degree.
- Further postgraduate study of three or four years for scientists and Associate Doctorate holders to attain the highest degree Tien Si (Doctorate) in Science. Five years of work experience was required for the degree.
- Transition from undergraduate studies overseas to postgraduate studies overseas immediately after graduation. This programme

was designed for talented students in pursuit of the degree of Pho Tien Si (Associate Doctorate). It started from 1972 and the number of students involved in that year was forty.

- Transition from undergraduate studies in Vietnam to postgraduate studies overseas immediately after graduation. This programme was designed particularly for talented students who were in pursuit of Pho Tien Si (Associate Doctorates).

Until 1990 the postgraduate education of Vietnam was undertaken mainly in Eastern European countries with only a few study disciplines offered in Vietnam. In short, under the Communist Regime post-graduate education started to develop in quite a gradual fashion.

General Commentary on Schooling

Under the broad concept of Communist education as described at the beginning of the chapter, learning that happens outside the schools is often considered more important than class instruction within the schools. The role played by various agencies of propaganda and indoctrination at times overshadows the schools on the broad scene of 'persuasion' and the changing of people. The schools, however, still have a strategic role to play; viz. the special task of reaching and remoulding the young generation and providing a planned environment for learning.

It is difficult to describe the school 'system' because there is no one system that the Vietnamese Communists found to be satisfactory. Old schools were

being changed and new schools added and dropped according their usefulness in meeting what the Communists recognized as their tangible needs. Types of schools, length of schooling, the nature of the schools at various levels, and the relations between schools were subject to constant change.

Basically, the Vietnamese Communist leaders seem not to have had much regard for school systems, nor did they hesitate to make changes when they saw fit. They were guided by their immediate needs or ideological dogmas rather than any understanding of commitment to long-range planning. In the late 1950s education in North Vietnam underwent significant changes under the tutelage of Chinese Advisers, when 'Learn from China' was the slogan. Chinese and Russian replaced French and English as the most important foreign languages. In the late 1970s, 'Learn from the Soviet Union' was the slogan and Russian was considered the most important foreign language, Soviet theories dominated all studies, and the content of courses of study was reorganized along the lines of the Soviet syllabus and textbooks.

Private education disappeared in the North in 1955, and in the South in 1975 immediately after overtaking the South, all education was controlled by the state and the Party; consequently administration was highly and strictly centralized.

i. New Schools

Even with modifications, the schools were considered inadequate for the new needs. New schools were devised to achieve the desired objectives. Short-term institutes were established to produce trained personnel for different areas of work. The areas were narrowly defined, with each programme serving a specific purpose (Discussion, 1994).

ii. The Work-Study Approach

The work-study plan was adopted in the lower schools as well as in colleges and universities. The development of work-study schools received impetus from the policy of combining education with production. The work-study combination takes different forms. Work may be done on a farm, in a factory, or in a business enterprise. Labour and production are the major themes. Work and study may be scheduled on alternate days or alternate weeks or at longer intervals (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1994). Theoretically, study is to be integrated with work so that it may help solve the problems encountered in work. Education tends to be utilitarian; in line with the Vietnamese Communist cliché of unity of theory and action, knowledge and skill acquired in study are valuable to the extent that they are applicable to production or ‘the revolutionary struggle.’

One might say that utilitarianism and the domination of politics are the characteristics of the Vietnamese Communist education.

iii. School Texts

The major themes of labour, production and politics are evident in the content of the textbooks used in the lower grades as well as in the upper levels. There are stories of labour heroes who excel in production, and many lessons are devoted to the praise of Ho Chi Minh and stories of his exemplary childhood. The army is glorified, while the landlords, Bao Dai (expelled king), Ngo Dinh-Diem (President of the South), French Colonialism, and American Imperialism are objects of derision. Exaltation of the Vietnamese Labour Party (Communist Party) goes with the praise of Ho Chi minh, and ideological concepts are introduced early to accompany political indoctrination.

Education and the Proletarian Revolution

The Communist revolution is a class revolution. A major aim of political education is to 'heighten and sharpen' class-consciousness and to foster a firm determination to carry on the class struggle. Much is said about 'class education'. Its purpose is to use various means to remind old and young that class enemies continue to exist and plot against the revolution, that it behooves all good revolutionaries to be alert and ever ready to wage a relentless war against them. It is the aim of class education to impart the knowledge and develop the emotions that make valiant warriors in the class struggle (Chen, 1974, pp.178-181).

Education also contributes directly to a change in the class structure of Vietnamese society. By means of a positive programme of worker-peasant education, it raises the position of the members of the proletariat and qualifies them for leading positions in society.

Hand in hand with the policy of producing a large number of 'proletarian intellectuals' is the policy of requiring the 'old-type intellectuals' to engage in labour and production. Teachers, professors, scientists, artists, as well as capitalists, industrialists, and government personnel spend time on the farms, and in the mines and factories to become a part of the labouring class. Intellectuals and white-collar workers, as well as the landlords and urban bourgeoisie, have been stripped of their former prestige and social status. The rich are condemned and despised. The poor peasants who constitute the backbone of the peasant associations, and the workers who sit in government councils and congresses as 'deputies', have been accorded a new status of political and social importance. Peasants and workers with good production records have been invited to teach and lecture in technical institutes and vocational schools. Nguyen Quoc Bien (1995) considers education as playing a direct role in uprooting the old class structure and opening the way for new social values.

Achievements and Problems

The expansion of educational facilities under the Vietnamese Communist Regime in the North was truly impressive. The increase in the types of educational programmes offered and the extension of educational opportunity to workers and peasants inevitably resulted in more education for more people. The expansion was significant, especially in the lower schools and for the adult population.

i. Increase in Literacy

Much progress was made in teaching more people to read and write, though it is not easy to assess the degree of progress. At the present stage, there appears to be no reliable statistical data on the increase in literacy; nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that illiteracy was significantly reduced in the North. Even more significant was the increase of political consciousness among the masses. Through its pervasive 'propaganda network' the Vietnamese Communist Party and the State kept up a continuous flow of information and messages, which reached the little towns and villages and produced an impact on far more people than those brought into literacy classes. The radio, the stage, the neighbourhood 'study group', the organized parades and demonstrations, as well as centrally directed 'mass campaigns' for whatever aims or purposes that the Party or State intended, subject the entire population to a ceaseless barrage of information concerning the domestic and foreign issues of the day. True, the people heard and read only

what the Party and state want them to know and think about; nevertheless, numerous illiterate and barely literate people who used to take no interest at all in affairs outside their immediate surroundings are now aware of happenings in remote areas and take part in slogan-shouting and mass meetings that extended their interests far beyond their little village or town (Dao Thanh Que, 1990).

ii. New Learning Strategies

Educational theorists who criticize the formality and inflexibility of traditional education would be delighted at the boldness with which Vietnamese Communist education experiments with new methods and institutional forms. Past traditions constitute no stumbling block. Education served specific and immediate needs and is quickly changed if it does not produce results. There was no room for 'dead knowledge.' According to Ho Chi minh and the Communist ideology, knowledge must result in action and be tested in action (Le Van Giang, 1985). Education must produce changes in behaviour and the most important behaviour changes, in the Communist view, were those expressed in production, in political action and in ideological conviction.

There was no gap between school and society. The aims of the school were the same as those of the state and society. Education was no longer the privilege of the few or a haven for the leisure class or those who shun labour. The traditional dichotomy between mental and physical labour was being abolished.

iii. The Question of Standards

At the very time when the popularisation of education was winning admiration at home and abroad, educators within the North were expressing grave concern over the quality of education. To begin with, Vietnamese Communist policy was more concerned with quantitative than qualitative growth. The immediate aim was to educate the proletariat; in view of the high percentage of illiteracy among the proletariat, it was more important to bring some education to the many than to give more or better education to the few. Thus, the higher levels of education tended to be neglected. The situation does not appear to have improved since, with the Communist Regime still focusing heavily on Primary education.

At the same time, the new regime was in a hurry to produce trained personnel for immediate use and had to depend on short cuts, such as abbreviated courses of study and short-term institutes. Even in the regular colleges and universities, there was pressure to provide shortened courses of study. Moreover, all institutions of higher learning were ordered to admit a minimum quota of students of worker-peasant origin, most of whom had extremely inadequate academic preparations, having leaped from illiteracy to 'secondary' and 'higher' education. While their enrolment in higher institutions was a source of ideological satisfaction to the Vietnamese Communists who took pride in the progress of the class revolution in education, the worker-peasant students merely accentuated the trend of subordinating academic achievement

to such non-academic qualifications as class origin, production record, and ideological fervour.

A major source of difficulty was the lack of competent teachers. A great number of intellectuals moved to the South when the country was divided in 1955. Even if all teachers were fully utilized, there would not be enough for the expanding needs of a vast educational programme. But the Communists distrust many teachers as 'old-time intellectuals' who were unable to shake off their 'bourgeois ideology.' They preferred to fill teaching positions with trusted cadres and those who were ideologically above suspicion (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1994). The trouble was that many of the trusted cadres had not had much schooling themselves; nevertheless, they were placed in key positions or given supervisory authority over teachers. Backed by the power of the Vietnamese Communist Party, the supervisory cadres regarded themselves as ideologically superior to the better-educated teachers. They berated the teachers for their ideological inadequacy; they demanded the 'thought reform' of teachers and pass judgement on their ideological progress. Teachers had been dismissed on the basis of unfavourable reports of cadres. Low salaries and the humiliation inflicted by domineering cadres must have discouraged many from becoming teachers. Thus, the teacher shortage had continued to prove an acute problem.

iv. Ideological Challenges

Perhaps more attention could be paid to the upper levels of education after a broad foundation has been firmly laid, and such shortcomings as the lack of teachers could be overcome in due time. Unfortunately, many of the difficulties of Vietnamese Communist education were rooted in ideology. They refused to accept the traditional concept of educational standards; they scorned and condemned 'bourgeois scholarship'. Distrust of intellectuals was another ideological obsession that has had a negative effect on the educational programme. The downgrading of Vietnam's intellectuals was not merely a part of a policy to bridge the gap between the intellectuals and the masses; it sprang from the Communist distrust of intellectuals as products of bourgeois education and the transmitters of 'bourgeois ideology'. The distrust of intellectuals, which still exists in Communist thinking today, has led to a similar rejection of what the intellectuals value, viz., scholarship and academic achievement. As long as that attitude remains, the neglect of quality will continue to be an unresolved problem in Vietnam Communist education.

Conclusion

The dominant factor in all educational development in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) was the Communist ideology. The relationship between the individual and the state differed very little from the relations between individuals and the government in Socialistic China or Russia. The aim of education in North Vietnam was to advance and perpetuate

the Communist philosophy, and to raise a new generation of inspired fighters for the Communist Regime. It was an instrument of indoctrination and of propaganda that was not confined to formal instruction in the school but permeates every aspect of the life of every individual for twenty-four hours a day. As Lenin stated: "Our task in the school world is to overthrow the bourgeoisie, and we openly declare that the school, apart from life, apart from politics, is a lie and a hypocrisy" (Knight, 1940, p.539).

All of the resources of mass communication, controlled by the comparatively small Workers' Party elite, were used to direct the total population. No dissident opinions were permitted or tolerated in any area of life and deviationists must be ruthlessly suppressed. Not only were psychological and propagandistic influences utilized to ensure conformity, but the economic life of the country was also mobilized to destroy individuality.

It was evident that schools in North Vietnam had two major purposes. In the first place, the school was an instrument of indoctrination for the principles of Communism. According to educators in North Vietnam, "The aim of education is defined, not in terms of an abstract philosophy, but in accordance with the paramount claims of the social order" (Discussion, 1992). These educators also explained that the major aim of instruction was an understanding of the world and the cultural heritage of the present time. They describe these matters in terms of class struggle and admitted that the Marxist interpretation of history would differ widely from that of the bourgeoisie.

Since the impact of this Communist ideology could not be complete unless all citizens were literate, literacy had been the primary objective in the educational campaign of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The second major aim of education in North Vietnam had been the training of people to be able to participate in the industrial development of the nation. Le Van Giang (1985) has suggested that Ho Chi minh recognized that it would be impossible to build a strong, modern Vietnam that could hold its own against a potentially hostile world unless the people were educated in modern procedures. So, the place of labour in society and the requirement that each individual had some specialized skill was stressed at every level in the schools in North Vietnam. Together, the ideas of communization and industrialization dominated the educational programmes.

CHAPTER 5

EDUCATION OF THE SOUTH (1955-1975)

i. Political Background

Throughout the colonial period, 1859-1954, the vast majority of Vietnamese retained a strong desire to have their national independence restored. Seething Nationalist aspirations often broke out into open defiance of the French, which took forms ranging from the publishing of patriotic periodicals and books to an attempt to poison the French garrison in Hanoi (Nguyen Khac Vien, 1993). Some Vietnamese nationalist scholars and patriots such as Phan Boi Chau who rejected French rule but not Western ideas and technology, looked to Japan and China for support and political inspiration, especially after Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 which showed all of Asia that Western Powers could be defeated (Marr, 1971). Dr Sun Yat Sen's 1911 revolution in China was also closely watched in Vietnamese nationalist circles.

The Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang VNQDD, Nationalist Party of Vietnam, a large middle-class nationalist Party modelled after the Chinese Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party), was founded in 1927; however, the Nationalist leader Nguyen Thai Hoc was guillotined along with twelve comrades in the savage French retribution for the abortive 1930 Yen Bai Uprising (Duiker, 1983). Another source of nationalist agitation was evident among those Vietnamese who had spent some time in France, where they were not

hampered by the restrictions on political activity as they were at home. However, the most successful anti-colonialist movement proved to be from the Communists who were uniquely able to relate to the frustrations and aspirations of the population, especially the peasants, and to effectively organise and channel their demands for more equitable land distribution (Nguyen Khac Vien, 1993). Their political strategy won strong support from the peasantry in general.

When France fell to Nazi Germany in 1940, the Indo-Chinese government of the Vichy appointed Admiral Jean Decoux to conclude an agreement to accept the presence of Japanese troops in Vietnam. Due to their area's strategic location and their need for natural resources, the Japanese left the French administration in charge of the country. The only group that did resist the Japanese occupation was the Communist-dominated Viet-minh (led by Ho Chi minh) who obtained arms from the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), predecessor of the C.I.A. (Storey, 1991)

ii. *Franco-Vietminh war 1946-1954*

By the spring of 1945, the Vietminh already controlled a large part of Vietnam, especially in the north. In mid- August, after the atomic bombing of Japan, Ho Chi minh formed the National Liberation Committee and called for a general uprising, later known as the August Revolution (Cach Mang Thang Tam), to take advantage of the power vacuum (Duiker, 1983). However, when

World War II came to an end, the French managed to regain control of Vietnam, at least in name. But, in November 1946 when the French shelled Haiphong after an obscure customs dispute and killed hundreds of civilians, the Vietminh lost their patience. A few weeks later, fighting broke out in Hanoi, marking the start of the Franco-Vietminh War.

In the face of a Vietnamese determination that their country regain its independence, the French were unable to reassert their control. After eight years of fighting, the French were defeated, finally, at a fatal battle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

A Geneva Conference was opened to negotiate an end to the conflict. Two months later, the Geneva Accords were signed. The Accords provided for an exchange of prisoners, the temporary division of Vietnam into two zones at the Ben Hai River (near the 17th parallel) and a nationwide election was expected to be held on 20th July, 1956. After the signing of the Geneva Accords, the South was ruled by Ngo Dinh Diem, described by Storey (1991) as an extremely anti-communist Catholic.

