Education for Human and Societal Progress and Peace*

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Introduction:

People working as a team would have to be able to communicate with the same language and concepts. The event related in the Bible is the Tower of Babel. God created men but men were trying to build the Tower of Babel to reach heaven. They spoke the same language and hence could get organized to achieve a common goal, to challenge God. God then scattered them around and made them speak different languages resulting in the inability to communicate with ease. They could not have what is known as connectivity. To have connectivity denotes the capacity to communicate to have common understanding in order to pursue common goals. Connectivity connotes speaking the same language and having common understanding on concrete matters such as a house, a building, a car, a cat, a dog, etc. More important, there must be a common understanding on abstract matters such as concepts about equality, fairness, justice, democracy, good, bad, right, wrong, etc. The abstract part or the concepts usually are the sources of conflict and hence destroy positive connectivity. Conflicts in concepts can take place even among people speak the same language. In the case of the Tower of Babel, the people afterwards could not communicate but soon through interactions they were able to communicate again because they learned each other's language. Today, English is a common language where people can use of medium of communication and yet conflicts still arise as a common phenomenon due to the different interpretation of the abstract part of the language or the concepts which are devoid of common understanding and agreement upon the terms.

Education is a tool for people to acquire knowledge of one's society and the subject matter common to all such as proven scientific theories. But in terms of social sciences and other subjects which can be value-oriented such as ideology, religious faith, standard of right and wrong, cultural practices, etc., common understanding may not come about due to the difference in culture, belief and system of learning. However, admittedly differences will always remain even among people of the same society. Education can elicit a better common understanding once there is common knowledge on certain areas of learning even among people of different societies. Education is thus instrumental in bringing about commonalities while differences are acknowledged and taken with tolerance. There is a possibility of convergence in certain areas of learning most notably in natural sciences. It is therefore an important tool for connectivity. Educational cooperation in the form of joint research projects, scholars exchange, cultural exchange could be instrumental for a close and useful connectivity in the field of knowledge seeking but with significant implications about human relations, and international relations. Scholarships awarded to students to come to study at a particular country will enhance a close relationship between those who studied in that particular country in the academic field as well as human relation and a special feeling toward

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that country. This type of connectivity, broadly defined as interactions and undertaking common activities, is thus useful for cooperation for development and, for that matter, for peace.

As AES is coming to become a reality in fewer than two years' time, interactions and cooperation in the various areas will take place hopefully in an accelerating manner.[1] Education is a factor which will foster a close relationship among the ten members. Students exchange program, scholarly exchange through visiting fellowship, joint research projects, seminars, and "cross-national studies" where students of one ASEAN nation can study in another ASEAN country for a certain semesters will enhance exchange of knowledge, data, ideas, concepts, etc. Connectivity through education is thus a most important factor which deserves serious attention. But of most importance is to come up with a common understanding of the term "education," its significance and its objective. This will be discussed momentarily.

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The significance of education

Education is a factor of utmost importance in personality formation and for social development. Indeed, since the time of ancient Greece, there were talks about the significance of education as a prime factor for a good Polis. Plato believed that education was the means to prepare the people to be fit for the society. For the Chinese, education has always been emphasized as an important element in the society. The Chinese would talk about ***rern chai*** or human caliber or human resource as the key to the country's progress and development.[2]

John Dewey, (1858-1952) a famous American philosopher and educationist who advocated educational reform for the American society linked education not only with personality building but also democracy.

John Dewey, the eminent thinker of the progressive movement, the dominant figure in American education advocated three points for a good education.

First, the schools would be freely available to all from kindergarten to college.

Second, the children would themselves carry on the educational process, aided and guided by the teacher.

Third, they would be trained to behave cooperatively, sharing with caring for one another.

Dewey concluded that if the above are fulfilled," then all these creative, well-adjusted equalitarians would make over American society in their own image."

