



The History of Chinese Schools
in Johor

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Compiled by
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Preface

The compilation of this short History of Chinese Schools in Johore is the direct outcome of a suggestion from the Deputy Director of Education in charge of Chinese schools in Malaya that the Assistant Inspectors of Chinese Schools compiled the history of Chinese schools of their respective states. These would then be collated to form the History of Chinese Schools in Malaya. Unfortunately only Johore produced its assignment. Thus the compilation of the History of Chinese Schools in Malaya fell through.

However, given the homogeneity of the social, cultural and economic system of the Chinese in Malaya, we may safely assume that the pattern of development of Chinese education in the other states did not differ much, if at all, from that in Johore. The availability of the History of Chinese Schools in Johore, therefore, enables the readers to visualize the development in the other states, bearing in mind the possible difference in the timing and degree of their developments.

The materials for this brief account were gathered with the cooperation of headmasters, members of school management committees and people interested and involved in Chinese education. Information was also obtained from interviews and from many school magazines which very often included the history of their schools.

It was fortunate that at the time when these materials were being gathered, many elderly residents and school founding members were still alive. Very valuable information was given by people like Ng Chin Kiat (黃振傑) and Wong Yee Cho (黃戩初) of Johore Bahru; Teo Kang Swi (張江水) of Pontian; Tan Tin Puan (陳鎮潘) and Cheong Boon Siong (章文健) of Kluang; Chiam Tong Seng (粘東生) and Teo Peng Kai (趙平階) of Batu Pahat; Chua Keng Sam (蔡敬三) of Sungei Mati; and Chia Chau Tong (謝兆棠) and Lee Siang Sam (李尚三) of Segamat.

To all who had helped to make this compilation possible, I convey my heartfelt gratitude.

Johore Bahru
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The history of Chinese education in Johor

1. Introduction.

In writing the history of Chinese education in Johor and for that matter, in Malaya, it should be borne in mind that Chinese education in Malaya, up to the advent of the communists in China, followed the system prevailing there. Any difference which might exist was due to the slight modifications made to suit local environments. However these were so slight that they might as well be ignored. Changes taken place in China invariably brought about similar changes in Malaya although they were adopted at a slightly later date.

2. Early settlement.

The Chinese commenced settlement in Johor around 1856. Most settled along the main rivers, planting gambier, pepper and coconuts. The Chinese population was then small and there was no locality where it was sufficiently large to justify the need of a school. The struggle for living was arduous in the early pioneering stage. Working hours were long and exhausting and after the day's work, no one was in a fit mood or condition to think of education. Most settlers came from Fukien, Canton and Hainan. They usually settled and worked among their own clans. Hence the existence of a majority of a particular clan in some districts, for example, the Hakka in Kulai and Senai and the Fukchau in Yong Peng.

3. The gradual expansion of gambier, pepper and coconut cultivation brought more Chinese to Johor and towards the end of the Manchu Dynasty, the Chinese population in Johor Bahru, Muar, Batu Pahat, Segamat, Kota Tinggi and Yong Peng reached a point where the need for a school began to be felt.

4. Aim of education in the Early Schools.

The immediate aim of education at this early stage was the acquisition of a sufficient knowledge of the Chinese language which would enable students to keep business accounts and to read and write simple letters. The next was character training aiming at inculcating the virtues of filial piety and correct behaviour. the acquisition of academic degrees such as Siuchai (秀才), Chujern (舉人) and Chinsze (進士) in order to secure employment in the government of China was never contemplated. Parents were satisfied when their immediate aim was fulfilled.

5. Types of schools.

The history of Chinese education may be conveniently divided into three periods; the dialect period, (before the Chinese Republic), the dialect cum Kuoyu period (circa 1912 to 1925) and the Kuoyu period (circa 1926 to the present day).

6. Family schools.

Family schools were known to exist before the Chinese Republic and of which information is available. In a few localities where parents who could afford engaged private tutors to teach their children at home and at the same time admitted outside paying and non-paying pupils. Such a school was opened by a Kukup kangchoo (港生) by the surname of Chew (許) in his house employing his clerk as teacher.

7. Private schools.

During this period, private schools were opened by people who depended on teaching for a living. One was opened in Johor Bahru. As the teacher was a Teochiu, only Teochiu pupils attended. There were probably a few more private schools in Johor but information regarding them is not available.