In 1955, Diem refused to implement the Geneva Accords and held a referendum on his continued rule of the South. He declared himself president of the Republic of Vietnam on the basis of a favourable vote of the people of the South. The regime of the South carried on until 1975 when the North successfully achieved the unification of the country by force.

iii. *The Setting*

Vietnam is not unlike many of the countries of Asia which have carried on highly formal types of education over a period of many centuries. The early educational system of Vietnam was built upon the Chinese cultural pattern. It was codified in A.D. 622, but may have existed as early as the first century (Lindholm, 1959). The system stressed the memorising of characters, texts, and classical literature. Proficiency was tested at graduation when large numbers gathered to be examined for civil service positions by mandarin scholars. In the last great examinations in 1876 and 1879, six thousand candidates took examinations in Hanoi, and some small examinations continued for some years (Nguyen Quoc Thang, 1993).

By 1890 French schools were beginning to replace the Mandarin system. The curriculum, following the pattern in France, featured a dual system; one was highly academic and cultural for those preparing for university studies and the other was designed for the common people. However, even under the French, the 'cite-recite-exam' method prevailed in Vietnamese education. "Education still primarily emphasized the classics, literature, poetry, and symbolism. It was hardly adequate for a people whose country faced immediate and urgent economic, political, and security problems" (Hildreth, 1959, p.144). As an avowed Vietnamese Confucian, Huynh Khac Dung in his criticism of the French colonial education system in Vietnam remarked: "In South Vietnam, by the creation of French schools in which the French language and Quoc Ngu (Vietnamese National language) were taught at the same time, the French –

with the stroke of a pen suppressed the old educational system. However, graduates from the French so called 'modern' educational system finished with very poor qualifications, indeed, they were poor representatives of both cultures" (Huynh Khac Dung, 1952, p.37).

Another Vietnamese historian and Marxist scholar Nguyen Khac Vien (1962, pp.166-167) described the French education system as "a third rate education. Its impact on education and culture in general was disastrous. It was far from bringing enlightenment and education and what was positive in Western civilization to Vietnam."

iv. *The Transfer of Bureaucracy*

In spite of all the comments made by Vietnamese scholars or by the Vietnamese in general, essentially they had taken possession through the French education system of an inheritance from the French; viz., the transfer of bureaucracy through French education.

Bureaucracy, after all, is a technology for managing institutions and the transfer of a centralized bureaucracy from France to Vietnam represents a transfer of an educational technology (McGinn, 1987).

In short, the use of technology was a political exercise as was the choice of what technology to transfer. While the French colonial government of Indochina opted to transfer a technology, once that technology was

transferred, a series of struggles ensued over who was to control it. Ultimately the struggles were resolved by a decision as to the appropriate use of bureaucracy. In Vietnam, the bureaucracy was regarded as necessary to legitimise a contested educational system and to mute the debate about education by rendering political matters as technical ones (Kelly, 1987).

Although the transferring of this educational technology was regarded as a form of imposition, it was accepted, applied, and transformed by the political struggles throughout the years even after gaining independence in 1954, particularly in the South.

The New Technology/Bureaucracy

The inheritance of educational technology from the French colonial administration had provided the Republic of Vietnam in the South with a modern educational system under the leadership of Nguyen Duong Don who was appointed by the President of the Republic of Vietnam as Secretary of State for National Education (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993)

In 1956, Mr Nguyen Duong Don and his assistant Huynh Hoa concluded that education had reached the stage where it needed re-evaluation and re-orientation. In consequence, the Division of Education of the United States Operation Mission (USOM) in Vietnam was called to the Ministry of Education, where a long discussion over many hours was spent crystallising a master plan for the future of Vietnamese schools and schooling. It was agreed

that education should be free, public, and universal; that it should be extended to every village in the nation (the South); and that a complete system should be established from the primary schools through to the universities (Hildreth, 1956). From then, a new educational system was born in South Vietnam.

The following system was put into practice from 1953 to 1955, and was named the 'Nguyen Duong Don Programme':

Primary Education: 6 years

Secondary Education: 7 years

a. Junior Secondary - 4 years (grades 7-10)

b. Senior Secondary - 3 years (grades 11-13)

The Senior Secondary Programme was divided into three divisions:

Division I – Practical science; stressing Physics, Chemistry and Biology

Division II – Mathematical Science; stressing Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry

Division III – Language and Literature; stressing Vietnamese, English, French or Chinese (Classical studies)

The Don Programme was revised at the Secondary level in the 1958-1959 academic year. The revision followed the 'Hoang Xuan Han Programme' which was introduced by the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts and Hoang himself, organised by a group of well-known scholars such as Nguyen Thuc Hao, Nguyen Huy Bao, Nguyen Van Hien, Ta Quang Buu, Ha Thuc Chinh, Hoai Thanh and Dao Duy Anh.

The revised programme was essentially the first Vietnamese educational programme, and was divided into four divisions (see Table 5).

Table 5: The Hoang Xuan Han Programme Divisions

(Source: Nguyen Quoc Thang, 1993)

- Division 1 – Practical Natural Science, comprising Physics, Chemistry and Biology
- Division 2 – Mathematical Science, comprising Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry.
- Division 3 – Language and Literature, comprising Vietnamese, English, and French.
- Division 4 – (a) Literature of classical languages, comprising Vietnamese literature, Chinese Literature, and one foreign language: English or French.
(b) Literature of classical languages, comprising Vietnamese literature, Latin Literature, plus one foreign language: English or French.

In the academic year of 1967-68, the revised Don programme was again reformed although the contents of pedagogy and the original system remained unchanged. However, under the advice and counsel of UNESCO, South Vietnamese education in general started to apply a continuous 12-year system:

- Primary – five years,
- Secondary – seven years.

The practice was under the resolution of the government of the Republic of Vietnam No. 2641-GD/Pc/ND, dated 20th of December, 1969 (Ministry of Education, 1969).

Development of Secondary Education

i. Governmental Structure

The schools of Vietnam (South) were directed, supervised, and largely financed through the Ministry of National Education (Bo Quoc-gia Giao Duc). Highly centralised and authoritarian in character, the Ministry had all the strengths and weaknesses of such an organization. Heading up the Ministry was the Secretary of State for National Education who was appointed by the President of Vietnam. The Secretary held a seat in the President's cabinet; he also nominated for appointment by the president, his Director General who served as Director of the Cabinet. This man appointed subordinate ministry officials and school directors (or principals) throughout the country (McAlister, 1969).

ii. Developments in Schooling

In the course of the development of Vietnamese education in the South, both France and the United States were involved profoundly.

Since the founding of the Republic, United States assistance to the development of adequate schools in South Vietnam was offered on a government-to-government basis. Official channels had been carefully maintained because of the sensitive nature of the Vietnamese political scene. In 1956, the nature of the aid programme was changed from a 'general release

of funds' to 'release of specific amounts for specific projects' (Hildreth, 1959).

The Director of USOM and the Deputy of I.C.A. (International Cooperation Association) for the Far East agreed with Vietnamese educators that the ideal of a 'school for every village' was a worthy goal. It was decided that the United States would furnish the building materials and the Vietnamese government would furnish the labour for the primary school building programme.

In addition to the primary school programme, general consideration had been given to pilot the community school in underdeveloped countries. The pilot community schools, designed to help people solve practical problems, had been demonstrated to be very successful in countries such as the Philippines and Mexico. As early as 1953 suggestions were made by educational advisers from the United States that Community Schools would offer distinct advantages for the Vietnamese. It was decided to trial nine such schools in South Vietnam.

In most cases, the school principals had received some training in the Philippines, where they studied the structure and administration of community schools. However, the staff did not have the opportunity to become sufficiently imbued with the community school philosophy to achieve the desired kind of results. In spite of all the frustrations, the pilot community

school project in Vietnam did experience limited success in most quarters. However, it was not surprising that the Vietnamese had been unwilling to accept the new and revolutionary institution with enthusiasm; even people of the United States resisted changes in educational practice. In Vietnam, the pilot community schools were beginning to function as the vehicle through which the desires of the villages were made known. They finally became the local social centres and, as such, were reported to offer some relief to the dull and monotonous life which characterised so many villages of Vietnam (USOM Report, 1959).

Official records of the Ministry of Education Vietnam (1959) showed that most of the larger cities in the South had at least one Lycee; nevertheless, because approximately half of the secondary schools were in Saigon, there was a great need for additional schools in the outlying provinces. Unfortunately, due to the country's financial condition, money was not available to build more secondary schools.

When the curriculum was analysed it was found that the secondary curriculum, even more so than the primary one, remained highly academic. Apparently, the competitive examinations for entry and advancement in secondary education had been designed largely to eliminate students. Roughly seventy percent (70%) of the primary students who took qualifying examinations were failed each year. This failure rate was a necessity because the schools could not accept all who could profit from a secondary education.

There was insufficient money for the employment of enough qualified teachers, and well-trained teachers for the upper levels were scantily supplied. Examinations were so difficult that, of the 70,000 students in the public and private secondary schools in 1957, only 747 passed the first baccalaureate and only 422 the second (MOE, 1956-1957). In other words, of the students who started secondary school, approximately only one out of 170 actually completed his/her secondary education.

The failure of such large numbers of students was due a range of factors including:

- The examinations were not entirely based on the subject matter taught, and
- The curriculum of the school was not designed to serve the natural, innate capacities of many students; e.g. students of vocational or artistic bent were required to pass the rigid examinations in the classics, and students gifted in engineering were eliminated because of lack of interest or aptitude in the humanities.

Proportionally there were more private secondary schools than in the case of primary education. For instance, of the 70,000 students in secondary schools in 1957, approximately 40,000 were being educated in private or semi-official schools (MOE, 1957-1958).

iii. *Contributions of France*

A substantial portion of the secondary education was financed and carried out by the French Cultural Mission to Vietnam, at no expense whatever to the Vietnamese government. During 1957, this Mission contributed approximately US \$3,000,000 to the educational programme in South Vietnam.

The Mission still operated public Lycees, in which it paid all the expenses of operation and maintenance, as well as teachers' salaries. The classes were taught in French by French teachers recruited in France and sent there as instructors, or by Vietnamese who had been trained in France. Generally speaking, the French schools were well equipped; the students had textbooks printed in France, and the teachers did not lack the essential instructional materials as did those teaching in the public Lycees of Vietnam. Despite the fact that the French secondary schools were perhaps too academic, with curricula which might be regarded as too theoretical, Hildreth (1959) reported that the French were doing a commendable job in secondary education.

Educators in Vietnam generally agree that no consideration of education would be complete without reference to the School of Agriculture at Blao. This school was not under the Ministry of Education, but was administered and financed as an institution of learning by the Ministry of Agriculture. Courses offered were at secondary level, general in nature, with little specialization. Agronomy, animal husbandry, and some viticulture were

taught, and plans were being made to extend experimentation in areas such as plot planting, animal breeding, soil analysis, soil fertilization, and soil conservation and improvement. Rather than theory learning which had characterised too many schools in South Vietnam, the Blao School stressed the practical 'dirt farming' type of learning. The school, as well as its enrolment, was small. Located on a site of about one thousand hectares, it comprised classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, faculty homes, and a library. As agriculture is the basic industry of Vietnam, the Ministry of Agriculture had high hopes for the development of Blao (Ministry of Agriculture, 1956).

Obstacles to the full development of the school did not relate to money, because the United States Operation Mission (USOM) had been generous in its support of it and the Department of Agriculture attempted at the beginning to make admission to the school as attractive as possible. To that end, scholarships were given to all qualified students who attended Blao. The greatest problem was staffing the school with a sufficient number of qualified personnel; well-trained agricultural teachers were not available in Vietnam. In this case the persistence of the culture pattern can be seen; for generations on end, people had farmed as their parents and ancestors did and, as a consequence, few aspired to a career in agriculture. The traditional cultural perception also raised the issue of status, which was so important in Vietnam. It would take the entry of a university into the agricultural field to give this occupation the stature it deserved. That was one of the reasons explaining the upgrading of Blao School into a university, finally, in 1967 (MOE, 1968).

Development of Vocational Education

There was a critical need for the development of industrial techniques in Vietnam to prepare the country for its new role in the family of nations. It needed to become economically strong, with basic industries established which would raise the living standards. Unfortunately, only the most rudimentary beginnings in vocational education were evident by 1955.

During their regime, the French did establish some vocational schools, such as the College Technique de Saigon. These schools had been taken over by the Vietnamese government, with the French continuing to offer both teaching and professional advice. However, fewer than 4,000 students were enrolled in vocational schools in 1957, which indicated that only a few out of the many hundreds of thousands of students were given this essential training.

A limited number of vocational schools had been established in Hanoi and Haiphong, and after the partition some were moved from North to South Vietnam. One of these moved to Hue in the central part of the country, just below the 17th parallel. After 1955, American and Vietnamese advisers decided that a vigorous programme in Vocational Education should be started, and USOM in Saigon employed a technical adviser for this developmental phase of the educational programme.

In vocational, as with agricultural, education the question of status arose almost immediately because of the Vietnamese belief that education should prepare one for a life of ease as an adult. Most people still regarded manual labour as improper work for educated men. The first new vocational institution to be established was the Vietnamese Institute of Technology in Phu Tho, a section adjacent to Saigon. This was an all-out effort on the part of the United States to provide an institution of status for the encouragement of trade and technological training, and represented a compromise between the Vietnamese ambitions for an engineering education and the need for vocational skills.

Schools of public works, radio electricity, and marine navigation were already in operation. Training courses in the metal construction and motor mechanics trades were offered later in the South.

Students from the Lycees and Colleges were unable to matriculate directly in that part of the school which some day would be engineering training. Those from College Technique, which was a lower level vocational school, could gain entry to the second part, and from there, advance to engineering. Those from the apprentice or polytechnic schools might enter the Institute and be prepared for jobs as skilled workers in industry and public works.

The movement to establish polytechnic high schools was based on an effort to engender democratic methods and thinking in the schools. To accomplish this

goal, an ideal vehicle would have been to set up comprehensive high schools such as those in the United States. However, the idea of introducing woodworking into the Lycees' program was repugnant to the Vietnamese. Therefore, it was hoped that academicians and trade trainees would live and learn and work on the same campus of a polytechnic high school, and that this new institution might eventually bring about a comprehensive high school, much as it evolved in the United States. Although such schools were no longer being established in America, it was still hoped by the U.S. Educational adviser that the Vietnamese educational development would follow the American pattern. This expectation, as some of the Vietnamese scholars later remarked, was "a typical pattern of penetration of American culture into Vietnam" (USOM, 1959, p.133).

Higher Education - Universities

i. Background

Vietnam's higher educational system traces its origins to imperial court-sponsored schools of classical learning (Quoc Tu Giam) and, subsequently, the colonial university of Indochina (later the University of Hanoi). The country recorded great success in education despite the many long years of war and an underdeveloped economy. Compared with many developed countries, Vietnam had a considerably long history of education. Nevertheless, for centuries Vietnam's education had not developed very healthily due to feudalism and the poor living standards of the people. In fact,

for a long period of time, studious men only used the imperial examination system as a stepping-stone for getting an official position or a promotion in society. Not until the early twentieth century had Vietnam's tertiary education sprouted a new branch. The establishment of the Indochinese Medical School at Hanoi in 1904 marked a milestone for modern education at the tertiary level in Vietnam.

During the years 1918-1919, seven more colleges and institutes were established, including the Indochinese University; they were –

1. College of Medicine & Pharmacy (Ecole de Medecine et de Pharmacie)
2. College of Laws (Ecole de Droit)
3. Teachers' College (Ecole Superieure de Pedagogie)
4. School of Veterinary (Ecole Veterinaire)
5. College of Public, Administration (Ecole des Travaux Publics)
6. College of Agriculture (Ecole de Superieure d' Agriculture)
7. College of Commerce (Ecole Superieure de Commerce)

In the course of development, there were great changes in these institutions after 1927. Some of them were fully developed and upgraded, while others were downgraded or disbanded according the requirements of the practical learning situations (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993).