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[1]*Likhit Dhiravegin, "AEC and Thailand's Positioning." In* ***The Journal of the Royal Institute of Thailand*** *Vol. V (5 December 2013) : 1-17; Likhit Dhiravegin,* ***Globalization: the new world order and the new power configuration.*** *Presented at 7th Congress of the World Federation of Hainanese Associations, at BITEC, Bangkok, Thailand, November 23-24, 2001; Likhit Dhiravegin,* ***Karn Prub Tua Nai Yuk Lokapiwat Lae Karn Triam Tua Khao Pen Samachik Prachakom Setakit ASEAN Kong Prathes Thai [Adjustment in the era of globalization and preparation to become a member of the AEC of Thailand]*** *in Chatthip Nartsupha, ed.* ***Duayrak: Thai Kab Nana Chart****, No. 6 (Bangkok: Sangsunt Press, Ltd., B.E. 2556 [2013]).*

[2]*The Chinese has as its core principle about quality of a human being is how to be a good man. A person who lives up to the standard of being a good person by performing his duties expected of him is referred to as "He knows how to be a man."*

The above was John Dewey's visualization of education and democracy for the American society. His idea gained acceptance widely.[3]

The first item, education to be available to all is of interest for purpose here. How can it be possible for the people of the learning age to have access to education with the aid of the state combining with self-support through an educational loan program would be the topic of concern for discussion. The following discussion will take the care of Thailand as an example. Taking cognizance of the fact that education is a ***sine qua non*** for human as well as society's progress and development, in Thailand, ways and means have been devised for decades to provide educational opportunity for the poor and the needy. There are scholarships programs of all sorts, of the both from the government and the private organizations. There is also educational financial aid given by foreign organizations such the Fulbright scholarship, the Ford Foundation scholarship, to name only a few. But that is still far from being sufficient.

That education is recognized as an important factor is not just confined to the utilitarian aspect but also as part of a fundamental right of a citizen and a guarantee of social justice. Starting with the 1977 constitution, to be repeated in the 2007 constitution a 12 years free education for the people was stipulated in the charter.[4] It was deemed as the stepping stone for educational opportunity for the people. This is the level of high school which would allow the graduates to continue on at a college level in regular universities both state and private. There are also open enrollment universities for the objective. The ***rai son d'tre*** was that in this age of economic development and democracy, the people are entitled to have access to education for personal advancement and for the development of the society as a whole. For this reason, the "Loan for Education Program" known in the Thai acronym as ***kohyohsoh*** was launched. The program was successful to an impressive degree but admittedly there have been some problems in its ***modus operandi*** most notably the payment default of the loan. This would lead to a debate on the ethical and moral issues, the pros and cons of the program and whether the program should be terminated or to be continued.

To start with, if education is taken as a form of investment for the building of human resource for the country, it can be argued that the existence of workforce with good caliber brought about by education would serve the objective. Through education, the quality of the people would be a concomitant result. The better qualified people who have the caliber to work in either the government agencies or the private firms, or self-employed, would help develop the society, the regrettable shortcomings in ethic and morality on the part of those who defaulted in the payment of the loan notwithstanding. But it must be pointed out here that this does not mean that the ethical and the moral issues are to be ignored or to be glossed over. That is an area which has to be rectified eventually

As education has been recognized as the ***sine qua non*** of nation-building and social development, it is thus a prime factor which a good government has to pay serious attention. In philosophical terms, access to education for the people is an inherent right of a citizen. In the national development aspect, it is almost the master factor in national

*[3]John Dewey was a great American scholar. He published many books on the subject of education. See John Dewey, **How We Think**, (D.C.: Health & Company, 1910); John Dewey, **Democracy and Education**, (New York: Macmillan, 1926); John Dewey, **Logic: The Theory of Inquiry**, (New York: Henry Holtana Company, 1938); John Dewey, **The Child and the Curriculum**, (New York: University of Chicago Press, 1956).*

[4]There is a strong possibility that similar provisions will be put in the new constitution which will come out in due course.

growth and national power, to be discussed subsequently. Education contributes significantly toward the development of the society in the various aspects. A discussion of the subject is given momentarily.

