Education on the Main Land China and Taiwan
A Comparison of Theory and Practice

Nobuyuki Kubota

Foreword

Although people on the two sides of Taiwan Strait share a common nationality, their living standards differ widely from each other. People in the Republic of China on Taiwan have enjoyed freedom, democracy, and prosperity, while people on the Chinese mainland have suffered poverty and backwardness as a result on the Chinese Communists' totalitarian rule. In the words of Pu Nai-fu (pen name 無名姓), a mainland Chinese writer who has settled in Taiwan after living in mainland China for thirty-three years, while Taiwan has created seven miracles, mainland China has experienced seven calamities. One example Pu gives of the difference between the two sides of the Strait is that Taiwan publishes a total of 2,500 magazines while on the mainland there are less than one hundred available. The number of books and periodicals per head of population in Taiwan far exceeds that on mainland\(^1\). Alexander Solzhenitsyn has pointed out that the Chinese people are very fortunate to have a Taiwan. Taiwan's economic and political achievements have made in the hope of the mainland Chinese people. Taiwan's achievements are not an accident but the result of its leaders' farsightedness\(^2\).

Throughout Chinese history, all people have had the right to receive education, and education has been aimed at character training. Some commonly cited Chinese theories of education taken from the Confucian Analects include: “give everybody equal access to education” and “guide people with morals and discipline them with the teaching on social order.” The “Objectives of Education in the Republic of China,” promulgated on April 26, 1929, stipulate the following:
Based on the Three Principles of the People (三民主義), education in the Republic of China is aimed at enriching people's lives, maintaining the existence of society, improving the people's livelihood, and extending the nation's life span so as to maintain national independence, realize democracy, and enhance national economic development, with the final goal of realizing universal harmony.

In other words, the ultimate goal of education is to give people skills and develop, people's characters. It has been said that in the West, more emphasis is placed on the pursuit of knowledge, while Oriental countries emphasize the fostering of benevolence. The Chinese tradition of giving everybody equal access to education combines the teaching of wisdom, benevolence, and courage. It has also been said that Western countries have paid greater attention to the quest for truth while in the East, the importance of virtue has been underlined. The Chinese tradition of using education for character training combines the quest for truth, virtue, and beauty.

However, Communists have a quite different idea of value of education. Lenin, for example, proposed that schools should serve as instruments of the proletarian dictatorship. Stalin said that education is a kind of weapon, the power of which depends on who it is controlled by and at whom it is directed. Mao Tse-tung's (毛沢東) view was that Communist philosophy of struggle. He also said that although it is necessary to read some Marxist-Leninist writings, reading too many of them turns people into bookworms and makes them dogmatists or revisionists. Based on Mao's theory, the Chinese Communists have treated schools as battlefields for class struggle rather than places for imparting knowledge. The Chinese Communists also claim that the class struggle and the line struggle in education is quite complicated and it is not easy to distinguish correct lines and viewpoints from those that are incorrect. This has meant that the history of education reform in Communist China has been one of struggles between different lines. Because of this incessant line struggle, no stable system of education has been established in mainland China.

When the "Four Modernizations (四現代化)" drive in industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology was launched after the Cultural Revolution (文化大革命), the Chinese Communists said science and technology was the key to modernization and that education was its basis. With this change in policy came another round of education re-
form. According to Teng Hsiao-ping (鄧小平), the current reform of education should be geared to the needs of modernization, in line with world trends, and handled from a long-range perspective. Ho Tung-ch'ang, Pekin's former minister of education, said that efforts should be made to make primary school universal, reform middle school education, and readjust college education so as to build a solid foundation for the modernization drive. The reforms that have been carried out in the past few years, however, have not enhanced the quality of education and have failed to produce enough qualified personnel. This has brought about a setback in the Four Modernizations.

From the above, we can see that standards of culture and education on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait differ dramatically. The reason for this discrepancy is that the two sides have different political systems driven from different official ideologies. In this article, the author will make a comparison of the development of education on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait from the point of view of both theory and practice.