Prior to World War II and according to the system and organization of French education, tertiary institutions were categorized into two levels:

- a. Universities (Universite)
- b. Colleges/Institutes (Ecole Superieure)

Both universities and colleges/institutes were the ultimate institutions for higher learning in France. However, in terms of curriculum and constitution, they were varied. The application of this system was seen in Indochina, under the French Colonial Government, as follows:

a. University (Universite)

According to the French system, 'university' is a kind of school for higher learning. It can be freely named after the varied faculties. For instance, the name 'Saigon University of Science' is essentially the faculty of science of the University of Saigon. In constitution, it is a branch of the University of Saigon; in administration, it can be independent.

No additional entrance examinations are required for students intending to enrol at a university or a specific faculty. Students with the certificate of Tu Tai II (equivalent to a Year 12 certificate of graduation in the West) are accepted regardless of number or age.

The training programme of the university or any of its specific faculties was focussing on study principles in general and cultivation of the man with a sound knowledge based on his field of study.

Nguyen Q. Thang (1993) suggested that the programme the student selected must be approved by the council of the faculty, and the knowledge provided might not be strictly limited within a certain area, nor was it a professional expertise provided at a vocational institute.

Except for outstanding students, universities usually offered no scholarships or allowance of any kind to students. The students had to pay tuition fees.

b. College/Institute (Ecole Supérieure)

These professional institutions required students intending to enrol to pass an entrance examination. Tuition was free and allowances were offered to accepted students throughout their years of study under the condition that they had to work for the government for a certain period of time immediately after graduation. The graduates were guaranteed of employment and those who refused to accept jobs arranged by the government were forced to reimburse tuition fees and allowances to the school authorities. These professional institutions maintained strict regulations and provided a very rigid training programme. Students were well disciplined. They were trained within professional frameworks such as engineering, architecture, medicine, and teaching.

Before World War II (1939-1945) and for a decade after the War (1946-1954), almost all institutions of this kind followed the pattern of

the French system, particularly regarding the curricula and the constitution of those vocational institutes in Paris. Nevertheless, the academic standing of programmes in the two countries (Vietnam and France) was very different.

The Colleges/Institutes for higher learning (*Ecole Supérieure*) in Indochina were established during the period (1905-1907) when Paul Beau was Governor of Vietnam. However, the whole project was later discarded by Klobubowski who succeeded Beau as Governor (1908-1911). The project was suspended until 1917 when Albert Sarraut was re-appointed as Governor for Indochina. It was then reviewed and reconstituted and, finally, put into practice.

In terms of education, the French had the least intention to cultivate intellectuals in Indochina. The real purpose of establishing those institutions for higher education was to train up personnel as instruments to serve the Colonial Government, such as administration assistants, medical assistants, and so on. However, no Vietnamese had ever been assigned to be in charge of any section in the Colonial Administration. First, a medical school was set up, and later followed a Teachers' College, School of Public Administration and a College of Agriculture. In 1913 the medical school and the college of laws were merged into one under the name of The Institute for Higher Learning in Indochina (*Ecole des Hautes Etudes Indochinoises*). This Institute was afterwards developed and turned into the College of Laws. As for the rest of

the colleges/institutes, under administrative orders of the French Colonial Government they were all turned into universities: the University of Agriculture and Forestry, and the University of Public Administration were set up. The appearance of the University of Science followed two years later.

During the years 1935-1938, the total enrolment number of Vietnamese students at the professional colleges & institutes was 2,051. The number enrolled at the University of Hanoi was only 547. However, the number increased rapidly to 1,500 students at the University of Hanoi in 1944 of which 77 percent were Vietnamese students (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993).

Universities of the South

From 1949 on to 1954, the University of Indochina was moved essentially to Saigon, in South Vietnam, to form the core of the University of Saigon. The basic system of the university remained unchanged. From 1955 onwards, all colleges, institutes, and the Saigon University were reconstituted extensively. The combination of all these formed the University of Saigon which was then the centre of higher learning in the South. In summary format, the University comprised of the following branches, schools and faculties:

1. The Normal University of Saigon

Its forerunner the Teachers' College of Indochina (Ecole Supérieure de Pédagogie) was approved to establish on 15th October 1917 by Governor A. Sarraut (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993).

The curriculum of the University was divided into two sections:

- a. Humanities -Literature, History, Geography and Philosophy
- b. Science -Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology

Aim of university: To cultivate qualified teachers

Years of study: Four years (including teaching practice at public schools)

2. National Agriculture Centre (College of Agriculture, University of Saigon)

Formerly the Institute of Agriculture & Forestry of Indochina (Ecole Speciale d'Agriculture et de Sylviculture) at Hanoi, it was approved to establish on 15th August 1938 by the Governor of Indochina.

Aim of the College: To cultivate qualified engineers of agriculture & forestry

Years of Study: Four years (including practices in the farms and forest)

3. College of National Administration, University of Saigon

Its forerunner, the College of Laws and Administration of Indochina, was established in 1917 under the approval of the Colonial Government (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1992).

The College changed later into the College of Laws of the University of Hanoi and, in 1953, part of the faculty moved to the South to form the Institute of National Administration at Dalat (Truong Quoc Gia Hanh Chanh Dalat).

The Institute was substantially reconstituted in 1954, and was then under the direct management of the Office of Prime Minister. It moved to Saigon again in 1955 and bore the name

of The College of National Administration, and became part of the University of Saigon.

Aim of the College: To cultivate public servants & administrators at a higher level.

Years of study: 2- 4 years depending on study programmes.

Requirements: Entrance Examinations or being selected by the government.

4. Medical School of the University of Saigon

Formerly the Medical College of the University of Indochina at Hanoi, it was established in 1902 (Nguyen Ngoc Lanh, 1992). The first principal of this College was Dr Alexandre Jean Emile Yersin (1863-1943). Students at that time were required to study four years in Hanoi and the remaining three years in France, where they were required to complete their theses and intern practices for graduation.

Twenty-eight years later, upon the recommendation of the French Ministry of Education on 10th July 1930, with the approval of the Advisory Council for Education of Ministry of Colonial Affairs, the College became the Faculty of Medicines & Pharmacy of the University of Hanoi (Faculte de Medecine et de Pharmacie de l' Universite de Hanoi). From then on, medical students were trained in Vietnam by French professors. The first local-trained graduates began to practice as professionals in 1935 (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). Thence, the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy was constituted and recognized as a branch of the Medical School of the University of Paris. Nguyen Quoc Bient (1992) notes that it was not until the 1943-1944 academic year that Dr Ho Dac Di became the first Vietnamese teacher at this Faculty.

In 1949, the Faculty of Medicine split into two: one in Hanoi and the other in Saigon. After the declaration of the Geneva Conference in 1954, the faculty at Hanoi moved to the South and merged into the Saigon faculty to form the 'Education Centre of Medical Science' (Trung Tam Giao Duc y Khoa). This Centre split, subsequently, into three schools:

- a. The Medical School of the University of Saigon.
- b. The School of Pharmacy of the University of Saigon
- c. The School of Dentistry of the University of Saigon

5. College of Architecture, University of Saigon

Originally it was a department of the School of Fine Arts in Indochina (Ecole des Beaux-Arts de l'Indochine); it was established in 1924 at Hanoi (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). The Department of Architecture was not formed until the academic year 1926-1927. The School moved to Dalat, South Vietnam in 1928; from 1958 it became part of the University of Saigon under the administrative provision of the Ministry of Education during Ngo Dinh Diem's regime.

Aim of the College: To cultivate designers and architectural engineers.

Years of Study: 5-6 years (including practice).

6. The National Centre of Technology at Phu Tho (Trung Tam Quoc Gia Ki Thuat Phu Tho).

The Centre was established under the administrative order of President Ngo Dinh Diem of the Republic of Vietnam in 1957. It was administered directly by the Ministry of Education. The Centre was comprised of the following divisions/schools:

- a. School of Infrastructure & Land Administration
- b. School of Electrical Engineering
- c. School/Division of Handicraft & Industry
- d. School of Chemistry
- e. School of Marine Science & Technology

Aims of the Centre: To cultivate engineers in varied fields and technicians to serve the country

Years of Study: 2 years for training of technicians; 4-5 years for engineering

7. Teachers College of Technology (Truong Cao Dang Su Pham Ki Thuat)

Under the administrative order of the President of the Republic of Vietnam, the College was established on the 5th of October, 1962 (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). The College was designed to provide a training programme for teachers of science at the secondary level (both high school & training schools for teachers). Study courses included applied & professional science, technology of printing and painting, commerce, and light industry.

In the academic year 1973-1974, the College merged with the National Centre of Technology at Phu Tho to become the Comprehensive University of Thu Duc (Vien Dai Hoc Bach Khoa Thu Duc). It was administered directly by the Ministry of Culture & Education.

After 1975, the University was disbanded and thoroughly reconstituted. It bore the new name of 'The Normal University of Technology at Thu Duc' (Truong Dai Hoc Su Pham Ki Thuat Thu Duc) (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1992).

8. College of Marine & Oceanic Science at Nha Trang (Hai Hoc Vien Nha Trang)

The College was established in 1923 and was administered by the French before World War II. It changed hands to the Vietnamese in 1954.

Based on the provision by the Ministry of Culture and Education in February 1969, the College merged with the University of Saigon and became its branch at Nha Trang (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). The purpose of this College was to train and cultivate specialists undertaking research on oceanic biology and science along the coast of Vietnam.

After 1975, The College changed its name to University of Marine Products at Nha Trang (Truong Dai Hoc' Hai San Nha Trang).

9. College of Arts, University of Saigon (Dai Hoc Van Khoa Saigon)

This College was established prior to 1945 and was a branch of the University of Hanoi. The University was closed by the French during the post World War II re-occupation period (1946-1948). It was re-opened in Hanoi in the academic year 1948-49. There were two faculties then: one in Hanoi and one in Saigon. These two combined to form the Faculty of Letters (College of Arts) of the University of Saigon after the Geneva Agreement in 1954.

Curricula were departmentalised into Vietnamese Literature, Chinese-Vietnamese Literature, Philosophy, History, Geography, Humanities Science, French, and English.

The College offered study programmes leading to Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees before 1975.

10. College of Laws, University of Saigon

This college was formerly the School of Laws and Administration of Indochina (Ecole de Droit et d'Administration); it was officially established on 15 October 1917 at Hanoi (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1992). Its name was changed to The Institute of Laws of Indochina under the order of French President in 1931. From 1950, and especially after 1954, the Faculty moved to Saigon and the college became one of the members of the National Universities of Vietnam in the South. After reconstitution, it became the College of Laws of the University of Saigon after 1957. The College conferred the degrees of Bachelor, Master and Doctor in Law and Economics.

11. College of Science. University of Saigon (Truong Dai Hoc Khoa Hoc Saigon)

This college was formerly the Institute of Science of Indochina, officially established in Hanoi in 1940 and had a branch in Saigon a few years later. Its name was changed to University of Science as a member of the National Universities of Vietnam (Vien Dai Hoc Quoc Gia Viet Nam). From 1954, the two

Faculties of Hanoi and Saigon combined to form the College of Science, University of Saigon.

Before 1975, the College provided quite a variety of study programmes, such as: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Electronic & Electrical Engineering, Biology, Geology, and General Science.

After 1975, the College was disbanded. After reconstitution, it combined with the College of Arts to form the Comprehensive University of Ho-chi-minh City (Truong Dai Hoc Tong Hop Thanh Pho Ho Chi Minh).

12. The University of Hue (Vien Dai Hoc Hue)

The establishment of the University of Hue was the result of political activity by a group of intellectuals in Central Vietnam during the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem in 1957 (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). The University was comprised of the College of Laws, College of Letters, College of Science and a Teachers' College.

The Medical School of the University was set up in 1959. Degrees conferred by the University before 1975 included Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral.

13. The University of Can Tho (Vien Dai Hoc Can Tho)

This University was born much later than the university of Saigon and the University of Hue. It was established in 1966 under the administrative order of General Nguyen Van Thieu, then the Chairman of the National Leading Council which was the Military Leaders' Council after the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem. At the beginning, the University followed the constitution and system of the University of Saigon and of Hue. However, from the academic year 1970-71 it chose to use the American university system based on 'credits' (Tin chi) instead of conventional certification (chung chi) (Nguyen Q. Thang, 1993). It was the first and only Vietnam University to

apply the Western 'credits' system in counting students' performance for graduation.

The University was comprised of the following colleges:

- a. College of Arts (Letters)
- b. College of Science
- c. College of Agriculture
- d. College of Laws & Social Science
- e. Teachers' College

In addition to these state universities, there were some private universities in the South before 1975, such as Van Hanh University, Dalat University, Minh Duc University, Hoa Hao University, and Cao Dai University. Academically, the private universities' standing was comparatively lower than that of the state ones, particularly in the case of Hoa Hao and Cao Dai Universities.

The Impact of the West

i. Culture

The term culture can be defined in many ways. It may be regarded in a narrow sense to mean ideology; it may also imply the expression of ideology which includes literature, creative arts, and performing arts, the cultural forms that are called 'high culture.' In the view of Hsu (1981), culture creations and activities can serve as indicators of the basic orientation of a given culture.

However, the term 'culture' may also be defined as the way of living and the manner in which people organise themselves to carry on their livelihood; in other words, the definition is an anthropological one. Information in this

section is mostly in that light. Religious faith is one of the most common means by which people share their cultural values. Literature, as well as the arts, serves to express the values of a given group. Therefore, observation of religious practices and literary styles are also useful in identifying the mood and character by which people share their culture.

In addition to the continuity of developing Vietnam's national culture there were evident changes in the cultural values in the South during the period of 1865-1954 under the French and the period of 1955-1975 under the Americans. For centuries, Vietnamese cultural values were derived from a long tradition of rural surroundings that emphasised coherent human relationships in small communities and which has been described as a particularism (Dao Duy Anh, 1938). Kinship ties especially were strong and buttressed communal ties. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Vietnamese underwent changes, particularly in response to the intrusion in South Vietnam by the so-called French civilization through their colonial educational system. Industrialization and French trade turned coastal cities into a westernised Vietnam, while the massive population in inland villages, who still retained much of the rural cultural tradition, felt that their brethren in the cities no longer shared the same value system. Even the vocabulary used by the city people was very different from that in the countryside (Kleinan, 1999). Such cultural alienation, compounded by many other factors, finally led to a showdown in the Franco-Vietnamese War, and ended up with a fatal battle in Dien Bien Phu in 1954, which led to the dividing of the country into North

and South, a tragedy in the nation which had not yet reached unification after the thorough blood shedding Vietnam war with the Americans.

It is interesting, then, to make an investigation of cultural development in South Vietnam during the period of the splitting of the country from 1955 to 1975. A brief summary of the historical background of the Southern society would be helpful in order to appreciate its patterns of development which gradually evolved into a distinct life style. First, geographically speaking, the South is quite far from China; therefore, the Chinese cultural impact on the South was not as strong as it was on the North. Secondly, because it had been a colony of France for more than 90 years from 1859, much earlier than the North, it had experienced the early phase of education and the process of modernization along a course different from that in the Central or North of Vietnam. Thirdly, the rapid pace of economic growth is a result of the United States aid during this period pushing South Vietnam into semi-industrialization and urbanization. The result was an integration of the old Vietnamese cultural values with the new pattern of life in the modern industrial world (McAlister, 1969).

ii. *Behaviour and Values*

Human behaviour reflects cultural values, as seen in the interaction of individuals within the framework of the community, educational environments and kinship relations. Traditionally, the Vietnamese family structure is viewed as a channel of facilitating movement towards developing

enterprises rather than as a barrier to change; this can be seen in the value of communal solidarity in the process of adopting technological improvements such as modern irrigation. The behaviour of small town merchants reveals the blended effects of personal intimate relationships of the old style community combined with the contractual relationships of the more impersonal modern business dealings. From these, it can be seen that the transition from a rural to an urban society was achieved in South Vietnam without serious alienation between the two (Smith, 1968). Many of the old behaviour patterns, such as maintenance of intimate personal ties, served positive functions. Close family relations, for example, served to bridge spatial and social distance among members of the same family. There were new factors as well, of course. The development of irrigation, the use of bank cheques, the absence of migrants from their home villages, and their city job all were new elements imposed on old institutions or old situations. "Particularism in human relationships somehow seemed to adapt with changing" (Hsu, 1981, p.22).