In the first place, it can be argued that there is a twin evil of an under-developed society, ignorance and poverty. The twin evil, ignorance and poverty, forms the vicious circle which would retard the progress and development of a society. Ignorance stemmed from a lack of a proper education and training which would deprive a person of profound ideas save the ones learned from the basic socialization process in the family and limited years of schooling. This would result in the lack of the ability to have a decent job for economic well-being. The person would thus be poor and could not afford to have a decent education and most notably for the offspring. The lack of education and training would result in being ignorant and hence being poor. The process will thus be complete. To break the vicious circle, it is not to give a hand-out as is usually practiced by politicians for political popularity. This is because the person would remain poor as the old Chinese saying goes, in effect, that if you give a fish to a poor man, that person may live for one day, but if you teach the person how to catch fish, the person would live forever. The key factor is thus to provide a proper education to eradicate ignorance and hence poverty. Indeed, for the poor, what they may want to say but may be too timid to say it. That is, help me to need no help from men, so I can help the men in need.

The second point to take into consideration about the significance of education is related to a good political system. It would serve no positive purpose to be engaged in a debate on the issue of comparison between a democracy and a dictatorship as was the case in the Cold War period. The contentious issue would lead us nowhere. The question to be asked is what constitutes a good political system for the governing of the realm. The answer is as follows.

A good political system is one in which the person in the bottom economic echelon or the poorest, so to speak, can live "a life with human dignity" with the following requisites.[5]

First, the person must have the four basic needs--enough food or three square meals a day, enough clothing to keep warm, medicine or medical treatment for ailment and a decent shelter or having a roof over his or her head. These are the concrete political demands to which a good system must be able to accommodate.

Second, the person's fundamental rights including rights and freedom, equality, justice most notably social justice, human rights, and human dignity must be guaranteed by the constitution and the related laws and their enforcement. Without enforcement, laws will become just empty words written on papers. This part is the abstract political demands to which a good political system must accommodate.

Third, the person and most especially the offspring of the person must have a chance to have social mobility, by rising through the social echelon from a lower social stratum to a higher stratum, say from the child of a peasant to become a judge or a medical doctor. This can be realized by having access to a proper education and equal employment opportunity. Thus, education must be available to all as John Dewey said, through state subsidy and/or self-support. In case the person is too poor to pay for the

[5]*Likhit Dhiravegin,)Karnmuang Thai Lae Prachathipratai). [Thai Politics and Democracy] Bangkok: Misterkopy (Thailand) Co., Ltd., 2009.*

expenses for an education, state assistance through a program of loan for education can be an answer.

It can thus be seen that education constitutes a significant factor in bringing about a good political system as discussed above.

The third point to be given attention is related to national development of a country. A. F. K. Organski of the University of Michigan posited a theory that national growth is related to national power. In other words, the power and the international standing of a nation in the international community will follow a sequence of national growth (development) and national power (political, economic and social power) ***vis-à-vis*** other member nations. There are five factors for national growth and hence national power as follows:[6]

First, political development,
Second, economic development,
Third, social mobility,
Fourth, psychological modernity, and
Fifth, population.

For the modern era, we may add another factor, technology most notably information technology.

Political development means having a political system which the people are politically conscious and take part in the system. The system must be able to mobilize the people to be part of the governing system most notably in the process of decision-making and formulation of public policies for problem-solving and for national development. Political development can only occur in a society in which the people are politically conscious and have a sense of social responsibility and civic obligation. This can only come about when the people have received a good education. Education thus arguably plays a significant role in political development and political participation. But it should be pointed out that participation in politics must be voluntary and political consciousness must not be one that is generated by indoctrination and hence political mobilization, instead of voluntary participation, as is the case of a socialist country in the Korean peninsula.