8. Building and equipment.

Schools were usually accommodated in shop houses or clan association buildings. The early schools usually had no equipment other than chairs, benches and tables. In the case of clan schools, these were provided by the clan associations. In the private schools, most of them were provided by the pupils themselves. These were, unavoidably, of different shapes and sizes and were a common sight in the early schools.

9. Enrolment.

The enrolment in schools was never large. There were usually twenty to thirty pupils in a clan school and ten to fifteen in a family or private school. All were mixed schools. It is estimated that there were not more than fifteen schools and three hundred pupils at the end of this period.

10. Text books and curriculum.

The most commonly used text books were the Trimetrical Classics (三字經), Ku Wen Kuan Chih (古文觀止), Yu Shiao Ching Lin (幼學稗林), the Four Books (四書) and the Five Classics (五經). They were famous classics dealing mainly with philosophy, morals, filial piety, religious ceremonies and the relation between bureaucracy and leaders and the people. Their concepts, language and style were difficult, even for adults.

11. Only reading, composition, calligraphy and the use of the

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abacus were taught. In reading, the teacher read and explained the content of the lesson and the pupils strived to commit it to memory later. Composition consisted mainly of letter and essay writing. Much importance was attached to calligraphy. Pupils were often taught to imitate the writing of famous calligraphers. There were no ready-made exercise books. Loose sheets of paper were cut and bound together to serve as exercise books. These were mainly made by the teachers and the pupils themselves.

12. Teaching staff of the Early Schools.

The only qualification required to be a teacher was a knowledge of the Chinese language. As no subject other than reading, writing, composition and the use of the abacus was taught, a fair knowledge of the Chinese Language was considered sufficient. Teaching was given through one of the main Chinese dialects, namely Hockien, Teochiu, Cantonese and Kheh. In a clan school, the dialect of the clan was used; in a private school, the dialect of the teacher was used (a private school teacher would usually open a school in the district where he could find pupils of his own clan), while in a family school, the dialect of the employer was used. The employer would, of course, engage a teacher of his own clan.

13. To the average Chinese, the word "schoolmaster" was synonymous with learning and virtues. This made a schoolmaster one of the most respected persons in a locality.

14. Income and expenditure.

The clan association was responsible for the finance of a clan school. In most cases, the fees collected were sufficient to cover the salary of the teacher who was generally paid between \$15 and \$25 per month but rarely more than \$30. School fees ranged from \$1 to \$2 per month. Any amount collected in excess of the teacher's salary was used to purchase books and writing materials for the pupils and for miscellaneous expenditure. This was done in York Choy School, Johor Bahru which charged a flat rate of \$2 per month. 15. In a family school, the employer undertook to pay the teacher's salary. Fees from outside pupils were usually given to the teacher as extra income.

15. In a private school, all the income of a teacher came from school fees. The teacher had to pay for the maintenance of the school.

16. School life.

On first entering school, a pupil usually went through a simple ceremony. He usually brought to the school Chinese cakes, dried ground nuts and dried water-melon seeds. These were placed before the image of Confucius as offering. The pupil then knelt and bowed before the image as a sign of respect to the symbol of

learning. The offering was then distributed among the pupils and teacher. This ceremony was, of course, voluntary.

17. Compared with the life in a present-day school, life in school was arduous and monotonous. The greater part of a school day was occupied in vociferous chanting of the classics, each pupil at his own pace and tone endeavouring to memorise the lessons which had been taught. The noise was deafening but to the teacher and the parents, noise was a sign of diligence. The first book learned was usually the Trimetrical Classic. How arduous and monotonous school life was can be gauged from the fact that the book started with philosophy; with the first two sentences as "Man by nature is good". Pupils were expected to commit to memory all lessons taught without, very often, fully understanding their meanings. Corporal punishment was sometimes inflicted for failure to recite or to write out from memory the lessons taught. Memorising required great concentration and effort and was the most unpleasant part of school life.

18. Sports and games were, of course, unknown. Indulgence in such activities was considered somewhat frivolous and undignified. The relation between teacher and pupils was unnecessarily too formal. Much of the school life was thus deprived of much of its joy and interest and the rate of truancy which otherwise would be high was kept low only by the parents' love of learning and the interest they took in ensuring their children's attendance at school and by the fear of the teacher's cane.

19. The few bright moments which children had were during Chinese festivals, among which the Spring and Autumn Festivals were usually celebrated at school. These took the form of placing offerings before the image of Confucius accompanied by the burning of joss sticks and the firing of crackers.