Some of the elements of Vietnamese cultural tradition, such as kinship, relationship, and communal ties are surprisingly adaptable to new socio-economic conditions. It has often been said that inter-individual relationships, as a trademark of Confucianism, could have caused retardation of the modernization of Vietnam. In the case of the South's development such a simplistic statement seems to face some challenge, as it had long been under the influence of French education and civilization and the external influence was now continued by the impact of American culture. In fact, "many of the

traditional values and concepts, with proper revisions, actually served as lubricants to facilitate the transformation ushered in by industrialization and urbanization” (Eberhard, 1971, p.267).

Much of the Confucian ethics, after all, can be conducive to the modernization of an economy and society. South Vietnam was not the only place where transformation of a Confucianist Society was on the way then. Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore are all Confucian societies which evidence similar necessity and success in the move toward transformation (Hsu, 1981).

According to Eberhard’s (1971) analysis of notions of love and marriage, the continued emphasis on traditional attitudes toward marriage as an institution to form a family indicates concern with its social implications rather than with unions based on sexual attraction. Western customs are adopted, including relatively free courtship. Western individualism, which might have weakened the concept of social responsibility, and therefore the bond between husband and wife, however, does not appear to have prevailed.

Fewchuan (1974) observed that religious faith as reflected in characteristics of South Vietnam's temples underwent some profound changes during the separation of North and South. Especially noticeable was the movement away from folk beliefs toward the two major religions, Buddhism and Catholicism. The former was traditional and was transplanted from China together with

Daoism; the latter was a consequence of the impact of high religion which was brought by the one-million plus refugees from the North in 1954.

In regard to literature, the Vietnamese products in the South were clearly recognised as continuations and extensions for the tradition of the North. However, as time went on, the theme and writing styles had gradually been westernised not long before the unification in 1975 (Nguyen Duc Hiep, 1993).

In regard to cultural values, which reflected the fact that Vietnamese in the South generally retained values quite similar to those which prevailed in the North before 1954, it was recognised by Nguyen Quoc Bien (1993) that they probably leaned more toward urban than rural patterns, post-West more than purely traditional.

iii. *Uniformity of Rural and Urban Values*

The phenomenon of relative uniformity of values in the city and in the countryside can be attributed to the widening of communication channels that took place in South Vietnam. Education, of course, was extremely significant in making information accessible to an entire population. Channels of communication were also broadened as a result of the proliferation of public media and one strong American radio broadcasting station plus one TV station during the Vietnam War. Due to the expansion of the public media, the pattern of the South had been one of reduced distance between urban culture and its rural counterparts (Duong Thanh Binh, 1995).

For some years, there had been a growing interest in reviving traditional fine arts, dances, drama etc., including both folk and elite culture. For instance, 'Cai loung' (Vietnamese opera derived from Southern China, Guangdong Province) was revised from its traditions by some of the dramatists in search of a new mode of expressing themselves; and artists had been attempting to revive the skill of Vietnamese traditional painting. It appeared that the rapid pace of development of a uniform culture tending towards Westernisation had aroused a counter-action among the younger generation moulded and cultivated by modern Western education, which was re-elected by their swaying toward Vietnamese tradition and creating a new synthesis (Nguyen Van Duc, 1992).

iv. Conclusion

On the one hand, the cultural transformation taking place in South Vietnam, in spite of all the worries of the Vietnamese scholars and educators, was a success during the period of separation 1955-1975. On the other hand, there was a dark cloud on the horizon; the rapid transformation was gathering momentum. South Vietnam had been increasingly drawn into the orbit of Western, especially American, culture due to the growing contact with the West through trade, education, politics, and other interactions which became more and more westernised. The expansion of the influences of the public media were also accelerating, especially the American radio and TV channels. Therefore, much of the Vietnamese population in the South found itself

captured by Western culture, and being drawn toward conformity with it. The tremendous momentum of this movement might eventually have become so formidable that the Vietnamese in the South would be completely assimilated into the American civilization, historically a product of industrialization and urbanization. In Vietnamese, there is a proverb which tells of a young man who tries to imitate the style of walking in a foreign country and who eventually forgot his natural way of walking and had to crawl home on four limbs. If South Vietnam indeed became another occidental nation located in the Orient, as Japan is often described, the consequence would be two-fold. First, there would be no possibility of sharing a cultural heritage with North Vietnam compatriots, because the continuity would have been lost and the similarity erased. Second, there was a more imminent danger. The wickedness that American culture suffered then, for instance, the disintegration of community and the alienation of individuals from one another would appear in the South (Le Huy Hoa, 1999).

The Vietnamese cultural legacy includes a built-in antidote to the problems of modern life. It would be a pity for the Vietnamese in the South if they were to give up these valuable preventives. Culturally speaking, by the mid-1970s South Vietnam was standing at a fork in the road. The resurging interest in tradition on the university campuses, and among the young artists and writers very likely reflected their awareness of the danger of changes in cultural values. Their influence, however, was far too minor to overcome the formidable weight of the public media, the American media in particular, and

the entire Western world. More serious and organised efforts were needed to mobilize available resources in order to accomplish the great task of continuing progress without loss of the Vietnamese identity. As Nguyen Quoc Bien (1995, p.16) commented, "The government-sponsored cultural renaissance movement never became more than an ornamental effort." If there was any hope of preserving the ideological assets of Vietnamese culture to somehow redeem the problems of modern industrial and urban cultures, the efforts to conserve them needed to be more than an ornamental paint job.

In general, Vietnamese scholars agreed that in South Vietnam, the public needed to be educated, the media needed to be educated and the American media then needed to be restricted to a certain degree; the government also needed to be educated, so that the cultural values that the Vietnamese inherited from the Chinese and which had helped them survive for over a thousand years, and that had proved conducive and adaptive to the modern transformation of today, still could be serviceable to the Vietnamese society in the South, and shape an alternative to the Western model of post-industrial culture, an option the whole world would gratefully appreciate.

CHAPTER 6

VIETNAM EDUCATION TODAY

Education After Unification

i. The Context

The Second War in Vietnam and Indochina ended unexpectedly in April 1975. In the short period of 55 days a communist military strategic attack centred on the highland town of Ban Me Thuat was expanded into a nationwide campaign which led to the unconditional surrender of all civil and military forces of the Republic of Vietnam in the South. The rapid victory was surprising and, in fact, beyond the imagination of the leaders of both sides. The attack on Ban Me Thuat was originally planned as the opening shot in a series of offensives designed to continue into 1976; as stated by General Van Tin Dung (1977, p.25),

The strategic resolution of the political bureau was put into effect through the 1975-76 two-year strategic plan: in 1975 we would strike unexpectedly with large, widespread offensives, and create conditions to carry out a general offensive and uprising in 1976. In 1976 we would launch the general offensive and uprising to liberate the South completely..

The sudden collapse of the Republic of Vietnam in the South left the North Communist Regime facing nearly insurmountable problems. In spite of the fact that the vast majority of South Vietnamese soldiers and civil servants remained in place, there was a disintegration of centralised authority. Communist leaders had to move very rapidly to take over the maintenance of law and order, to ensure the transportation and distributions of provisions, medicines and other essential items,

to stop looting and other unrestrained acts of violence and to disarm the army of the Republic of Vietnam. After taking these and other emergency short-term measures, the Communist leaders had to devise longer range plans for the South. However, the Communist Party's strength in the South was rural based. The events of 1975 left the Party ill-equipped to assume responsibility for running cities and towns. Moreover, years of clandestine operations and secrecy produced a work style inappropriate to the demands of peacetime. According to one of the observers from the United Nations, Alexander Casella (1978, p. 17):

What emerged from the resistance was a class of bureaucrats and, above all, a style of management for which, secrecy, suspicion, and compartmentalisation were a conditional reflex. However, with the coming of peace, their reflex had become a liability that hindered all communication, the exchange of ideas, and co-ordination within the system. It is one of the major psychological legacies of the war and of Communism, which may take years to erase.

Notwithstanding the difficulties they encountered, the North Communist Regime carried on their Socialist reforms in the South.

ii. Resettlement Programmes

By 1975 South Vietnam had undergone a process of urbanization which saw its cities swell with displaced persons from the countryside, due to war. The sudden end of war left them and other urban residents, without the means of earning a livelihood, as industries depended on U.S. finance; the service industry and manufacturing industries dependent on the importation of raw materials lost their viability. These people joined the ranks of the unemployed, along with ex-army and civil officials of the Republic of Vietnam. It was apparent from the start that

these persons had to be involved in productive activity of some kind as soon as possible, or else they would become an intolerable burden on the new authorities.

The solution to the problem of displaced persons was a hastily organised programme of rural resettlement back to native villages (Pike, 1977). This programme was quickly extended to include resettlement in the new economic zones - areas that had been abandoned or had not yet been opened up for agricultural exploitation. However, it soon became evident that the resettlement planners had over-estimated their ability to plan adequately for such a large project.

iii. Economic Problems

The Republic of Vietnam in the South had grown in size and strength under American tutelage. According to estimates, the U.S. spent US\$159.42 billion dollars in aid and military related expenditure in Vietnam (U.S. Dept. of Defence, 1977). This represented over 15 times the combined Sino-Soviet expenditure for similar purposes on North Vietnam in the same period of time (1955-1975). As a result of this huge injection of funds, an enormous military establishment and an artificial, aid-dependent economy was created. Moreover, U.S. aid had created a consumer-oriented society in the cities of the South which enjoyed a standard of living well beyond Vietnam's means.

According to Alexander Casella (1978, p.176), South Vietnam's cities had become unmanageable and by the late 1970s, "70% of the economic activities in Saigon was service orientated and only 7% industrial." It should be noted that industry was

heavily dependent on imported raw materials, spare parts and oil for its energy needs. As a result of this lopsided development, the South's burgeoning middle class was ill equipped for the period of deprivation which followed the U.S. evacuation and curtailment of aid. In the countryside, peasant farmers, similarly, had become dependent on U.S. technological inputs which accompanied the Republic of Vietnam's 'Land-to-the-Tiller' program; viz., miracle rice, chemical fertilisers, insecticides, petrol, water pumps and spare parts. The withdrawal of all these items resulted in a decline of rice production. Failure to carry out the policy of agricultural collectivisation together with some natural disasters following the years after unification, made the nation's economic condition worse (Casella, 1978).

iv. Re-educational Process

Following the triumphant march of North Vietnamese troops to Saigon, the Communists brought with them drastic changes into the South, turning it upside down. All public channels of communication transmitted messages in support of the new socialist ideology. Radio, Television, newspapers, journals, poetry, songs, novels, movies; all were transformed into high-volume, high-frequency transmitters of selected themes, new values, and new role models. In a hundred different ways the new orthodoxy was inculcated, perfected, over-determined, as multiple sources sang its praises, taught its virtues, explicated its values, rewarded conformity and punished deviance (Duong Thanh Binh, 1997).

In the aspect of education, schools were closed as educators were rushed to the South from Hanoi to remodel them in conformity with the new ideology and worldview of Marx and Lenin. School curricula were drastically revised, and textbooks were replaced by new ones shipped from Hanoi (Duiker, 1995). The Buddhist University of Van Hanh and the University of Saigon were incorporated into the massive new Ho-Chi-Minh University, administered by the Ministry of Higher Education in Hanoi. The Hoa Hao University in Long Xuyen was dismantled.

However, these changes, vigorous, drastic, and threatening as they appeared to millions of people in the South, were not enough to satisfy the devout Communist leaders in Hanoi who felt compelled to impose their Marxist-Leninist version of 'Ly' philosophy upon the vigorous heterodoxy of the South. Flushed with victory that appeared to fulfil the dreams of fifty years of struggle and hardship, their ideological convictions seemed to be confirmed by reality.

So, like the Vietnamese Neo-Confucians, they remained beneath their Marxist veneer like the Nguyen emperors, and like Ngo Dinh Diem before them; they quickly set about to transform the alien reality of Saigon and the Mekong Delta into conformity with the way, the structure of reality, as they conceived of it (Nguyen Xuan Nham, 1995).

More than one million people in the Republic of Vietnam, out of the population of a little over twenty millions, were ordered to report for 're-education'. According

to the category to which they were assigned, they were instructed to bring along enough food and clothing to last from seven to thirty days. But there was little 'education' awaiting these people, and very few would return home after thirty days. Those were not 'schools' as some tried to portray them, nor were they 'prisons' as others claimed. They were essentially psychological/spiritual 'boot camps', places where "human beings were to be literally 'transformed' (cai tao), to be made into 'new people' (nguai moi) where beliefs and values and personality would be better suited to the new Socialist Society designed for them in Hanoi" (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1992, p.11)

For hundreds of thousands of intellectuals, religious leaders, politicians, congressmen, military and police officers, governmental officials, suspicious elements, and people who worked with or for the Americans, 're-education' meant years of hard manual labour on starvation rations, through which they received an ideological reform process to be converted into 'new men' of the socialist society. Most who endured this would remember only an all-consuming and degrading hunger, manoeuvring for a chance to drink the water their food had been cooked in, trying to catch birds and rats, scrambling to sneak a mouthful of wild berries on a work detail, wracking their brains for some means of obtaining any source of nourishment, however repulsive, to supplement their meagre rations. Many died in these camps. Many more were broken there, either mentally or physically.

No group of people suffered more at the hands of the party than the writers and poets, and the journalists of the Republic of Vietnam (the South regime). Nguyen

Van Duc argued that, in April 1976, those literary artists who had not already fled the country or been arrested were rounded up in a series of swift raids, as if they were dangerous criminals, and trucked off to forced labour camps like a consignment of pigs to the market place (Discussion, 1993).

In effect, everyone was to be there in the camps, indefinitely. There were no charges, no hearings, no sentences. No one knew when, if ever, they would be released. The power of their masters was total, and totally arbitrary. Most were released after two or three or four years, aged beyond their years, utterly cynical, concerned only with getting out of Vietnam or with the survival of themselves and their family in a society from which they were completely alienated. Tens of thousands, however, languished in these wretched camps for many more years, enduring not just the harsh physical conditions, but the petty humiliations to which those deemed to be 'unrepentant' or 'stubbornly reactionary' were subjected. If this is a format designed to celebrate the unification of a country, it is certainly not an appropriate one. Nevertheless, the Communists had achieved their aim of eradicating all opposition elements in the South, and it helped stabilise the occupation of the 'liberated' South. As discussed previously in Chapter IV, this is another practical instance of using education as a means to serve politically intended ends; in this case, those of the Communists.

v. Comments

The re-education programme, overtly set up for political purposes, will certainly be recorded in the long history of Vietnam education, and will occupy a short chapter

describing the days of devastation of human dignity and the humiliation imposed on the intellectuals of the South by the Communist Regime. It is an educational process through which hatred was cultivated, and its influence on the society of the time was profound. Millions of the families were damaged to such a scale that when the breadwinners were in the re-education camps, the housewives and children were left behind without care. Thus it provided a breeding ground for crime and prostitution for the sake of survival of these helpless relatives.

Education in Transition 1976-1986

In South Vietnam before 1975, the mounting U.S. presence under the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem and later that of Nguyen Van Thieu led to the growing influence of American culture and accelerated the breakdown of traditional values and institutions. For two decades the social and cultural environment of South Vietnam reflected an uneasy amalgam of Vietnamese, French and American themes. The American influence also penetrated South Vietnam society through different means. Economic and technological assistance from the U.S.A. stimulated the rise of a wealthy middle class increasingly influenced by social and cultural trends in the United States. The educational system, to a certain extent, was a copy of the pattern of the U.S.A. system, and although the ideal of universal primary education was not completely achieved, the literacy rate had increased to a level essentially higher than that during the colonial period (Duiker, 1995).