2. Theory of Education

In any country, education policies and systems of education are formulated under the guidance of theories of education. Confucianism remained China's official ideology for several thousand years through numerous changes of dynasty and economic changes, and in spite of foreign intrusions. After the overthrow of the Manchu government (清朝政府) and establishment of the Republic of China, Sun Yat-sen's (孫逸仙 = 孫文) Three Principles of People (三民主義) became the guiding principle for national development. According to Sun, his Three Principles are a crystallization of Chinese tradition, the theories and experiences of the Western countries, and his own ideas. The Three Principles serve not only as a guide for political development but also for the development of education. Under the Chinese Communists, on the other hand, education has been guided by Marxist principles and has become the most powerful weapon for class struggle.

In the Republic of China, education theory is based on Sun Yat-sen's principle of Min-sheng (民生 people's livelihood), which emphasizes people's need to survive, to help each other, and to make progress. The main
components of Min-seng principles are as follows:

1. The theory that people are the basis—Throughout the world and throughout history, “people” have been the major target of education. The Three Principles of the People also give top priority to the people. Therefore, under the guidance of the Three Principles of the People, Taiwan’s educational work has been conducted in line with the concept of taking people as the “basis”.

The theory that people are the basis is derived from the Confucian doctrine that the benevolent man loves all people. Based on that theory, equal educational opportunities have been provided to all people in the Republic of China on Taiwan, regardless of their family origin, profession, or financial conditions.

Every person has therefore had the opportunity to live up to his potential. Confucious never refused any one who came to him for learning. According to historical records, he had three thousand disciples. This fine tradition has been handed down through all generations and enabled ordinary people to receive education even in private-run schools.

2. The theory of survival—Sun Yat-sen said that human being depend on two things to maintain their existence: material necessities and education. In other words, they should be nurtured both materially and spiritually so that they can make their life meaningful. With education, every human being will learn how to serve others so as to realize social harmony and enhance the well-being of other human beings.

3. The theory of mutual assistance—Sun said that human beings rely on mutual assistance to survive, while other animals rely on struggle. He also said that through mutual assistance, a society and a country can be formed, and morality upheld. The theory of mutual assistance in education combines egoism and altruism, and it represents the interests of both individuals and society as a whole. It also involves the coexistence of peace and struggle.

Under the guidance of Communism, mainland China’s education system has been based on the following theories:

1. The class nature of education—Communists maintain that both culture and education have a class nature. Stalin even regarded education as the most powerful spiritual weapon in the class struggle. According to the principles of historical materialism, "education is an experience of the
struggle for life in human society and an instrument for the continuation of such a struggle.” Communists also say that in a class society, education is controlled by certain class for its own purposes(5), that education is a “weapon for the promotion of production” and for intensifying political struggle, and that in a class society, education cannot transcend class and politics.

2. Education as struggle — The philosophical foundation of mainland China’s education system is materialism and the theory of struggle. Under such a philosophy, historical development is seen as having a material basis and the evolution of society can only be brought about through struggle. The Chinese Communists claim that class struggle is the motive force behind social evolution and that the purpose of social evolution is the attainment of “class dictatorship.”

3. Education as labor — As historical materialists, the Chinese Communists regard the cultivation of political consciousness and a correct attitude toward labor as the main aims of education.

3. Education System

In the Republic of China, responsibility for the administration of education has been divided between the central and local governments, and the period of compulsory education is the same in all areas. In mainland China, there are two systems of education: whole-day schooling and the “half-work, half-study” system. The duration of compulsory schooling also varies from place to place. In most places, five years each of primary and high school are followed by four years of college education. In large cities and “key” schools, however, a “six-six-four” system is in operation.

1. Primary school education — According to Article 160 of the ROC’s constitution, education is free and compulsory for children aged between six and twelve. The six years of primary school education are aimed at training children’s bodies, minds, and characters. In mainland China, the duration of primary school education differs from place to place and only about 90 percent of school-age children are in school. Among those who are registered as attending school, only about 60 percent attend class regularly, and only 30 percent actually reach the required standard. At the time of the 1982 census, the number of illiterates and semi-literate
reached 235,820,002. The fact that large numbers of students have dropped out of schools will inevitably result in an increase in the illiteracy rate.