20. Quality of Teaching.

The quality of teaching was unavoidably low. Teaching techniques were unknown and the conditions in school were generally not conducive to learning. The study of the Chinese language as a vehicle of expression was not as successful as it could have been, considering the large amount of time spent and effort made by pupil. This is easily understandable when we take into consideration the conditions prevailing at that time. It should be remembered that this period was about forty years back when teaching techniques were unknown in many countries and when China was just coming into contact with the western world. Besides, Johor, and for that matter other states also depended on China for its teachers. Few well-educated teachers would venture to a country where living conditions were little known. A school, therefore, had little choice in the selection of its teachers. Moreover, few people worried much

whether or not their teachers were qualified. As their immediate aim was limited to the acquisition of sufficient knowledge to read and ^{write} simple letters and to keep accounts, they were satisfied so long as this aim was fulfilled.

21. Effect of the fall of Manchu Regime.

The overthrow of the Manchu regime and the momentary success of the Chinese Revolution brought national consciousness to the Chinese all over the world. The fall was greeted with wild enthusiasm. Efforts were made to unite the Chinese and to consolidate the hard-earned independence. Steps were taken to re-organise and to improve the conditions in Chinese schools.

22. Amalgamation of clan schools.

First, most clan schools agreed to amalgamate. Thus the Eng Choon clan school, the Chuan Chew-Amoy clan school and the Teochiu clan school in Muar were combined and moved into a new building in Jalan Sayang. The new school was named Chung Hwa (中華) School. In Johor Bahru, the Cantonese clan York Choy (育才) School celebrated the first Double Ten with a military style drill display, sports and a lantern procession. The other clans were much impressed and a meeting was arranged among the leaders of the various clans to discuss the opening of a public school (公立学校). The outcome was the founding of Foon Yew (寬柔) School on 1st February, 1913, the first modern school in Johor Bahru, modern in the sense that Kuo-yu was used as the medium of instruction and the usual present-day primary school subjects began to be taught. The Cantonese Kong Siu Association closed its York Choy clan school and moved their children to the new school.

23. Birth of modern schools.

Secondly, more modern schools gradually appeared. In Kota Tinggi in 1913, Lou Lan (盧蘭), a tin miner, opened a modern school in the Chinese Reading Society (中華書報社) engaging Lai Mun Ching (黎文卿) as teacher. Lai was introduced by Dr. Sun Yat Sen to Wong Kat San (黃吉辰), a Kota Tinggi Chinese community leader and a Kuomintang member who then introduced Lai to Lou Lan. Sun Yat Sen came to Kota Tinggi to raise funds for organising the overthrow of the Manchu Regime. In addition to his teaching duties, Lai also spread Kuomintang propaganda among the people and pupils. He also practised as a Chinese physician. Unfortunately for Kota Tinggi, Lai left after working for only two years and the school reverted to a Cantonese clan school. In Buloh Kasap, Segamat, Kok Bin (國民) School, a modern school opened in 1913 by a committee

headed by Tay Kai San (鄭開杉⁽⁶⁾), engaging Tan Hou Cheow (陳雨蕉) as teacher. In Segamat, Chung Cheng (中正*) School, also a modern school, opened in 1914. Later, owing to a difference in opinion among the committee members, a rival school, the Pei Cheng (培正) School was opened in 1917. These were followed by Lee Chee (勵志) School, Nam Hwa (南華) School and Chung Hwa (中華) School a few years later.

24. New School System.

Thirdly, a new school system similar to that in China i.e. six years each for primary and secondary courses was adopted. Pupils were graded for instruction though for economic reasons, usually two or more grades were combined as a class. This was so especially in rural and smaller schools. It was an improvement over the dialect schools where pupils of all grades were accommodated in the same classroom. New text books written on modern lines and published first by Shanghai Commercial Press and later by Shanghai Chung Hwa Book Company were used in place of the classics and Kuoyu replaced dialects as the medium of instruction.

25. Committee of Management.

Fourthly, school committees of management were formed. They raise funds and engaged teachers. Schools derived their income from school fees and monthly contributions from local shops. In larger towns, a cess on local produce was collected in addition. The financial position of Chung Hwa School, Muar was so sound that education was provided free until 1924 when expenditure increased with the opening of a secondary school.

26. Teachers.

Attempts were made to recruit better qualified teachers from China. Chung Hwa Secondary School, Muar employed many graduates holding Chinese and Japanese university degrees.