After 1975, the new revolutionary authorities did their best to remove the remaining sources of American influence. Within weeks of victory, all schools in South Vietnam were closed, and teachers were compelled to attend retraining sessions before being permitted to return to the classrooms. When the schools were reopened, new Marxist oriented textbooks hastily sent down from the North replaced those that had been in use under the South Regime. A campaign was launched to confiscate books, tapes, and records responsive to Western bourgeois decadence, and the newspapers that had published under the South Regime, except for the moderately critical Tin Sang (The Morning News), were closed by force (Nguyen Quoc Bien, 1994).

The remoulding of the educational system to transform it into a more effective vehicle for building a Communist citizenry was plagued with similar discontinuities. In an article in the September 5 issue of Nhan Dan (The People), Vice-Premier To Huu (1979), the party's rising ideological czar, conceded that many youth lacked discipline and socialist awareness. To deal with such problems, he referred to a recent resolution of the party Central Committee calling for the setting up of a new national educational system. This new system, as argued by To Huu, must devote increased attention to ideology, politics and revolutionary ethics. It must stress the unity of theory and practice, combine academic studies with practical labour, and integrate the school system into the corpus of society at large in order to make it more relevant to the nation's needs. Only then, To Huu argued, could a new generation of young Vietnamese begin to emerge bearing with them the qualities and abilities of the New Man.

The renewal programme known as 'Doi moi' was launched under a decision made in December 1986 when the Sixth Party Congress was held. However, the leaders who attended the forum did not make clear what impact the new strategy would have on social and cultural policies. Documents issued at the end of the Congress indicated that there would be a more practical approach to social problems; for instance, the Political Report made by Troung Chinh (1987), the Secretary General, stressed the importance of science and technology in promoting the performance of the economy. The goal of education was described in dual terms: to form and develop the social personality of the younger generation and to train a skilled workforce capable of contributing directly to socio-economic development (Congress, 1987).

Specific goals for education during that transitional period included the abolition of illiteracy, the realisation of universal primary education, and extending secondary education to all areas with favourable conditions. To enhance the quality of education, the social status and material conditions of teachers and other educational workers was raised. The role of ideology in education was not ignored in that political report, however the view was expressed that "we should oppose vestiges of feudal, colonialist, and bourgeois cultures" (Congress, 1987, p.113). Similarly, "all plots and moves by hostile forces aimed at making cultural and art activities a means of sowing pessimism and a depraved life style must be traversed. Superstitions and other backward customs and practices must be curbed" (Congress, 1987, pp. 114-115).

Nevertheless, over the next few years, Vietnam continued to face severe problems in achieving these educational goals. According to available statistics, only about one half of all eligible children enrolled in kindergarten, and almost 40 percent of adolescents dropped out of school by the age of 14. The country continued to suffer from an ongoing shortage of well-trained personnel, and higher education was still inadequate to meet the needs of a changing society. School buildings were badly in need of expansion and renovation, and teachers were still poorly paid and demoralised (Nguyen Xuan Thu, 1993).

The National Education System

Almost all sectors of the Vietnamese society and economy have gone through profound changes since 1987; changes that have brought forward some important achievements in spite of a lot of harsh challenges. The economy of Vietnam has overcome its decline, inflation has been brought under control, stability has been maintained. Thus, the foundation for a new period of development has been laid.

Redevelopments in education and training have become important parts of the renewal of the state. The basic task of educational redevelopment in Vietnam is to move from meeting the needs of a subsidized, centrally planned economy to meeting the need of a multi-sector, state-managed, socialist-oriented market economy. In 1993, the blueprint of continuous education and training improvement was mapped out by the Ministry of Education, whereby it indicated that the transformation of Vietnam's educational system has been successful in that it is

well developed in accordance with government policies and has been able to avoid committing the same errors of previous years.

A high regard for education in science and technology has been considered as national policy for developing the country's socio-economic objectives, national construction and defence. It provides the foundation and means for assuring successful implementation of such developments. Education and training, therefore, are considered as main targets for development investment; thus, complying with the expectation that education should be used actively to serve socio-economic development while, in return, the whole society should be mobilised to serve education.

Aiming at contributing to the state goal of "rich people, strong country, and civilised and equal society" (VETD, 1995, p.14) educational development must point to the target of improving general knowledge, training qualified manpower, fostering talented nationals, broadening the scope of education and promoting quality results. To be more specific, "the goal of education of Vietnam is to train independent, creative, active employees who can use their professional skills and knowledge to work hard to meet the needs of national construction and defence, while being sensitive to the genius of Vietnamese culture, combining in full play the inheritance of national tradition and the broader human civilization" (VETD, 1995, p.15).

The national education system injects life to these goals in ways appropriate to the various grades, levels, and branches of education. In November 1993, the Vietnamese government issued a decree regulating the grades and levels for education as follows:

1. Pre-school Education
(3 – 4 years old): Three years
2. General Education – Twelve years
 - Primary School – 5 years
 - Lower Secondary School – 4 years
 - Upper Secondary School – 3 years
3. Vocational Education: Three Branches, from 1 to 4 years beyond lower secondary
 - Technical Schools
 - Technical Middle Schools
 - Vocational Schools (Middle)
4. Higher Education: Four Levels
 - College (Cao Dang) – 3 years
 - University Degree (Bachelor's): 4-6 years
 - Master's level – 2 years
 - Doctoral Level – 3-5 years
5. Continuing Education
Providing for students who are unable to attend full-time courses at any institution

Primary Education

i. Objectives

The pre-schools and kindergartens in Vietnam, as officially stated by the Vietnamese authorities (Ministry of Education, 1986), have two objectives:

- a. To train the child's first personality and to prepare them for their future schooling, and

- b. to take care of the health of the child as well as to release parents from childcare work so that they can perform other activities in society.

With regard to primary education, its objective, as specified in Decree No. 305/QĐ dated 26 March, 1986, is to assist students to develop their moral sensibilities, as well as their knowledge.

ii. *Position and Characteristics*

Primary schools in Vietnam are to provide education from the first grade to the fifth grade for children aged from 6 to 14. Primary education serves as the initial basis for the formation and comprehensive development of personality and paves a firm foundation for general education and the national education system (Vietnam Education and Training Directory, 1995).

As stated by the Vietnamese Educational Authorities (V.E.T.D., 1995, p.45), the “primary education of Vietnam bears many characteristics such as being the foundation of education, universalization, national character, modernism, humanism, and democracy.”

iii. *Curricula and Contents*

Primary education in Vietnam is a five-year programme. Each academic year consists of 35 weeks of study, and there are six sessions in a week, each lasting not over four hours (i.e., 24 hours a week).

Those schools that provide more than six sessions a week can offer subjects such as -

- Foreign Languages (optional)
- Informatics
- Rural Economy (optional)
- Intensive Vietnamese Language
- Ethnic Languages (optional)
- Mathematics
- Music
- Fine Arts
- Science
- Physical Education and Training

Each student can select two optional subjects at most and should not spend more than six class hours a week on them.

After finishing Grade 5 (Year 5), students have to take a national primary school education examination. A Primary Education Certificate is awarded to those who pass the exams (Ministry of Education and Training, 1986).

Secondary Education

The current Vietnamese Secondary Education comprises seven years - from Year 6 to Year 12 (Grade 12) and is divided into two major divisions:

1. Lower Secondary Education (4 years)
2. Upper Secondary Education (3 years), or
Specialised Upper Secondary Education

The Lower Secondary Education is a four-year program, starting from Year 6 through Year 9 (Grade 9). It is built on the basis of strengthening and developing the achievements from primary education and continues to formulate the initial bases for cultivating the comprehensive personality of students. During this four-year period of education, students are provided with skills and systematic knowledge of humanity, sciences, social science and general techniques. Civic training (citizenship), occupation training, and working skills are focus areas (see Table 7, Appendices). A Lower Secondary Education Certificate is awarded to students who pass the national secondary examination after finishing their Year 9 studies.

The Upper Secondary Education is a three-year study program from Year 10 through Year 12. It is built on the foundation of the lower secondary education and has the responsibility for providing students with a more complete general education knowledge, of developing human personality, of preparing students for higher education, vocational training, social life, production for national

construction and defence to meet the requirements of renovation in the socio-economic developments (Vietnam Education, MOET, 1995).

By the end of Year 12 studies, students are equipped with a general education knowledge, systematic skills of natural and social sciences, and high moral standards. On top of these, students are expected to have a love for their country, for peace, and for mankind; a sense of responsibility for family and society and an eagerness to continue pursuing knowledge.

A General Education Certificate is awarded to the students who pass the national upper secondary education examinations.

However, the current upper secondary education has only one stream of education and students do not have much choice in their studies, whereas in the past, in South Vietnam, there were at least four streams from which students could choose; viz.,

- Stream A: Natural Science
- Stream B: Mathematics
- Stream C: Foreign Languages
- Stream D: Classical Language Studies and Humanities

It is worth noting that prior to 1989, continuing its educational system during the division period of 1955 to 1975, the educational system in North Vietnam consisted of only ten years (4-3-3) (see Education of the North, p.188) The Vietnamese government has recently implemented a policy on compulsory education. According to this law, compulsory education falls within the age range of 3 to 14 years old.

Specialised Upper Secondary Education

This kind of secondary education is the combination of the renovation in upper secondary education built on the base of lower secondary education. The following are the characteristics of the specific type of education:

- Improving the scientific and modern knowledge
- Intensifying practice, technical education and working skills
- Renovating teaching and learning methods
- The three specific groups of study in this kind of education are:
 - a. Natural Science
 - b. Natural Science and Engineering
 - c. Social Science

Each group has its own compulsory and optional subjects (MOET, 1995).

General Education Facts

i. Schools, Classrooms and Equipment

In 1992-93, there were 15,228 schools with 188,133 classrooms for primary education and lower secondary education. With a total of 332,688 classes, these classrooms were insufficient to cater for the demand for teaching. In many schools, therefore, students had to study in one or two or three shifts a day. Over 53% of these schools were too old to be used and were classified as unsafe to house students, especially as they all had thatched roofs. Almost no single primary school, or lower secondary school had a laboratory, a workshop or a studio.

For upper secondary education, there were 1,118 schools with 14,105 classrooms for 14,396 classes. With reference to equipment and furniture, desks and chairs for both students and teachers were seriously lacking. Many schools had no blackboards. In the remote areas such as in the Cao Loc District (Mountainous area) of Lang Son province, desks and chairs in 30% of its classrooms were pieces of board hanging along poles in the rooms. In provinces of Long An, Kien Giang and Minh Hai, only about 15 to 20 percent of desks and chairs were considered in good shape (Du An Quoc Gia, 1993-94, Vol 2, p.9). Equipment for teaching was out of date and inappropriate to the new curricula. In addition, the level of maintenance was poor.

ii. *Curricula and Teaching Methods*

After 1975, the new government initiated some education reforms in primary education. The programme changed from four years to five years to be compatible with that of the South and of many other countries in the world. In lower secondary education, the system changed to four years, not three years as it was in the past. Almost all subjects (e.g. Vietnamese, mathematics, history, geography) at this level of education as well as in upper secondary schools (Vietnamese, foreign languages, history, geography, mathematics, science) were modified significantly to meet the new demand of a changing society (Du An Quoc Gia, 1993-1994). In the last few years, the teaching methods and the curriculum content have become less politically oriented and more practical. This does not mean that the actual programme and the teaching methods are perfect. More profound reforms in both

content and methods are necessary, particularly in social studies, business, science and technology subjects.

With regard to methodology, rote learning and one-way transmittal of knowledge have been the major methods used by the majority of teachers in primary and secondary schools. Various modes of study such as class participation, self learning, class discussion, lesson preparation etc., have not been properly or widely applied in classrooms. Books and materials relating to teaching methodology in any language are very rare in Vietnam. New teaching methodologies have not been introduced in any teacher's training college or university.

iii. Teaching Materials and Textbooks

As in any country, textbooks in Vietnam play a very important role in a student's learning process. Textbooks for primary and secondary schools in this country are published monopolistically by the Education Publishing House (Nha Xuat Ban Giao Duc) of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). There are a number of steps to be taken in publishing a textbook. Firstly, it must be based on general teaching strategies approved by the MOET; then the Institute of Educational Science (Vien Khoa Hoc Giao Duc) develops sets of proposed syllabi. Finally, 14 subject committees are formed and headed by the Minister of MOET to examine the syllabi and to supervise the preparation of the textbooks concerned.

The author(s) and the subject committee work closely together on the draft. When the manuscript is approved, it is forwarded to the publisher for publication. The

publisher uses purchasing orders to decide the volume of circulation. Textbooks for the first Grade (Year 1) are of most concern. Each textbook, with not more than 150 pages, of 13 x 19 cm size, costs 1,000 Dong (equivalent to U.S. \$0.15), which is 50% cheaper than books by Science or Literature publishers. To date, each grade has a set of many textbooks. For example, at Grade 1 (Year 1) there is a set of 11 textbooks, costing 9,400 Dong in total (equivalent to U.S. \$1.00), whereas for Year 9, the set of textbooks consists of 25 books, with a value of 28,050 Dong (equivalent to U.S. \$3.00) (The National Budget Du An Quoc Gia, 1994, Vol. I, pp. 110-111).

Reading materials and reference books are even rarer. Maps, world atlases, games, toys, children's books, videos, cassettes, radios, typewriters, computers etc cannot be found in any primary or secondary school. Schools do not have the funds to buy new equipment. Most primary schools do not have a library. In the secondary schools, there are rooms called 'Library' or 'Reading Room' without books.

iv. Teacher Training

The quality of education at all levels depends greatly on teaching staff. However, the training of teachers in Vietnam has not been stable. Teachers in upper secondary schools are usually trained in the Normal Universities (Teacher Training Universities - 'Dai Hoc Su Pham'). Teachers in the lower secondary schools are mainly trained in the provincial Teachers Colleges (Truong Cao Dang Su Pham). Teachers in Professional Secondary Schools and in Vocational Training Centres are not formally trained in any teacher training institution. Finally, staff teaching in

primary schools and in pre-schools and kindergartens are trained in the Secondary Teachers Training Schools (Trung Hoc Su Pham). Up to 1991, there were 18 teacher training universities belonging to the MOET and 107 pedagogical schools under the responsibility of provincial education authorities. In the 1989-90 academic year, there were 65,398 students and, in the year after, 63,898 students in all teacher institutions.

Depending on requirements of each type of teacher, the length of study varied:

- 12 (years) + 5 (years) for teachers of foreign languages
- 12 (years) + 4 (years) for upper secondary teachers
- 12 (years) + 1 (year) for teachers in lower secondary school
- 09 (years) + 3 (years) for teachers in lower secondary school
- 09 (years) + 2 (years) for teachers in lower secondary school
- 07 (years) + 1 (year) for teachers in primary schools or in kindergarten
- 04 (years) + 3 (years) for teachers in pre-schools or kindergartens

In comparison with candidates who try to enter other institutions, students applying for teacher training institutions have a lower academic standing (BaoGao Cong Tac, Giao Doan Chan Doan I, Vol. I, MOET, 1994).

v. Training of Professional & Vocational Teachers

In the system of professional secondary schools and vocational or job training centres, the number of teachers is quite large. In the 1992-1993 academic year,

there were 10,692 teachers in professional secondary schools and 6,433 teachers in vocational training centres. There are six streams in professional training:

1. Technical Education
2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
3. Economics
4. Pedagogy
5. Health and Physical Education
6. Culture and Arts

The main content of teaching in vocational training centres covers:

1. Building and construction
2. Agriculture, Fishery, and Forestry
3. Business and Services
4. Postal Services, covering 396 types of career, of which 27 are very popular

Inevitably, there is some overlapping programmes between the professional training and the vocational training. Most of these schools and centres belong to provincial Authorities (MOET, 1995). The academic background of teachers in these schools varies greatly: (i) a very small number possess post-graduate degrees, (ii) most of them have graduated from universities in Vietnam or from abroad, (iii) a number have graduated from professional secondary education, (iv) teachers, with the lowest academic level, normally in charge of practical classes in job training centres, are those who graduated from vocational training centres. The majority of these teachers have never gone through any teacher training schools. Nevertheless, many of them have participated in short courses of teaching training.