2. High school education — In Taiwan, the ratio of ordinary high school to vocational school is just about right, and students of both these types of schools have the opportunity to go to college. Previously, Taiwan had three types of schools at the high school level: ordinary junior and senior high schools, teachers’ schools, and vocational schools at junior and senior high schools level. After the institution of nine year compulsory education in 1968, vocational schools at junior high level stopped enrolling students. Secondary level teachers’ schools were recognized into teachers’ colleges beginning from 1960, and then into institutes of education beginning in 1977. Therefore, secondary education in Taiwan now consists of junior and senior high schools and senior high-level vocational schools.

Secondary education in mainland China has not been well managed. In the 1950s, open places in high school were too few to allow all primary school graduates to continue their studies or to enable colleges to recruit enough students. Then, at one time in the 1970s, the number of high school students was so great that many qualified high school graduates had to be rejected by colleges. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (文化大革命), all vocational schools and many secondary vocational schools and technical schools were closed. The Chinese Communists began to reform the structure of high school education in 1978. However, this reform has focused on ordinary high schools, with the result that vocational education, especially in rural areas, has been neglected.

3. College education — Over the past decades, college education in Taiwan had improved both qualitatively and quantitatively. In 1950, Taiwan had only seven colleges and three graduate schools, with a total of 6,665 students.

To meet the increasing demand for professionals following Taiwan’s economic takeoff, a large number to private and government-run colleges were opened. By 1984, there were 105 colleges 276 graduate schools in Taiwan (14 times the number in 1950), with 412,381 students, an increase of 60.87 times. No such steady increase in the number of colleges has seen in mainland China. According to the January and February 1984 issues of Peking’s Chiao-yu yan-jiu (教育研究), in 1949 there were 207 colleges, in 1960 1,289, in 1963 407, in 1965 434, and in 1971 328. There has been an
increase in the number of colleges in recent years, and according to a report in the overseas edition of the People's Daily (人民日报) on March 9, 1989, mainland China now has 1,075 colleges. According to the 1982 census, the number of college students was 1,603,422, accounting only for 0.16 percent of the total population. The quality of mainland China's college education deteriorated seriously during the Cultural Revolution. At that time, Junior high school students whose family background was considered to be good could bypass senior high school and go straight to college. As part of their modernization drive, the Chinese Communists have in recent years opened a total of ninety-six key schools, but some of these are not well managed. From the above, it is clear that there are marked differences in the education systems on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, both with regard to theory and practice.

3. The Substance of Education

Our comparison of the substance of education on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait will be confined to the following three aspects: education in national morality, political education, and compulsory education.

1. Education in national morality — Benevolence, forgiveness, and peace are the main elements of traditional Chinese culture, and they are also embodied in the Three Principles of the People. For example, the Principle of Nationalism places strong emphasis on Chinese ethics, the Principle of People's Rights advocates democracy, and the Principle of the People's Livelihood calls for the promotion of science. The three principles are related to one another. In the "Educational Program for National Recovery and Reconstruction" adopted at the Fifth National Education Conference in Taipei in August 1970, much importance to education in national morality.

In mainland China, however, education has focused on class consciousness rather than national morality. Article 12 of Peking's constitution, adopted in January 1975, stipulated that "the proletariat should exercise overall dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure, including the sphere of culture." In order to conduct "class education," schools have become instruments of proletarian dictatorship.

The fostering of national morality unites all the people in a single
cause and it is based on love. Emphasizing class consciousness, on the other hand, causes one section of the population to struggle against the others and proceeds from hatred. Cooperation and mutual aid are needed to foster national morality, while disintegration and struggle will be the inevitable outcome of class struggle. Although the Chinese Communists claim that they have great esteem for "the people," they have actually never stopped persecuting them, especially during the Cultural Revolution when the majority of the population were considered to be class enemies.