27. Aims of Education of the Modern Schools.

The aims of education were widened. With the awakening of national consciousness, the instilling^{of} patriotism was included. This was continuously encouraged by the Chinese Government through the Chinese Consulates and their education emissaries. Portraits of Dr. Sun Yat Sen and his exhortation began to appear in schools. As schools used China-published text books and employed mostly China-educated teachers, this aim was largely fulfilled.

28. Co-existing Dialect and old-style schools.

Various factors, however, caused a delay in the opening of modern schools in many localities. In remote and small areas, the impact of national consciousness was not felt to the same extent as in large towns. In such places, therefore, not much enthusiasm for organising education on modern lines was aroused. The aim continued to be literacy in the Chinese language, to read and write letters and to keep business accounts. As dialect schools could fulfill this aim, the need for opening modern schools did not, for the time being, arise. Teachers qualified to teach in Kuoyu preferred to remain in town schools. In other areas, disunity and rivalry among clans, the gradual but ever-diminishing effect of the overthrow of the Manchu Regime and the absence of people interested in new education retarded the opening of modern schools and prolonged the existence of the dialect type. In such areas, therefore, existing dialect schools continued to operate and new dialect schools continued to open. In Kukup, three old-style schools opened between 1912 and 1919. One converted to the new school system only in 1925, another in 1930 and the third in 1936. In Batu Pahat, Cheng Siu (正修) School was opened in 1912 by the Batu Pahat Chinese Chamber of Commerce as an old-style school with the clerk of the Chamber as teacher. In Segamat, in 1912, Tan Hoon Suan (陳雲旋), a rich merchant, employed Phua Su Leong (潘嗣良) to teach his children and at the same time accepted paying and non-paying pupils. Sia Woon Chiong (謝文祥) opened Kei Woon (啟文) School in his rubber estate for Kheh children employing Sia Mu Woon (謝慕文) as teacher and Tan Chak Sam opened one in his store-house for Teochiu children. In Kluang, a private old-style school was opened in 1919 but closed only after a year. In Pontian, Pei Chun (培群) School opened as an old-style school in 1922 and converted into a modern school in 1926. In Bekok, two old-style schools opened in 1923 but closed the following year when Hwa Chiao (華橋) School opened. This school opened as an old-style school but adopted the new school system the year after. In Rengit, York Chai (育才) School opened in 1925 as an old-style school and started to use Kuoyu only in 1938. In the same place, old-style York Hwa (育華) School opened in 1930. In Ayer Itam, one Mr. Wong (黃) opened an old-style school in 1929 using the labourers' quarters of towkay Song Chiu Ping (宋秋樺) as school premises.

29. Disappearance of Dialect Schools.

Though a few old-style schools continued to exist, practically all had converted to the modern type by 1936. From then on, schools which opened were nearly all modern schools. By then people had come to realise the superior value of modern education over that of the old, both from the utilitarian and cultural point of view. With

the appearance of Chinese newspapers in Malaya, the Chinese here were in constant touch with the events in China. Much changes had taken place there since the fall of the Manchus. The influence of the literary revolution of the 1917-1919 in China to replace the traditional form of the language by Kuoyu was felt in Malaya. It was contended by its advocates that the language of the classical works was so remote from the language of daily life that not many people could understand it. Ability to understand and use it required a deep knowledge of ancient literature needing many years of study. Professor Hu Shih (胡適), leader of the literary revolution introduced the language of daily life, the language of the people into literature, newspapers, novels and scientific treatises. Translations of literary works into Kuoyu began to appear and these could easily be understood by any one with a fair command of Kuoyu. There were then two schools of thought; one advocating the exclusive use of Kuoyu, the other favouring the use of Kuoyu only in the press and suggesting a modified literary style, simplified and brought nearer Kuoyu for literary works. It was argued that Kuoyu was too long-winded and wasted space. The literary style with its conciseness could substantially reduce the space taken by Kuoyu. This trend of thought was closely followed in Malaya and was the chief cause for the disappearance of old-style schools. Moreover, local environments were now more favourable to the opening of modern schools. People were becoming more enlightened. Clan feelings had greatly decreased culminating in a desire to cooperate for the welfare of the Chinese community. A joint effort was made to organise schools. It was only natural that for the different clans to open a joint school, the medium of instruction would inevitably ^{be} Kuoyu. Besides, the supply of teachers able to teach in Kuoyu had increased. All these factors brought about the discontinuation of separate clan schools.