To be admitted to a professional school, a student must have completed Year 9 or Year 12; a programme of three years is for those who have completed Year 9, and a two-and-a-half year programme for those who have completed Year 12. There are two types of students: 'Regular' students and 'irregular' students (on-job training students). The number of students in professional education and vocational training centres has been declining in recent years. This is due to the fast socio-economic development and changing of the state and the quality of training which obviously fails to satisfy the demand and needs of the labour markets today.

To conclude, this current system of professional and vocational training exists quite independently. Its relation with other levels of formal education is very loose. As a result, the programmes have not been responsive to the needs of a changing society, and they are unable to pace with the fast tempo of national developments.

vi. Financing Education

The budget for education in the five-year period of 1980-1985 was 5.9% of the total national budget, and in the 1986-1990 period it was 7.95%. This was an increase, but was very low in comparison with some of the other countries in that decade (Australia in 1982-83: 14% of total government budget; Brazil: 13.5%; Canada: 19.0%; Thailand: 12.0%; Hong Kong: 17.4%). The budget did not respond adequately to the needs of the new trends in education, and affected seriously the quality of education in Vietnam (Du An Quoc Gia, 1994, Vol. I). In addition, the major part of the budget was used to pay salaries of personnel (56.99% for salary

of staff in primary and secondary schools in 1990 and increased to 64% in 1994), leaving the budget for basic building and teaching materials very low.

In 1993 for example, the budget for each primary school student was 24,337 Dong (U.S. \$30.0), of which 508 Dong (or 2%) was used for school buildings, and 23,829 Dong (98%) for staff salaries. As a result, educational premises including libraries and other educational facilities remained in extremely poor condition. The low standards in all sectors of education are due largely to the budget. Teachers' salaries were not enough for them to keep themselves and their families. Most of them had to work elsewhere to earn extra income for survival; the alternative was to leave their teaching career. The prospect of education in Vietnam did not look promising (Du An Quoc Gia, 1994, Vol.1).

vii. General Education in Viet-Nam: Comments

The new system of education in Vietnam requires further reform. The quality and efficiency of education and training seems to be declining, and has failed to meet the demands of the necessary and desired renovation. The proportion of illiterates in the country remains large (12.3%). Enrolments in primary and secondary education have dropped, especially in rural areas. The target of universal primary education remains distant. Drop-out and repetition rates are high at all levels. Complementary vocational and technical training programmes are reaching fewer people. The quality of training is low and often not relevant to realistic needs. Many graduates in higher education, technical and vocational schools have difficulties in finding employment.

Internal and external efficiency remains low at all levels. Certain areas of the country and groups within the society lag far behind the rest of the country in educational development (Report of the VN Education and Human Resources Sector Analysis, 1997).

Higher Education

As stated by Professor Tran Chi Dao (1995, p.77) Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Education and Training, the objective of Vietnam's higher education is "an education with the aims of improving people's knowledge, nurturing the elite, developing personality; one that serves as a foundation to train new quality men, self-controlled working people who are dynamic and creative enough to enter the 21st Century". In fact, Vietnamese higher education should be actively responsive to the needs of the market, the open-door economy, the cultural reconstruction and the requirements for national development.

In November 1993, the new educational system of Vietnam was approved by government decree. The new structural features of higher education demonstrate that there are two areas of study in higher education: programmes in colleges (Truong Cao Dang) and universities (Dai Hoc) which vary from 3 semesters to 6 years in length of study.

12 (years) + 3-4 (semesters) - Leading to Certificates of general higher education
 12 (years) + 2-4 (years) - Leading to Diploma of Specialised Higher Education

- 12 (years) + 3 (years) - To train lower secondary school teachers
- 12 (years) + 4 (years) - For Bachelor of Arts, Science, Engineering
- 12 (years) + 6 (years) - For Medicine & Dentistry

At present, programmes at universities consist of the following streams; a system adopted from the former Soviet Union (Du An Quoc Gia, 1994, vol. 2, pp. 47-9).

1. Technology (Khoi ky-thuat cong nghiep)
2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (Khoi Nong- Lam-Ngu)
3. Science, Social Science, and Teachers Education
(Khoi Khoa Hoc Co Ban va Su Pham)
4. Economics (Khoi Kinh Te)
5. Health Science (Khoi Y-Te)
6. Culture and Arts (Khoi Van Hoa va Nghe Thuat)
7. College System (He Cao-dang)
8. Postgraduate Study Programmes (He Cao Hoc)
9. Postgraduate Programmes by Research (He Nghien Cuu Sinh)

Universities also offer postgraduate higher degree study programmes such as:

Master's Degree - in general, two years after the Bachelor's degree.

Doctoral Degree - two to four years after the Master's degree.

i. Status of Higher Education

By 1991, there were in Vietnam 105 universities with 126,600 students; however, each university covered only one field of study. There were only small colleges grouped according to their specialties and some of the comprehensive universities which provided programmes in humanities, social and natural science were comparatively small. The scope of almost all of the higher education institutions in Vietnam was very limited. This situation had caused a lot of difficulties relating to management and administration expenditures, and had hindered the improvement

in quality of training. The mono-disciplinary model of institutions limited the organization of training on a wider spectrum and the capacity to associate research and social service in a comprehensive way. Although this system of university study seems no longer appropriate in Vietnam (Nguyen Xuan Thu, 1993), it was not until 1993 that Vietnam had larger multi-disciplinary universities.

From the end of 1993, some multi-disciplinary universities were established by integrating the former small institutions into big ones, such as:

- Hanoi National University (December 1993)
- Ho-chi-minh City National University (January 1995)
- University of Hue (April 1994)
- University of Thai Nguyen (April 1994)
- University of Danang (April 1994)

According to recent statistical data, by 1995 the number of institutions for higher learning were distributed as follows (based on specialties):

- Comprehensive Universities & Colleges:	8
- Universities & Colleges of Engineering:	9
- Agricultural-Forestry-Fishery Colleges:	3
- Universities of Economics, Management and Law:	5
- Colleges of Foreign Languages and International Studies:	2
- Colleges of Medical Science & Sport:	7
- Colleges of Culture and Fine Arts:	7
- Teachers Colleges (Outside University):	4
- National and Provincial Teachers Training Colleges:	37
- Other Colleges:	7

(Source: Vietnam Education and Training, 1995)

These institutions for higher learning have been distributed in some main cities and provinces, such as Hanoi, Ho-chi-minh City, Hue, Haiphong, Danang, Thai Nguyen, Can Tho, and Ha Son Binh. It is interesting to note that some of these institutions are under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Training

while others are under the Ministries of Health, Culture, Finance, Laws, Construction, Transportation, and Water Authority.

This structure of the higher education network needs to be reorganised, as it is composed of a large number of small and scattered institutions with poor facilities, weak and inefficient management, and narrowly specialised programmes that fail to train students for job demands in the varied labour markets. While the government encourages the opening of public, semi-public, community based and private institutions at tertiary level, subsidising them partially, amalgamation of colleges and universities is one of the re-organising programmes being implemented to respond to the need for changes.

ii. Significant Issues

Other significant issues regarding higher education in Vietnam include:

- a. inability of higher education institutions to link with the development of the state in research, production, and employment.
- b. unsatisfactory quality of higher education and irrelevant training programmes which fail to meet the requirements of the fast changing society.
- c. low efficiency in management, administration, and services in higher education.
- d. lack of a system of written legal documents which stipulate the management structure within which the relation between institutions and the Ministry is clearly stated.

The lack of such system leads to two tendencies:

- the extreme dependence of the institutions on the Ministry which, in turn, reduces their motive force of action to change, and

- the lack of control or guidelines, exert a negatively influence on the training quality and its evaluation.

e. *The Academic Staff*

The basic data on the academic staff for the 1994-1995 academic year are demonstrated as follows (Lam Quang Thiep, 1995):

- Total number of teachers: 21,484 (64% of the total 33,683 education personnel).
- Distribution by age: In general, the average age is high, and much higher at institutions with a long history. Only about 30% of the teaching staff are under 35 years old.
- Distribution by qualifications: 2,991 or 14% hold doctoral degrees of the teaching staff. The higher degree holders are concentrated mainly in Hanoi and Ho-Chi-Minh City.
- Lifestyle: The salary of the lecturers is very low. About 50% of the teaching staff have to supplement their earnings through holding an extra job. This seriously affects the quality of teaching and research by university academic staff.

f. *Student Enrolments*

In the 1994 academic year, the total number of students enrolled at the institutions of higher learning was 356,310 of which 136,940 were full time students, and the rest were students of varied modes of delivery. This figure indicates that there are 50 tertiary students per 10,000 people in Vietnam (i.e., 0.05%). It is a very small proportion compared to most countries in the region (MOET, 1995). With 21,848 staff for 356,310 students, the staff/student ratio is 1:16.4. With regard to youths in the age range of 20-24 the percentage of students nationwide was 5.9%.

In the two years (1994-1995) the total number of students increased steadily due to the nation's economic growth and the diversification of training programmes.

University and College students are required to take entrance examinations before they can be admitted to universities or colleges; they are split into two groups depending on their scores on exams and social political background. However, there have been some change in student admissions in recent years. Before 1987, the entrance exams for institutions of higher learning were administered by the Ministry of Education - Higher Learning; however, the selection process has been turned over to the respective enrolling institutions since 1997.

In the past, the state policies for students of higher learning allowed for either granting of scholarships or subsidies. However, with the re-orientation of higher education in the direction of serving the market economy, and together with some amendments to the national constitution, the Higher Education Institutions have been permitted to collect tuition fees from most of the students since 1988, although scholarship grants continue to be available to students according to their academic achievements and good conduct. This move towards personal payment of fees creates problems of equity as the gap between the rich and the poor has increased in Vietnam since the open-door policy in 1986. As mass education diminishes, it is not surprising to perceive the emergence of education for

the elite. There are some 'targeted students' including children of veterans, disabled veterans, martyrs and merited people, who receive an education allowance.

g. *Teaching and Facilities*

In almost all institutions of higher learning, a mass lecture given by staff is the predominant teaching method. Teaching with aids (videos, overhead projectors, slide show, film), case study, class discussion, problem solving in groups, etc. is not widely used. The ratio between class contact hours (30 hours per week) and private study is 1:1 or, in some cases, even less. Only 15.6% of students go regularly to a library (often to have a quiet place to study), and 8% never visit the library; 74.7% of students have expressed the view that the teaching methodologies are boring (Lam Quang Thiep, 1995). Textbooks and reference materials are in great shortage. 75% of subjects have neither lesson plans nor teaching materials. Library facilities are desperately poor. The Hanoi National University of Technology holds the largest collection of books; 259,200 volumes, written mainly in Russian. Other universities have much smaller collections; often of less than 5,000 copies, and with most of them being very old. Lam Quang Thiep (1995, p.79) indicated that the total expenditure on books and library materials was 2,224 million Dongs (equivalent to U.S. \$200,000), an average of U.S. \$1,900 per institution. Overhead projectors, slide projectors, film shows, language laboratories and science laboratories are very rare. The total value of computers (102 PC computers) in the entire system of higher education

in 1990 (with 103 universities and colleges) was 714 million Dong (U.S. \$70,000), an average of U.S. \$680 per university; and 11,455 million Dong (U.S. \$1,000,000) for laboratories, an average of U.S. \$7,910 per university (Du An Quoc Gia, Vol.2, pp.107-116).

iii. *Overview*

Generally speaking, the Vietnamese Higher Education system faces three major obstacles:

- Within the higher educational system itself, the structure, network, goals and objectives, curriculum and methodologies are very defective and irrational. There are severe limits to the connections between higher education institutions (universities and colleges) and science research, business, production and employment. In comparison with the demand for national development, the scale of the higher education system remains very small and its quality in education and training is low.
- Manpower to maintain and develop higher education still remains very fragile. There is a serious shortage of well qualified teaching staff as well as of physical facilities; the management mechanisms remain ineffectual due to a lack of scientific bases and a whole set of laws and regulations which fail to meet the demand for improving the training quality. The teaching staff have to face a lot of difficulties in their academic and economic life, thus causing negative influences on their work.

- Appropriate socio-economic conditions, which are often considered as a prerequisite to education in general and creative thought in particular remain very limited as is often the case in developing countries, thus reducing learning interests and dynamism, particularly at the higher education level.

In brief, the demands for higher education development to meet social needs are changing to a greater extent than existing resources and reserves of resources are capable of handling. All these constitute huge challenges to the higher education system of Vietnam at the threshold of the 21st century.

CHAPTER 7

i. Introduction

This study consists of selected aspects of more than two thousand years of education in Vietnam; from 111 B.C. to 1995 A.D. They are presented somewhat chronologically according to divisions caused by historical evolution of cultural, philosophical, social and political developments that have impinged on Vietnam education. The four main divisions are:

1. 111 B.C. to 1886 A.D.

The Early Education in Vietnam which commenced with the Chinese invasion in III B.C. and the introduction of Chinese language, continuing to the declaration of China's abandonment of its suzerainty over Vietnam in 1886 A.D.

2. 1886-1954 A.D.

This sixty-nine year period covers the French rule and its implementation of colonial education in Vietnam.

3. 1955-1975

Within this twenty-year period, the Vietnamese began to sanction their ownership of education in the country, but the efforts were hindered by the bifurcated north/south divide.

4. 1975-1995

The development of a more national approach to education became possible after the reunification of the country in April 1975.

ii. Study Overview

An explanatory background of each period has been provided to enable a contextual understanding of the formation of the country's educational system, and the impact of the system on Vietnamese society and its national identity. However, a succinct review by way of summarising the whole story may be of value. Thus, Chapter 7 provides a succinct overview of the study's identified development features of Vietnam's educational system.

The introductory chapter gave some basic information about Vietnam's geographic features, the people that constitute the nation, the long history that covers more than two thousand years with the constant changing of dynasties and the evolution of Vietnamese language. The furnishing of this information was to aid in the understanding of Vietnam as a modernising nation.

The second chapter provided detailed information on historical factors which indicate how an early education system of Vietnam was established under the influence of China, and its impact on the formation of a Confucian political system and a Confucian society in Vietnam.

Many Vietnamese scholars agree that the history of formal Vietnamese education commenced in the year 1075 under King Ly Nhan Ton, "when the Vietnamese government officially introduced the Minh Kinh - the first tertiary examination in the country, to select talented persons for government positions" (Nguyen Xuan

Thu, 1993, p.13). Others consider that Vietnamese education started in the year of 1076 when the Quoc Tu Giam (Temple College of Literature), the first national academy was established.

However, more recent scholarship is generally of the opinion that Vietnam's education essentially commenced soon after the Han Chinese invasion in 111 B.C. During the Chinese rule, the Chinese tried to impose a centralised state system on the Vietnamese to forcibly sinicise their culture. Chinese civilization, particularly the Chinese written language, was introduced into the country and with Chinese writing came Chinese control. A considerable impetus to the introduction of Chinese characters came about when significant number of Chinese refugees, members of the scholarly bureaucracy and families of Han functionaries fled to the area as a result of the brief Wang Mang usurpation (9-23 A.D.) that intervened between the earlier and later periods of the Han Dynasty. With the encouragement of the Chinese governor, schools were founded by the refugees to teach Confucian learning. With the flood of refugees the role of education shifted to one of outright cultural and political assimilation - i.e., signification.