2. Education on political ideology—The official political ideology in the Republic of China is Sun Yat-sen's Three principles of the People. In an effort to instill this ideology among students, courses are offered in Sun Yat-sen's ideology at college level, in the Three Principles of the People and civics at senior high and vocational school level, on civics and morality in junior high schools, and life and ethics in primary schools. The ideology of the Three Principles of the People is also taught in high schools and primary schools through the history and geography curriculum, and at college level through modern Chinese history, international relations, and mainland China studies. In addition, students are encouraged to adopt good habits.

In mainland China, the authorities have recently begun to make efforts to improve political and ideological education. "Ideology and Morality" has been taught in primary schools since the fall of 1981, and ordinary high schools offer five courses with political content on ethics for young people, elementary law, brief history of social development, and dialectical materialism. A Course on Communist ideology and morality has been offered in colleges and universities since the fall of 1982. However, students have a strong antipathy toward this kind of political-ideological indoctrination. The saying goes that teachers of Party history tell lies, philosophy teachers indulge in idle talk, those teaching political economy talk big, while those teaching scientific socialism talk nonsense. This is not so much matter of poking fun at the teachers as a condemnation of Chinese Communist propaganda. (7)

Besides, students have also aired their opposition to Communist Party rule and the socialist system. As in the Soviet Union, mainland China's political texts, especially the school textbooks, are replete with Marxist-Leninist doctrine and fail to tackle any practical issues. As a result, students
find them unacceptable.

3. Compulsory Education—According to Article 159 of the ROC's constitution, everyone has equal access to education. Article 160 states that education is free and compulsory for children aged between six and twelve, and government provides textbooks for children from poor families free of charge. In 1968, the length of compulsory education was extended from six to nine years, far exceed the target of seven years of free education by 1980 which was set in long-term education plan for Asia supported by UNESCO. In the period from 1983 to 1985, ROC's Education Ministry concentrated on expanding vocational education. There are also plans to extend compulsory education to twelve years in several phases. Taiwan's economic prosperity is a result of improvements in education. No efforts were made to extend compulsory education in mainland China until 1982 when the new constitution stated that the authorities intended to extend compulsory elementary education. That is to say, in areas where the "five-five-four" system is in force, compulsory education will be five years duration. Even such a short period of compulsory education has been difficult to achieve, as was admitted in Kwangming Daily (光明日报) commentary published on July 22, 1983: "Since at the current stage we still have financial problems, it would be impractical to have the government supply all the funds needed for the popularization of elementary school education." Financial problems have hampered efforts to extend the availability of elementary education. On May 27, 1985, mainland China published the "Decision on the Reform of the Education System."

The second part of this "Decision" states that compulsory education should be handled in line with local conditions because mainland China is so vast and its economic and cultural development is uneven. For the purpose of extending the availability of compulsory education, the "Decision" divides the country into three parts. Large cities and other economically more developed areas (about one-fourth of total territory) are to have nine years of compulsory education starting in 1990. In towns and villages which have already experienced some economic growth (about on half of the total territory), the new system of compulsory education is expected to begin in 1995. As for the remaining one-fourth of the territory which is economically backward, no deadline has been set for the implementation of nine-year system; the work of extending compulsory education will be carried out
accordance with economic conditions.

From the above, it is clear that it will be long time before mainland China has nine years of compulsory education. Besides, nine years of compulsory schooling would only be appropriate in place where the “six-six-four” system is in force, as under the “five-five-four” system, the compulsory period would overlap with senior high school. The decision to make local governments responsible for developing compulsory education has also made the task more difficult in some areas.

Essential Requirements of Education

Adequate funding, teaching materials, and teachers are generally considered to be the main elements determining the effectiveness of education, and the importance of these three factors was underlined by the then Vice Premier Wan Li (万里) in his speech to the “National Work Conference on Ordinary Education” in July 1983.\(^{11}\)

An examination of these elements will provide a usual comparison of the state of education on the two sides of Taiwan Strait.