30. Kuoyu Period(circa 1926 to present day)

Modern schools were now increasing fast. It was estimated there were about 120 schools with 3,000 pupils by 1926. These increased to 133 schools, 185 teachers and 5,500 pupils some time before 1939. By 1939, there were 254 schools, 563 teachers and 16,911 pupils. (Based on the Johor School Annual Report by H.R. Cheeseman, Superintendent of Education, Johor)

31. Schools during the Japanese occupation.

When the Japanese occupied Malaya, all Chinese schools were closed. When they were permitted to open in October, 1942, only those in big towns and large villages were opened. At the beginning Chinese was allowed to be taught. In the middle of 1943, however,

an order was issued instructing schools to use Japanese as the medium and Chinese was permitted to be taught only for one period a day. As practically all teachers did not know any Japanese, teaching had still to be conducted in Chinese. It was therefore not possible to enforce Japanese as the medium of instruction and the Japanese discreetly winked at and condoned a situation for which there was no solution. An attempt was made to teach teachers the Japanese language in three-month and six-month courses in the so-called Training Centres called the Kun Ren Zo (訓練所). Such courses were more for propaganda than educational purposes. Moreover, teachers had little desire or incentive for learning the language. Though a few managed to acquire a sufficient command of the language to teach at primary school level, the majority returned to school not much better than when they entered.

32. Towards the end of 1943, Japanese school supervisors were appointed in all districts. They insisted on Japanese being used as the medium of instruction. As little Chinese could now be learned, enrolment began to fall. The fall was hastened by difficult economic conditions and towards the last few months of the Japanese occupation, staffs outnumbered pupils in many schools. Schools, however, were kept open by the Education authorities so that their actual number and unsatisfactory conditions might not be known by the higher authorities. The largest number of Chinese schools which ever existed during the Japanese occupation was 42. Eleven were closed leaving 31 at the end of the occupation. The highest enrolment reached was 6,500 in the middle of 1943.

33. Schools at the beginning of the Reoccupation.

When Malaya was reoccupied, most of the school premises were in a state of disrepair. Their furniture and equipment were either partly wholly looted or damaged beyond repair. Large sums of money had to be spent before they could reopen. This fact together with the unstable social and political conditions then prevailing discouraged many pre-war school committees from coming forward. Seizing this opportunity, the communist-organised People's Committees in the various towns opened most of the large schools and staffed them with communist teachers. Enrolment began to swell, but not before long it was discovered that these teachers were no better than their pupils in academic knowledge. It was also found that most lessons were lessons on communism and many parents withdrew their children. Though enrolment fell, the People's Committees clung to their schools and it took a few months before the pre-war school committees were able to dislodge them. When the communists were ousted from the big towns, they retreated to the villages and opened schools wherever they could. They

opened no less than 17 schools naming them either Peng Min (平民) School, Min Chong (民衆) School or Yee Wu (義務) School. These existed till the outbreak of the Emergency in 1948 when the communists disappeared into the jungles or were detained.

34. Rehabilitation of Schools.

Money was soon raised by the pre-war school management committees. Repairs to school premises commenced and equipment was installed. Schools were reopened. It was soon found that accommodation in urban schools was grossly inadequate and schools had to operate in two sessions. Prohibitive cost of building materials and labour delayed the construction of new school buildings and the extensions of existing ones. Rural schools were worst off. Many were zinc and wooden buildings. Four years of misuse and neglect left all in an unusable condition. Major repairs had to be carried or completely new buildings erected. Great efforts were made and schools reopened. The number of schools increased to 211 in December, 1946 with an enrolment of 27,574, far above the pre-war figure.

35. When China emerged from the Second World War as one of the Five Great Powers, a wave of national consciousness swept through the oversea Chinese just like that when the Manchu Regime fell. This consciousness together with the sufferings received at the hands of the Japanese impressed upon the Chinese a greater need for unity and when schools reopened, nearly all clan-managed schools were amalgamated. Chung Cheng (中正) School, Pei Cheng (培正) School, Lee Chee (勵志) School, Nan Hwa (華南) School and Chung Hwa (中華) School in Segamat combined to form the present Hwa Chiao (華僑) School. In Kulai, Eng Tsai (英才) School, Chung Teck (崇德) School and York Mun (育文) School joined together as Chung Hwa (中華) School. In Senggarang, Hwa Chiao (華僑) School and Sin Seng (新生) School teamed up to become the present Chung Hwa (中華) School. Hwa Chiao (華僑) School, Pei Eng (英才) School and Chung Hwa Girls School (中華女校) in Kluang merged and took the name of Chung Hwa (中華) School, while Hwa Chiao (華僑) School and See Nai (士乃) School grouped together as Chung Cheng (中正) School. A further sign of unity ^{was seen} in schools in Yong Peng, Rengit, Benut and Batu Pahat. Schools in each of these places agreed to pool their financial resources and place themselves under one management.