Traditionally, the Chinese administrators established both public and private schools, mainly for their sons, to cultivate them into officials of state administration. These officials undertook the responsibility for implementing the policy of the feudal intelligentsia, suggesting that sons of the mandarin class could also be members of the power body, regardless their scholastic achievements. This

situation continued for some centuries and, finally, only a small number of Vietnamese from the gentry were allowed to attend the Chinese schools. No details of the educational system of Vietnam appear to have been recorded during the period.

This model continued until the Chinese Tang Dynasty (AD 618- 907) when China replaced the competitive examination development for the system of government of the feudal intelligentsia, inaugurated doctoral degrees and sent excellent Vietnamese students to take the State Literacy Examination in Beijing. In organization, the Vietnamese system of education was a reproduction of the Chinese system, being divided into primal education (under fifteen years old) and higher education (above fifteen years old).

An independent Vietnam was established by Ngo Quyen who defeated the Chinese troops at a decisive battle in Each Dang in 938. Vietnam's independent status continued until the French invasion of Vietnam in the late 19th Century. During the period of independence, reigns changed from dynasty to dynasty. Nevertheless, Vietnamese education continued to develop. In 1253 AD the National Institute of Learning was established followed the setting up of the Royal College in the Temple of Literature in 1076. These were the two main public academies of higher learning in Vietnam, and continued to operate until the beginning of the twentieth century when in 1918 the French Colonial

Administration determined to abolish completely Confucian learning and education in Vietnam.

The content of the examinations was mainly based on the Five Ancient Books (Ngu Kinh), The Book of History (Kinh Thu), and the Four Books (The Four Classics, Tu Thu), along with Confucian works as well as the Vietnamese Historical Annals (Su Ky). However, contents of the State Literary Examinations changed with the variations of dynasties in Vietnam, although the main content remained the same throughout the course of the history of state examination system.

The main purpose of the Literacy Examinations was essentially the elevation of the educated classes to different levels within the mandarin hierarchy. Covering Chinese Philosophy and literary works and exclusively in the language of the Chinese mandarin 'chu nho', the examinations were not easy to pass. The required a powerful memory virtually to the exclusion of all else -including creative and independent thinking. This, of course, mitigated against an administration imbued with any substantial intellectual and creative impetus, favouring a more stable Confucian inactivity bred in men of classical learning and honour.

The State Literary Examination had prolonged its practice for almost one thousand years in Vietnam since the first examination took place in 1075 to the

ending in 1918. It had a profound influence on Vietnam culturally, politically, socially, and economically. For many modern scholars, both East and West, the educational system was, as a Chinese thinker and philosopher Hu Shih (1959, p.445) observed, “fossilized as a state orthodoxy in pre-republic days. It was antidemocratic development.” English philosopher Bertrand Russell (1992) also pointed out the difficulty posed by the rigidity of the Confucian value system. He observed that the insistence on filial piety and the excessive strength of the Confucian family were barriers to social change and national reconstruction.

To conclude, whatever criticism may be directed at the State Literary Examinations, the practice of this educational system had, for more than one thousand years, constructed a firm Confucian society in Vietnam. So deep-rooted did Confucianism become, it formed the basic mentality and the attitude of the Vietnamese people; it became part of them.

The third chapter presented a substantial narration of the invasion and rule of Vietnam by the French (1886-1954) together with the incoming cultural tides from the West. It also described some elements in regards to the setting of an elite colonial educational system and its effects on Vietnam.

When the French embarked on the conquest of Vietnam in 1858, it was a long standing independent nation-state, where Confucian institutions and values had been established. The Chinese classics educational system was well developed

and widespread, taught in village schools staffed by Vietnamese who aspired to become civil servants in their nation's bureaucracy. The Vietnamese court had traditionally controlled education through a Ministry of Education and Rites which administered the State Literary Examinations and ran the national academy. Native village schools were all forced to close down and were disbanded when the French consolidated their power in Cochinchina; French schools were set up to replace the abandoned ones at the village level.

The original intention of the French in Vietnam was to rule with an iron hand over the newly gained colony so that the Colonial Administration could easily pursue its political and economic purposes. Until 1917 Governor-General Albert Sarraut presented a sharply outlined French educational policy and announced a comprehensive education system to serve the youths of Vietnam. This new educational system was, as Albert Sarraut (1954, p.44) remarked, to provide "a simple education, reduced to essentials, permitting the child to learn all that will be useful for him to know in his humble career of farmer or artisan to ameliorate the natural and social conditions of his existence."

In 1918, a new and comprehensive colonial educational system was introduced officially to Vietnam. This schooling system continued until 1945, and the Japanese came to Vietnam and overthrew the French by a 'coup d'Etat' on the 9th of March under the banner of 'returning independence to Vietnam.' Thenceforth, the form and practice of instruction turned from the French language to

Vietnamese as the teaching media. It was a turning point in the history of Vietnamese education.

During the Colonial Period, the development of higher education in Vietnam was slow. University of Hanoi was established in 1904; two more universities were set up in 1938. The University of Science was founded in 1940.

To sum up, the Vietnamese context “was one in which education policy was contested from all sides; by the French Colons, Vietnamese elites, and villagers.

During the sixty-nine year period of French rule, the Vietnamese had taken possession, through the French education system, of an inheritance from the French; viz., the transfer of bureaucracy. The transfer of a centralised bureaucracy from France to Vietnam represented the transfer of a new educational technology in the country.

Chapters 4 and 5 identified two different development directions of education in Vietnam during the divided period (1955-1975) of the country. Educational changes in the North of Vietnam were radically different after 1954.

In the North, the Vietnamese Communists, following the patterns of Russian and Chinese Communists, established a socialist state and called their regime a proletarian democratic dictatorship. Within the Communist doctrine, education is

considered to be synonymous with 'persuasion'. It is far broader than that which goes on in the schools. Indoctrination and propaganda are seen as forms of persuasion and are inseparable from education. Whatever makes an impact on the hearts and minds of people performs an educational task. In order that they might be more easily reached by the extensive network of mass media carrying the messages of the state to the cities, towns and villages, the masses had to be taught to read posters, brochures, propaganda sheets and even the newspapers published by the party. The reduction of mass illiteracy was given the first priority in the communist policies. Under the broad concept of Communist education, learning that happens outside the schools is often more important than class instructions in the schools. The role played by different agencies of propaganda and indoctrination at times overshadows the schools on the broad sense of 'persuasion' and the changing of people. The schools also have a strategic role in reaching and remoulding the young generation and providing a planned environment for learning. The aim of education in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was to promote and to perpetuate the Communist philosophy, and to raise a new generation of inspired fighters for the Communist Regime. In short, education was an instrument of indoctrination and of propaganda which was not confined to formal instruction in the school but permeated every aspect of the life of every individual for twenty-four hours a day. No dissident opinions were permitted or tolerated in any area of life, and deviationists ruthlessly were suppressed. Not only were psychological and propagandistic influences utilised to ensure conformity, but the economic life of the country was mobilised also to

destroy individuality. As a result, such education produced citizens with stereotyped mentality and ideology, and without creativity.

It is unfortunate that the Vietnamese scholars who had just been liberated by the West from the bondage of the Confucian way of thinking, were imprisoned again in the Marxist-Leninist ideology via this system of education in the North of Vietnam

In the South, the inheritance of educational technology from the French Colonial Administration had provided the Republic of Vietnam with a modern educational system under the leadership of Nguyen Duong Don who was appointed as Secretary of State for national education in 1956. It was agreed, under the guidance of Don, that education of the Republic of Vietnam should be free, public, and universal; that it should be extended to every village in the nation (The South), and that a complete system should be established from the primary schools through to the universities. A new educational system was born in South Vietnam.

During the 1953-1955 period, Nguyen Doung Don's educational programme was put into practice.

This general educational programme was revised in 1958-1959 academic years. It was called the 'Hoang Xuan Han Programme' under the leadership of Huang

himself and the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts. The programme was based on the French model with some modification such as devoting more time to the Vietnamese language and with less time for French and other languages. More attention was drawn to Vietnamese history and geography. It was the first Vietnamese educational system/programme organised by a group of Vietnamese educators.

The Hoang Xuan Han Educational Programme was reformed in 1967-1968 academic year under the Advisory Counsel of UNESCO. The new Han's General Education Programme was a continuous 12 years system of 5 primary years and 7 secondary.

Higher education was well developed in the South during the divided period. Over twenty years, all colleges, institutes and the University of Saigon underwent a wide and profound reconstitution process. On top of the huge expansion of the University of Saigon, five to six private universities were also established, although their academic standing was comparatively lower.

To conclude, during the two decades, both France and the United States played a key role in Vietnam education. The French influence overshadowed the American influence in the first decade; however, in the second decade, closer contacts with the United States led to an increase of American influence on education in South Vietnam. In reality, a blend of French and American influence guided by the

overall aim of making use of the experiences of the West to design an educational programme that would meet the context and the needs of the changing society of South Vietnam.

Chapter 6 described the transitional period of 1975-1986. In South Vietnam before 1975, the mounting U.S presence under the Regime of Ngo Dinh Diem and later that of Nguyen Van Thieu led to the growing influence of American culture and accelerated the breakdown of Vietnamese traditional values and institutions. For twenty years the social and cultural environment of the Republic of Vietnam in the South reflected an uneasy amalgam of Vietnamese, French, and American themes. The rise of a wealthy middle class increasingly was influenced by social and cultural trends in the United States. In the latter decade of the period of division of the country particularly, the educational system of the South was a copy of the pattern of the U.S. System.

After the downfall of the Regime in the south, the new revolutionary authorities made all-out efforts to remove the remaining sources of the American impact on Vietnam. Within weeks of the triumph of the North, all schools in the South were closed, and teachers were forced to attend retraining sessions before being permitted to return to the classrooms. Educators from the North were rushed to the South from Hanoi to remodel the schools in conformity with the new ideology reflecting the worldview of Marx and Lenin. School curricula were drastically revised, and textbooks with appropriate ideology were sent to the South to replace the old ones.

A campaign of confiscating books, tapes, and musical records responding to Western bourgeois was launched, and all newspaper were forced to close. The remoulding of the education system to transform it into a more effective means for building a socialist country was rapidly put into practice. This new system devoted more attention to ideology, politics, and revolutionary ethics. Specific goals for education during this transition period included the erasure of illiteracy, the realization of universal primary education, and the extension of secondary education to all areas, with approving conditions. The role of ideology was, of course, not skipped over. However, over the next few years, Vietnam continued to face severe problems in achieving these educational goals. According to governmental statistics of the mid 90s, only about 50 percent of all eligible children enrolled in kindergarten, and close to 40 percent of youth dropped out of school by the age of 14. The country continued to suffer from a serious shortage of well-trained personnel, and higher education was not developed well enough to meet the needs of a changing society. School buildings were urgently in need of renovation and expansion, and teachers were still poorly paid and demoralised.

In short, the coercive Communist educational system practised in the South has been regarded to be a failure, attributing to conflict of ideology, economic conditions, clash of class struggle, and other factors of a social context.

iii. Conclusion

In reviewing the course of developments in the history of education in Vietnam, it is evident that the formation of the educational system of each period was greatly influenced by external factors. From arrival of the Chinese, with the introduction of their language and culture from 111 BC to the ending of the Chinese direct rule in 938 AD, the educational system was formed and based on the Chinese Imperial Examination System wherein the contents of education were the Confucian ideology. The teaching of Confucianism restricted Vietnamese scholars to the study of human relations, literary style, and the ethical code of behaviour of a gentleman. The teaching and learning process was essentially a 'rote' learning pedagogy; its purpose and aim was to have students pass the Imperial Examinations and be selected as an official of some sort. As such, education was fully utilised as a means of access to power. It provided no enlightenment for independent thinking, and the successful Vietnamese scholars were yoked with Confucian ideas and the Chinese conventional institutions and values.

In 938 AD Vietnam declared its independence after defeating the Chinese army at Each Dang. However, after one thousand years of Chinese rule, a Confucian society had firmly been established in Vietnam, and Confucian values and institutions had been deep-rooted in the minds of the Vietnamese. In such a context, Confucian education continued to be sustained for another one thousand years.

The French completed their conquest of Vietnam in 1885 when the Chinese navy 'Black Flags' were losing the battle badly north of Hanoi. The Ching Dynasty declared its abandonment of suzerainty over Vietnam the following year. With what they called 'the mission of civilisation' the French brought into Vietnam a modern educational system with certain modifications introduced from the French system. During the French governing, officially 70 years in Vietnam, an 'elite' educational system was finally established, formally in 1918. Nevertheless, the Vietnamese Court at Hue and its bureaucracy claimed that they had the unique legitimate power to decide the direction of Vietnam's educational development. It is interesting to note that the Vietnamese still expected schools to provide them with access to power; such an expectation had been historically attached to education even though the new educational system was contrary to such notions. As Governor General Albert Sarraut (1954, p.44) remarked, the colonial education in Vietnam was "to provide a simple education, reduced to essentials, permitting the child to learn all that will be useful for him to know in his humble career of farmer or artisan to ameliorate the natural and social conditions of his existence."

This statement by Sarraut clearly indicates the kind of education which the French Colonial Government intended to provide for the Vietnamese people.

As Karl Marx commented in his article in the New York Tribune in 1853 (Nan Fang-shuo, 1995, p.4): "Imperialism, destroyed an old, traditional society and, at

the same time, had laid a strong foundation with Western material civilisation in Asia.”

Marx’s point of view might be hard to accept for some of the nationalists. Nevertheless, in many ways the contradictory double character of colonial imperialism, viz., destructive and enlightening, is something which appears only too widespread. Nowhere is this truer than in Vietnam, where the Colonial Regime used every possible means to demolish the historical Confucian society and education while, concurrently, imposing French technology and civilisation on the region.

The battle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 resulted in the French army being defeated by the Vietminh and the colonial rule of the French in Vietnam came to an end. Under the Geneva Accord the country was divided into two: the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North and the Republic of Vietnam in the South. During the period of this division of the country, the North Regime was under the influence of Soviet Russia and the communist countries, while the South Regime was pro-West.

Educational developments by the two regimes were going in opposite directions. The educational system in the North was based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy and ideology. According to the Communist conception, education was a force for social change and considered an essential part of the Communist programme. The

programme went far beyond economic and political changes and demanded the establishment of a new society and called for new customs, new habits, and new patterns of thought and behaviour, even new emotions.

With the Communist doctrine, education was considered to be synonymous with persuasion. It is far broader than what goes on in the schools. Learning outside the schools, therefore, was often more important than class instruction within the schools. The role played by the varied agencies of propaganda and indoctrination at times overshadows the schools on the broad scene of 'persuasion' in the changing of people. Old schools were being changed and new schools were added or dropped according to their usefulness in meeting what the Communists recognised as their tangible needs. They were guided by their immediate needs or ideological dogmas rather than as a response to any understanding of long-range educational planning.

The Republic of Vietnam in the South continued to develop a pro-Western educational system in which both the French and the Americans played a key role in accelerating its modernization of Westernisation. The society of Vietnam in the South became gradually more open and democratic after the fall of the Ngo Dinh Diem administration. With Nguyen Van Thieu's succession in the regime, more and more students were sent to the West to be educated under the assistance of Western countries. The return of these graduates to serve their country turned out to provide great intellectual resources for development of education in the South.

During the period of 1955-1975, the Republic of Vietnam made admirable achievements in both general and higher education, although due to wartime conditions, popularised general education was not able to be extended far into the remote areas.

Generally speaking, education in the South had provided opportunities for the younger generation university students to develop healthily in term of cultivation of democratic ideas, independent thinking, appreciation of Western institutions and culture, life style and with a freedom of speech on campus. In short, under the influence of the West, education in the Republic of Vietnam in the South created and established an open society that was preparing the nation to march into democracy.

However, the expanding of democratisation of education was short-lived. Its development was suffocated when the Communists arrived and took over the South in April. 1975.