1. Education Funding — According to statistics published by the ROC Education Ministry, government spending on education in 1985 amounted to slightly over NT$100.3 billion. This was divided approximately as follows: central government, NT$20.6 billion; Taipei Municipal Government, NT$14.5 billion; Kaohsiung Municipal Government, NT$5.2 billion; Taiwan Provincial Government, NT$38.7 billion; township governments, NT$604.4 million; and Quemoy and Matsu, NT$432.8 million; Altogether, 16.57 percent to total government expenditure that year went on education.\(^{12}\) \textit{Chung-hua min-kuo chiao-yu t'ung-chi, 41.} In mainland China, the national education budget is rather limited. In the February 1980 issue, Chiao-yu yen-chiu disclosed that government spending on education was equal to only about 1 percent of the total output value of industry and agriculture, 2 percent of the national income, and 5.6 percent of the government budget. According to statistics published by the Government Outlay Investigation Group of Mainland China's Finance Ministry, education spending was 9.3 billion yuan in the red during the period from 1966 to 1987. In 1979, the education budget was 7.11 billion yuan. 22.8 yuan for each of the 213 million students in colleges, high schools, and primary
shools. This meager education budget will make it difficult to repay the debt, let alone to improve standards of education. Mainland China's schools are short of 55 million desks and chairs, and some schools which are too poor to by clocks have to time their lessons by the position of the sun.

2. teaching material — In Taiwan, there is an adequate supply of well-compiled school textbooks and students also have access to numerous reference books. Academic research is not subject to any political restrictions. In mainland China, there is much room for improvement in school textbooks. For example, the nationwide unified teaching materials, compiled in June 1980 for primary and secondary schools, have been criticized for being impractical since they are too difficult for the “five-five” system of primary and secondary schools, but too simple for “six-six” system schools. There are also problems with regard to college-level teaching materials. In May 1983, the People's Daily carried a series of advertisements for new college and secondary school textbooks. However, most of the over one thousand titles were revised versions pre-Cultural Revolution works.

Conclusin

Ronald Reagan has claimed that Communism is the root of all evil, and others have suggested that the Chinese Communists are the most evil of all Communists. Comparing the situation on either of the Taiwan Strait, Mr. William Cheshire, editor of Washinton Times, has said that no visitor to both the Chinese mainland and the Republic of China on Taiwan can fail to be impressed by the difference between them; one of them is poverty stricken while the other is very prosperous. Such a sharp contrast is a sign that Communist totalitarian systems based on Marxism will forever lag behind systems based on freedom and democracy. Mr. Cheshire also said that the Three Principles of the People and the free and democratic system followed in the Republic of China is a dynamic combination, noteworthy for the prosperity and progress it has brought to Taiwan, and that Marxism and totalitarianism have only produced the nightmare of Communism, such as that experienced by the people of the Soviet Union. In fact, the Three Principles of the People have proved to be superior to
Communism not only in politics and economics, but also in culture and education.

A country's education system has a great impact on its development. For example, the emphasis on education in Japan from the time of the Meiji Restoration contributed greatly to Japan's national reconstruction after World War II, and its modernization since then. The German regained their confidence after their government took over responsibility for education from the church. In the case of the United States, the spread of secondary and higher education in the twentieth century has accelerated the country's scientific and technological development and done much to augment its power. The promotion of education in the Republic of China on Taiwan has facilitated the territory's economic takeoff which began in the 1960s. The Taiwan model in education should therefore be adopted for the whole of China.

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FOOTNOTE
(2) "Build Taiwan in a Harmonious and United Way," Christian Tribune (Taipei), May 24, 1987, 2.
(3) "Consolidate and Develop the Education Revolution in Colleges," Red Flag (紅旗) 1974, No. 1: 54.
(5) Ch'ang Ch'un-yuan, New democracy education curriculum 新民主主義教育 課程 4Th ed. (上海：上海雜誌社, April 1951), 18.
(8) People's Daily (人民日報) May 29, 1985, 1, 3.
(9) "The problems and contradictions confronted by the Chinese Communist


(12) Chung-hua min-kuo chiao-yu t’ung-chi, 41.

（くぼた のぶゆき 本学教授）