36. The number of schools continued to increase and reached their peak in May, 1948 just before the effects of the Emergency were felt. There were then 358 schools with 39,582 pupils. Soon after, the effects of the Emergency began to tell. Many small schools in affected areas, chiefly rural districts, were closed. By July, 1951, the number of schools had dwindled to 231 and enrolment to 36,220.

A news report on the situation appeared in the then Straits Times with this headline, " Communists closed schools".

37. Government Control.

The Malayan government exercised very little control over Chinese schools until after the First World War. Control was introduced more on political than educational grounds aiming at preventing the teaching of subversive matters and the perpetration of communist activities. This task was first undertaken by the Chinese Protectorate. Schools and teachers with a minimum of the Junior Middle School qualification were required to be registered with the aim of ensuring for the pupils a fair standard of instruction carried out in healthy surroundings. This control was taken over by the Department of Education after the Second World War. At the initial stage, the control was somewhat limited. In addition to the registration of schools and teachers, a small per capita grant, ranging from \$5.00 to \$15.00 per year was given based mainly on the standard of school premises and the availability and size of the playground. The grant amounted approximately to one-tenth of the current expenditure of a school.

38. Government involvement gradually increased. Hitherto, the inspection was undertaken by an officer from the Chinese Protectorate. His main duty was to ensure that no communist activities were carried out in schools. After the Second World War, the Ministry of Education appointed an Assistant Inspector of Chinese Schools who, in addition to administration, also offered professional advice on teaching and school administration.

39. Secondary Education.

After the establishment of the Chinese government, Chinese education in Malaya gradually expanded. With the increase in enrolment, the number of pupils completing primary school education also increased. To cater for these pupils, the first secondary school, Chung Hwa Middle School (中華中學) was opened in Muar in 1924 and started senior middle classes in 1929. In 1929, Hwa Nan Girls' Middle School (化南好中學) also in Muar was opened while two more middle schools, Chung Hwa Girls' Middle School (中華好中學校), Kluang and Hwa Chiao Middle School (華僑中學), Batu Pahat were opened in 1935 and 1940 respectively.

40. After the re-occupation, Chung Hwa Middle School and Hwa Nan Girls' Middle School, Muar amalgamated to form Chung Hwa Middle

School (中化中学). Six more middle schools were opened. Chung Hwa Middle School (中華中学), Kluang opened in 1947, Pei Hwa Middle School (培華中学), Sungei Mati in 1949 and Hwa Chiao Middle School (華僑中学), Segamat in 1950. The then prevailing high prices of rubber and copra gave school committees a golden opportunity to raise funds for capital expenditure. This together with the ban on admission of Malayan students into Singapore middle schools hastened the opening of Foon Yew Middle School (寬柔中学), Johor Bahru, Pei Chun Middle School (培群中学), Pontian and Chung Hwa Middle School (中華中学), Rengit, all in 1951. By now, all large and medium-size towns had secondary schools.

41. Change in school organisation.

With the increase in school enrolment, the duties of the headteacher correspondingly increased. To ensure efficient administration in a large school, its duties were divided and entrusted to three teachers specifically appointed to undertake these tasks. A dean (教務主任) was assigned the job for the allocation of teaching duties. A discipline teacher (訓育主任) took on the duty of maintaining school discipline and a physical education teacher (體育主任) took charge of physical education with ^{the} headteacher exercising overall control.

42. School management committee.

The increase in pupil population and thus the size of the school brought a change not only in school administration but also in the structure of the school management committee. Hitherto most school adopted the president system (總理制) under which the control of a school was in the hands of three or four committee members. As a school grew in size, its management became more complex. A larger committee was needed to manage its affairs. As a consequence, a larger school committee was formed.

43. The main duties of a school management committee were the raising of funds and the recruitment of teachers. Though school management committees were normally elected on a yearly basis, most of their members continued to be elected in subsequent years but it was not uncommon to have school committees elected on a half-yearly basis. It was difficult, under this short term of office, to plan any long-term programme. In an attempt to improve this system, schools were advised in 1948 by the Education Department to extend their term of office to at least two years.