Economic development invariably will need technological know-how, skilled labor, research and development program, etc. All the above would require education and training for the populace. Any society in which the illiteracy rate is high and the people are untrained or under-trained leading to a pool of un-skilled labor, the chance for a successful industrialization will be slim and hence economic development will lag behind. A good education is the key to this second factor of national growth,

Social mobility will correspond to what we have discussed above regarding the third requisite of a good political system, to have social mobility for a change of one's social status. Without education, the great bulk of the population will lie idle in the rural areas and the future of the country will remain in the hands of a few. The absence of manpower to help in the process of national growth will hinder the chance to have national power. But social mobility can only happen when the people are educated. Here the importance of education can be readily recognized.

Psychological modernity or thinking rationally with logical and scientific reasoning can only be possible when the people are free from superstitious belief. A good education will allow the people to have self-confidence because they would be

[6] *Lectures given at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Mass., USA., 1968.*

liberated from ignorance and from fear of the unknown. Thanks to the scientific revolution taken place in the West, the superstitious belief in natural power imposed upon by certain elements in the society has been eroded. The social myth which imprisoned the people in blind faith is losing its sanctity and credibility once the people are better educated. Education will lead to an analytical mind and scientific and logical thinking. Psychological modernity is necessary for a modern age and for living in a modern society. It is most important for national growth and national power.[7]

Population is a factor which helps generate national development and national power. Organski pointed out that of all the Western powers in the nineteenth century, England, France, Germany, Spain, for example, had at least thirty million people. These countries had big enough domestic market which helped with the initial stage of industrial development. The American automotive industry became successful because of the huge domestic market which sold cars in great volume making the economy of scale possible. A big enough population will also provide manpower for fighting wars. But for the large number of population to have positive contribution for national development, the population must be an asset, not a liability. That is, they must have purchasing power and must possess technical skill for contribution for economic development. They must also have psychological modernity. The age structure must be supportive, i.e., ages from 16-60 preferably should large while below 16 and above 60 preferably should be kept manageably small. This would call for a good policy of family planning. But what is obvious is that education is an integral part in turning the population into an asset rather than a liability for national growth and national power.

The significant role of technology most notably information technology, to which we add to Organski's five factors is obvious. Indeed, the modern technology has changed the planet Earth by turning the world to become flat. Technology lag is a most dreadful factor for the nations to lag behind. Indeed, as an analogy, societies that are ignorant of the modern technological gadgets may be reduced to the Stone Age. And technology can only happen through education in the various subjects of modern science and technology, social studies and humanities.

In sum, education is very important from the various standpoints that we have discussed. It is arguably the Key factor for human and societal progress, the achievement of which can contribute toward peaceful co-existence among nations.

The educational system of the East and the West: A comparative perspective[8]

The significance of education is recognized and taken as an important key factor for development and for peace. But one important issue is the system of teaching and learning. There is a commonly accepted observation that in the West, students are taught to think, to be critical, to analyze and to voice their opinions, whereas in the East most notably Asia, students are taught to memorize or to learn by rote or by heart. This issue is to be taken for discussion momentarily.

[7] *Cf. Alvin Toffler. **The Third Wave.** (New York: William Morrow, 1980).*

[8] *Cf. Likhit Dhiravegin, Key Note Address at the ASAIHL-Thailand in cooperation with Siam University, Conference "**Cultures, Ideas and Educational Systems: A Comparison between the East and the West**" The 32nd Inter-University Conference The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning-Thailand Chapter at Siam University on 31st March 2014 at Siam Auditorium, 19th floor, Royal Jubilee Building.*

A comparison between the East and the West is a ten million $US topic. It is very broad and it will take a lot of generalizations, if not over, to discuss such a broad topic. Indeed, the various factors involved will make it difficult, if not impossible, to telescope them into a coherent argument. Be that as it may, the salient features of the cultures, ideas and educational systems between the East and the West, will be discussed. In so doing, it is necessary to narrow down the scope of the discussion so that it will be more manageable.