The imposition of the Communist education system practised in the South has proven to be a relative failure due to conflict of ideology, economic elements, clashes of class struggle, and other factors of a social context. The re-educational programme which was delineated in the previous chapter is worthy of mention again. The specially designed educational programme overtly set up for political purposes certainly will not be missed out in the long history of Vietnam

education, and will occupy a short chapter recording the days of devastation of human rights and dignity, and the humiliation imposed on the intellectuals and the elites of the South by the Communists. It is an educational process through which historical conflict and hatred between the North and the South deepened. Its influence on the society of the time was profound and is expected to be long-lasting.

Special goals for education during the transitional period (1975-1985) were not fulfilled successfully; including the abolition of illiteracy, the realisation of universal primary education and the extending of secondary education to all areas with favourable conditions. In effect, over the next few years, Vietnam continued to face severe problems in achieving its educational goals. While the country's internal difficulties appeared to be insufficient to generate a strong cause for changes, the external factors were so strong that Vietnam was forced to react: e.g., the blooming of economy in China after the open-door policy since 1979, the collapse of Communism in Soviet Russia, plus the disbandment of East European countries as a Socialist Group all formed a catalyst for reform (Doi Moi) in Vietnam. The reform programme was launched under the decision made in December 1986 when the Sixth Party Congress was held. Since 1987 almost all sectors of Vietnam society and economy have gone through profound changes that have brought forward some significant achievements in spite of a lot of harsh challenges. Redevelopment of education and training have become an important part of the renewal of the state. The fundamental task of the redeveloped

educational programme aims at moving from meeting the needs of a subsidised, centrally planned economy to meeting the need of a multi-sector, state-managed, socialist-oriented market economy under a constructive blueprint of continuous education and training was mapped out by the Ministry of Education and Training. On the surface, it appears that the transformation of Vietnam's educational system has been successful in accordance with government's policies and, as stated by the authorities concerned, "it has been able to avoid committing the same errors of previous years" (VETD, 1995, p.17). However, in reality there are still many serious educational problems in Vietnam needing to be addressed, especially in the areas of research and higher education.

With reference to research, it is apparent that ministries, research institutes, and university departments are constantly encouraged to pool their talents in order to coordinate projects. However, the State set certain limitations on incoming information from foreign countries. Compartmentalisation, which not only existed but became entrenched between major sectors, and within each sector as well during the previous thirty or forty years, was used to restrict the obtaining of certain foreign information, particularly information relevant to the social sciences. Vietnam's leaders certainly know the harmful effects of compartmentalisation, often ascribing attributes to it such as residual peasantism or the small producer mentality. To a certain extent, it may be true that individual researchers guard their data like farmers guard their crops, or that institute directors can be equivalent to headmen operating behind the thick bamboo hedge

and such attitudes are not rare even in developed countries. In Vietnam, nevertheless, the entire state structure made such attitude more sharp and severe, whatever the State desires of particular leaders. Due to Vietnam's national security systems, unless a researcher's work has been authorised officially as 'need to know', he or she does not seek out information or data, whether it be in a restricted library collection or an information centre at his or her own institutions at a different government ministry. When higher-level research managers address themselves to the compartmentalisation problems, they almost always call for more centralisation rather than for reducing the barriers. Thus, a member of the State Science and Technology Commission urged that there be a unified administration of all foreign contacts, to aim resources according to a master plan extending to the year 2000, and that a halt be called to inappropriate, localised, or frivolous interactions (Tap Chi Hoat Dong Kinh Te - Economic Activities Journal. 1994. no.4, p.16).

The limitations of Vietnam's entire approach to knowledge emerge most conspicuously in the study and research of foreign countries. The History Research Institute, for instance, focuses only a very minor proportion of its resources to researching anything beyond Vietnamese history. The Economics Institute seems to take the outside world more seriously, most notably by referring to Soviet texts of the 1920s-30s to see what should be applied to Vietnam today. In fact, most Vietnamese schools of economics or business in universities are still teaching Marxist theories of economics today. Ironically, there is an

extraordinarily huge curiosity among Vietnamese concerning things and events foreign. This is illustrated by experiences during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, where primary school teachers were expected to answer students' questions about foreign customs with inadequate information available, or to teach World Geography without a globe. Overseas Vietnamese who left Vietnam before or after 1975 offer sufficient links for understanding developments in the West, however, the majority of these immigrants, due to political reasons, are reluctant to re-establish contact with institutions in Vietnam. A significant and growing minority are willing to cooperate within their chosen fields, but some psychological factors are still given the obstacles to such contacts.

Vietnamese leaders need to decide what is more important, maximising control or maximising production. In recent years, the Vietnamese Communist Party has, as Christine White (1998, p. 43) observed, "relaxed controls in certain realms because not to have done so would have meant economic disaster". However, those relaxed controls are officially specified as temporary 'transitional' concessions, and tend to be justified by some quotations from Lenin and references to Soviet experiences in the 1920s, or Stalin's forced 'socialisation' after 1928. It does not seem to occur to the guardians of Party Dogma in Hanoi that "the world has moved on since then, and they are faced with problems never imagined by Marx, Lenin, or Stalin" (White, 1998, p.44). Nevertheless, the unwillingness or incapability of Vietnam's Communist leaders to bring forth new conceptual models, new analytical methods for the context surrounding them, will

not necessarily thwart a younger generation from inventing their own solutions on a transitory basis.

With reference to higher education the requirements of the renovation policies in Vietnam, together with the current socio-economic situation, have created profound influences on education in general, and on higher education and post-graduate studies in particular. In stating the ideal, education is ready and always one step in advance of essential changes. Education prepares and provides some well-trained and skilled workers, including experts considered to be able to lead and apply modern technology to production; i.e., experts able to make technological achievements to keep everyday life in step with rapid developments associated with the market economy.

Nevertheless, the degrading of education and training in Vietnam has been quite serious. Some survey documents show that in 1990 the average number of school years attended by each person was 4.5, exceeding by only 0.1 year the average of 1980. In 1995 the number of people with postgraduate qualifications amounted to only 12 percent of all university lecturers and researchers (Nguyen Duy Quy, 1995). Statistics referring to developed countries suggest the ratio should be 30 percent, as such a proportion can then expedite the process of industrialisation and modernisation. At present, the percentage of Ph.Ds and other doctors in Vietnam's tertiary educational institutions is 6.6 percent, whereas the desirable percentage should be at least 12-13 percent. The majority of people in the workforce lack

vocational skills, as up to 90.2 percent of the active labour force are working in non-state agriculture without essentially technological knowledge. The above situation has been caused by numerous factors, and the most important one is the role of education in creating 'grey matter potential', i.e., sufficient intellectual power to uphold ongoing national development has not been fully supported by the government. Education and training in science and technology, therefore, have not been placed at the core of socioeconomic development strategy. At the same time the government has not much determination to seek out measures and solutions for suitable investment. In the aspect of agriculture, when the market economy was blooming, workers on the farm mainly paid attention to the national policy of short-term immediate interest of working on quotas (National Policy No. 10 on Quotas) rather than the long term interests of education, training and bringing up people's knowledge to increase production and originate prosperity.

A considerably high degree of hard, simple manual work still prevails in Vietnam's industries. This affects attitudes towards work value, the process of socioeconomic development and the Vietnamese people's life style. As Nguyen Duy Quy (1995, p.37) pointed out, "The development of a market economy involves the progressive application of advanced modern technology in production, business, and management; therefore the brain quotient investment in goods and products gradually increases and more and more original creative work is generated."

In order to meet these requirements, the Vietnamese government, at the 7th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in June 1991, declared that together with science and technology, education and training need to be taken as a national priority that comprises a motivator and basic condition to ensure the implementation of socio-economic goals of, “building and defending the country” (Ministry of Education and Training, 1993, p.44).

The goal of education in Vietnam has been stated as “upgrading people’s knowledge, training human resources, fostering qualified personnel, providing workers with cultural and scientific knowledge, with professional skills, creativity and discipline at work” (Ministry of Education and Training, 1995, p.14).

Under such circumstances, the system of higher education is being reorganised and research institutes need to be linked with universities to help interchange of support between training and academic research work.

The “Vietnamese government needs to link closely the policies on economic development with those on social development including education” (Sloper, 1995, p.38). Needs arise in society which require, among other ministries and governmental agencies, education to be fitted out with whatever is necessary for further progress. In the process of foreign investment in Vietnam, the culture and life style learned from foreign countries are moving in the nation; certain positive and negative effects will accrue to the people and the relevant surrounding areas.

Psychological preparation for the social status as such should be made, and there ought to be intelligible, judicious as well as prudent discussions from different points of view on the devices and appropriate measures to handle and cope with the existing and future environment.

All these problems “have set for Vietnam education, specially higher education, a task to be radically reformed and dynamic. This need for reform applies to the whole educational system from the organisation and management of schools, and syllabus to the curricula, and methods of teaching. Above all, there should be the clear-cut awareness of the link between formal education and human resources as a core issue in national development” (Nguyen Duy Quy, 1995, p. 38).

The context of Vietnam education today is a mixture of socio-economic development, the political system, the demand for training and human resources, the functions of research and education, and investment from within and without. The interplay of these elements or factors will decide the direction both of Vietnam’s national development and the quality of its education. The economic development of Vietnam today presents a great opportunity within the foreseeable future to generate favourable conditions for Vietnamese general and higher education.

After all, the successful and healthy development of education in Vietnam will be based on a more open society and a more democratic political system than its

current context; and the future of Vietnam education will be depending on the wise decision and foresight of the country's political leaders and educators.

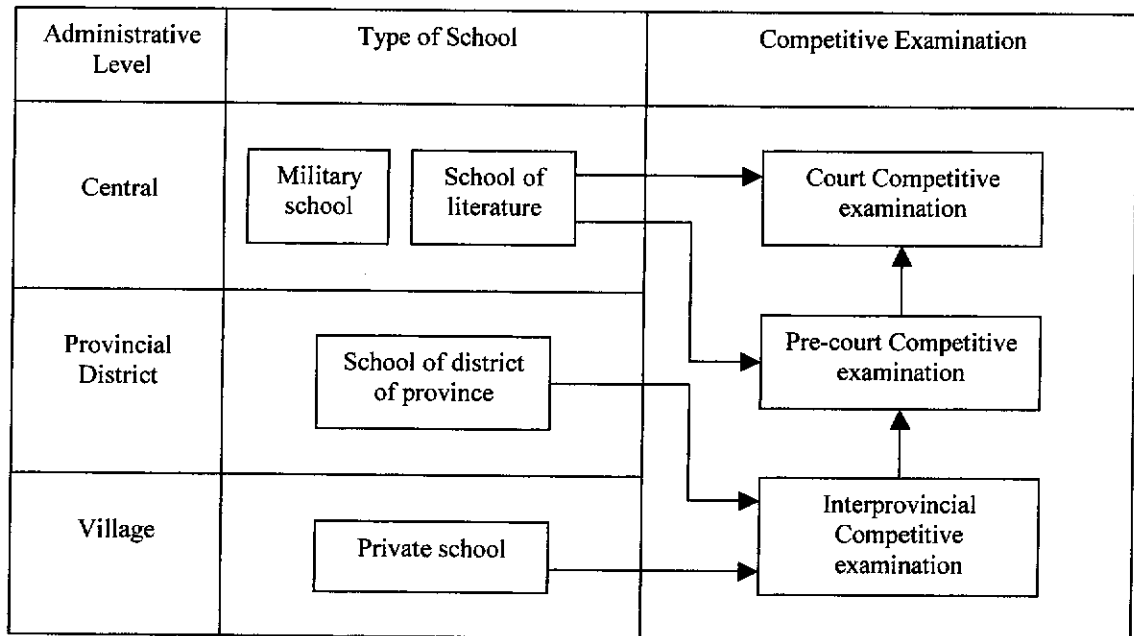
iv. Research Result

The study of this dissertation is coming to a close. In looking back, the research result can not be said to be complete or consistent throughout, nor is it entirely satisfactory. The main achievement of this dissertation can be claimed in its fulfilment of concisely sketching aspects in a history of Vietnamese education, which covers more than 2,000 years. With very limited information on which to base the story, the task was particularly difficult to accomplish. As Vietnam continues as a Socialist country, its society is semi-open; circulation of information, to a certain extent, is strictly under the control of the government. Even the national archives are only partially and conditionally open to local researchers, let alone foreign scholars and researchers.

In addition to this, statistical data provided by the government can be different in various situations: when they want to show their achievements in best light to foreign visitors the figure swells; when they intend to make an application to international institutions for funding, the figure shrinks. The figures raised at a Party Conference at a high level again may be different from the figures announced by the government to the people in general. Under such circumstances, statistic figures and related illustrations are not used much, or very circumspectly,

in this study. However, the author has tried with great effort to provide as sufficient details as possible in the discussion throughout the thesis.

Many good books and periodical articles have been written on Vietnam. Many provide a simple, concise, introductory overview of the country, while others focus on specific episodes of war or span of time in modern history. Similarly, as a study for a Doctor of Philosophy degree, this research has certain capacities and limitations. As stated in the first chapter, there is a dearth of research in Vietnamese education. However, as a scholar from the University of Hawaii remarked: "In terms of research in Asia, Vietnam is still an unexplored land. There are vast territories which remain untouched" (Tran Van Tai, 1996, p. 46). The author of this thesis is optimistic about the many problems of education in Vietnam today and expects this study to stimulate the interest of other scholars to continue the task of understanding the development of education in Vietnam in a more open context and under a more democratic political system.

Appendix i**Educational System of Vietnam in the Feudal Periods 1075-1917**

Appendix ii

The National Education System Today

Source: Vietnam Education & Training Directory, 1995. Ministry of Education

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix ii (p. 307-308) has not been reproduced.

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Technology, 21/11/03)**

Appendix iii

Teaching curricula in upper secondary education

Source: Ministry of Education and Training, 1995

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix iii (p. 309) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix iv

Some figures about general education

Source: Vietnam Education & Training, MOET 1995

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix iv (p. 310) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix v

Some statistics

**Pre-school Education
and General Education Enrolment**

Source: Vietnam Education & Training, MOET 1995

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix v (p. 311) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix vi

**Continuing Education Enrolment
(general secondary education)**

Source: Vietnam Education and Training Directory, MOET 1995

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix vi (p. 312) has not been reproduced.

**(Co-ordinator, ADT Program (Bibliographic Services), Curtin University of
Technology, 21/11/03)**

Appendix vii

**Teacher staff
(Academic year 1992-1993)**

Source: Vietnam Education and Training Directory, MOET 1995

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix vii (p. 313) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix viii

Teaching curricula in Lower Secondary Education

Source: Ministry of Education and Training, 1995

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix viii (p. 314) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix ix

The credit system was initiated in higher education: credit requirements for undergraduate degrees and diplomas in Viet-Nam

Source: Dr Vu Van Tao, 1995 Ministry of Education, Vietnam

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix ix (p. 315) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix x

Some statistics of Higher Education

**Long-term and Short-term
Academic Year 1993-1995**

Source: Ministry of Education and Training, 1995

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix x (p. 316) has not been reproduced.

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Technology, 21/11/03)**

Appendix xi

Number of students at Tertiary Level 1980-1990

Source: *Bao Cao Cong Tac: Giai doan Chan doan*, Vol.2, p.42

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix xi (p. 317) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix xii

Students of Regular Trend in Different Areas of Studies

Source: *Bao Cao Cong Tac: Giai doan Chan doan*, Vol.2, p.43

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix xii (p. 318) has not been reproduced.

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Appendix xiii

Characteristics of Teaching Staff at Higher Education (1980-1990)

Source: *Bao Cao Cong Tac: Giai doan Chan doan*, Vol.2, p.42

Note: For copyright reasons Appendix xiii (p. 319) has not been reproduced.

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