44. Members of school committees were well-known among their community and were in a better position to approach the public and appeal for financial assistance. It is pleasing to know that response was praiseworthy when appeals were made. Among the outstanding donors were the late Tiger Balm King Mr. AuBoon Haw who donated \$13,000.00 to Chung Hwa Middle School, Muar, in 1939, Ngee Heng Kongsi (義興公司), a society formed for the overthrow of the Manchu regime, contributed \$20,000.00 to Foon Yew School, Johor Bahru in 1918 and \$6,000.00 to Chung Hwa School, Muar in 1920. The Rubber Dealers' Associations and the Rice Dealers' Associations in the various districts were regular contributors. The various branches of Lee Rubber Company in Johor contributed generously when capital expenditure was needed. The school committee members themselves ^{were} regular contributors; members such as Lau Tiok Hau (劉榮候) and Tay Boon Peng (鄭文炳) of Muar; Teo Lee Seng (趙伯生), Chiam Tong Seng (粘東生) and Teo Peng Kai (趙平階) of Batu Pahat; Teo Kang Swee (張江水) of Pontian; Chua Keng Sam (蔡敬三) of Sungei Mati; Tan Tin Puan (陳鎮潘) and Cheong Boon Siong (黃文雙) of Kluang and Wong Yee Cho (黃義初) and Ng Cheng Kiat (黃振傑) of Johor Bahru. Society owed them a great debt for sacrificing not only money but time and labour in order to provide education for a large number of children, a task which the government would find difficulty to undertake.

45. Teaching staff and conditions of service.

Owing to the absence of Chinese universities and the limited output of Senior Middle School graduates in Malaya, this country was unable to supply its schools with sufficient teachers. Schools had to overcome this shortage through recruitment from China. In most states, the Senior Middle School qualification or its equivalent was the minimum qualification required for registration as a teacher. Johor, however, was satisfied with the Junior Middle School qualification. Comparatively Johor was less advanced than many other states and most of its schools were scattered in rural areas where living conditions were less congenial. Better qualified teachers who had little difficulty in finding employment in urban schools were not keen to accept appointments in these areas. This accounted for the presence of a large number of teachers in Johor who held only the Junior Middle School qualification. Even with this concession in registration requirement, Johor was still unable to find sufficient qualified teachers. Thus the requirement of this minimum qualification for registration was not strictly enforced.

46. Before the second world war, there was no quantitative shortage of teachers, but schools were generally understaffed because of financial constraints. When Japan occupied Malaya, local output of teachers as well as supply from China ceased. This together with the restriction on immigration from China after the war resulted in an acute shortage of teachers. The shortage was aggravated by the large increase in school enrolment. As a result, many schools became seriously understaffed. As a temporary measure, academically under-qualified teachers were recruited. At the same time, teacher-training classes were opened to train them aiming at improving both their standard of the Chinese language and the techniques of teaching.

47. Before the second world war, teachers were paid on the average approximately \$50.00 per month with no allowance or increment. After the reoccupation, the average salary gradually rose to over a hundred dollars. The emolument for teachers had never been adequate. This most likely would continue to be so as long as schools were financed and managed by private organisations. Inadequate remuneration compelled many teachers to engage in spare-time jobs to supplement their income. Nearly all schools provided teachers with free quarters, usually a room to each family, free light and water and a domestic help to cook their meals. Meals were prepared in the school kitchen. The cost was shared on a pro-rata basis.

48. Teachers were usually engaged on the prevailing system of one-year contract. The contract was renewed if their services were considered satisfactory but for various reasons, the turnover was frequently high. Under this system, teachers were never certain of their tenure and were always on the look out for vacancies elsewhere. It was doubtful if they would work whole-heartedly. In fairness, it should be mentioned that there were many dedicated teachers who served conscientiously in spite of this system. The conditions of service improved with the introduction of a payment of a per capita grant in 1946, for with this payment, the Government could insist on a better tenure of service for teachers. Henceforth, a teacher's service could be terminated only with sufficient reasons. Otherwise the grant would be withdrawn. Three schools were penalised for not conforming with this condition. Recently there had been a change in the system of engaging teachers. Now the management committee appointed the head teacher and left him to find his own staff. This had both advantages and defects. The head teacher would normally prefer to engage his former colleagues and close friends. The camaraderie brought about close cooperation and conscientious service. On the contrary, should there be a change of headship, a substantial change of staff would follow.

49. Teachers' tenure of service was made more secure when the Government undertook to pay their salary from 1.1.1953. This could be regarded as the happiest day of a teacher's life for with their livelihood assured, the worries and anxieties of the past disappeared. They were now able to put their heart and soul into their job. The children, society and the nation thus benefited.

50. Tendency of pro-China outlook.

Many factors contributed towards influencing the pupils to acquire a pro-China outlook. The first was the political milieu of the time. Malaya was then virtually a British colony. In order to retain their possession, the British colonial administrators ensured that no political matters were mooted in public. Topics like nationality and citizenship were taboos. The Chinese were regarded as immigrants permitted to stay under sufferance. Unsure of their citizenship status, they continued to regard themselves as the citizens of China and carried on their daily work with this outlook in mind. Secondly, school text books were written and published in China and were sold in the branches of the publishers here. Much of the topics in these text books concerned China and things Chinese. Thirdly, most teachers were recruited from China. There was a tendency for their teaching to become China-biased, though not intentionally. It was just a spontaneous outcome of their China education background. Lastly, the presence of the Chinese Consulate with its education emissaries in the background exercised some tendentious influences. Sometimes at the certificate presentation ceremonies of public Mandarin language classes, officials from the Chinese Consulate were invited to give away the graduation certificates.

51. Re-orientation of Outlook.

After the second world war, measures were taken to counter this unhealthy outlook. In 1951, two educationalists, Dr. Fenn and Dr. Wu Teh Yao from America were invited to look into the education system of the Chinese schools and make recommendations for improvements. Their findings were given in the Fenn-Wu Report. They found the system too China-oriented. They recommended, firstly, the content of the school text books be revised by incorporating more local topics and deleting those considered unsuitable. The aim was to reduce the emphasis on China and place more emphasis on Malaya. Accordingly, the Chinese Education Technical and Advisory Committee was set up to undertake this task. Revised text books were now used in Chinese schools. Secondly, they recommended a Teacher Training College be set up to train Malaya's own teachers. They further recommended Government bear the whole cost of Chinese education. All the recommendations except the one on the cost of

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Epilogue

This short History of Chinese Schools in Johor covers events up to April 1957 only when I left Johor for a study course in the United Kingdom.

Since then, Chinese education has expanded considerably not so much in the number of schools but in the enormous size of the pupil population and teachers. There are now 115,677 pupils compared with 39,582 in 1948.

The National Education policy has also undergone some changes. The Government has undertaken to pay the salary of Chinese primary school teachers and bear the cost of maintenance of school premises. It has continued to permit the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction in Chinese primary schools and there is a possibility that it may repeal Section 21(2) of the 1961 Education Act which empowers the Minister of Education to convert Chinese primary schools (Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan, Cina) into National Primary Schools (Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan). Should this eventuate, the worries and anxieties of the Chinese community over their schools would come to an end.

The remaining problem awaiting solution is the reluctance of the independent Chinese Secondary Schools to accept the National Education Policy regarding the medium of instruction. The schools wish to retain Chinese as the medium of instruction while the Government stipulates that it should be changed to Bahasa Malaysia. It is earnestly hoped that a satisfactory solution would be found for overcoming these different viewpoints.

31st January, 1991,
Johor Bahru.

Goh Teik Chow.

education had been implemented. Although the Government had not borne the whole cost of Chinese education, it had nevertheless increased its financial contribution for Chinese schools.

52. The future of Chinese schools.

The Chinese community was greatly concerned with the recommendation in the Barnes Report. A meeting was held at the Chinese Association, Johor Bahru on the 4th of August, 1951 among headteachers, teachers, school committee members and people interested in Chinese education to discuss the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports and to prepared a memorandum for presentation to the Government. The meeting contended that the conversion of Chinese primary schools into National primary schools would exterminate Chinese culture. They could not agree with the view that those who would not support ^{the} National School Policy were disloyal and did not deserve to have Malaya as their home. The moulding of a united Malaya, they continued, depended more on cooperation, mutual understanding, respect for one another's culture, religion and equal treatment for its citizens. They quoted Canada and Switzerland as examples. The meeting supported the Fenn-Wu Report and would wish schools to operate according to its recommendations.

53. Whatever the future policy on Chinese education might be, all true Malaysians hoped that it would help to promote racial harmony and cooperation and bring about the participation of all races in the task of creating a united Malaya.