It will be remembered that the most oft-quoted saying regarding the difference between the East and the West reads thus, "East is East, West is west and never the twain shall meet." This saying means the two worlds shall forever be apart. But this saying is probably no longer valid. The world in the globalization era has shrunk into what is said metaphorically a "global village." There exists also now the convergence theory, a synthesis of the good elements of different systems and different parts of the world. Indeed, it is common for a Thai to have a Western breakfast which consists of bread and butter and jam, sunny side up, cereal, milk and what have you. For lunch it may be Chinese noodle and for dinner Italian cuisine and red-wine. Even in language, many Thai speak with a number of "borrowed" words from English, Chinese and Japanese.

The difference in culture, idea and educational systems does not come out of a vacuum but a difference in historical development and the social system which have an effect on the thinking system and the concomitant results on other aspects of the society. On the outset, the East and West may not be that different. Under a dictatorial political system such as the Roman Empire, more importantly the four decades of the Dark Ages following the fall of the Roman Empire, the West was dominated by a system of forced belief through indoctrination and enforcement of Draconian laws. The people were supposed to believe what the rulers wanted them to believe. This had something to do also with the power and the authority of the power wielders. Galileo who tried to speak the truth through his discovery with the existence of telescope that the Milky Way was just a congregation of stars in defiance of the power of the priests was harshly persecuted by the clergy. Galileo paid dearly for his truth by being tortured until he became blind and put away to die in prison. His predecessor was even burnt alive for advocating something which defied the orthodox tenet of the faith. In those years, culture, idea and educational system in the West were controlled by the clergy and the social system. This was not dissimilar to the East. But the West had a struggle process which brought about changes including the Renaissance, Reformation, Magna Carta, Scientific Revolution, and eventually the Industrial Revolution after the coming of the steam engine.

The question is how come the above process of changes did not take place in the East. No one could come up with a cogent answer save it was a difference in the geographic location, the climate and eventually the most convincing argument is the difference in historical development or social evolution.

The West has been the cradle of democracy while the other parts of the world most notably in the East, it was marked by despotism. This gave rise to the differences in culture, idea and educational systems. More importantly was the process of learning and truth seeking. This was a broad generalization but for argument's sake, the picture was simplified, if not over-simplified. This line of reasoning could also be easily accused of reductionism. But as food for thought and to cater to the need to address the

broad topic, it could be said that the concept of education and the teaching method and the process of truth seeking played a most important part in the differences in the outputs and outcomes of the cultures, ideas and educational systems of the two sides of the world.

The West believed that education was for teaching and learning through discussions and arguments. The students were entitled and indeed encouraged to be critical and analytical. The East most especially in Asia the students were to take education as supreme knowledge as given. The students were to learn while the books and the teachers were the authorities.

The teaching method in the East was for the students to learn by rote as if to memorize a religious tenet. In the West, the students were to think and to ponder the points made in the textbooks and the points made by the teacher to come up with their own arguments. Reasoning and logic and data would form the basis of validity of theory rather than taking the authority by faith.

The East held that the truth had already been established while the West was in constant seeking for the truth along the dialectic method of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis and then thesis and the process would continue.

All the above would lead to a difference in culture, idea and educational systems.

But at the same times, there were commonalities between the East and the West in the fundamental values germane to the society and the system. First was to have social harmony and the ability to co-exist. But to arrive at that end, different cultures, ideas and educational systems would ensue depending the era and the imperatives of different societies. Second, there was a need to have a viable and sustainable society and other systems. For that end, the people would be prepared by education to fit in the environment and hence different societies would come up with different cultures, ideas and educational systems to cater to the specific needs of the societies which varied.

But as there was a change in technology leading to a change of cultures, ideas and a shift in era, the educational systems would be affected. Hence whether the East or the West, the differences would be narrowed down. This was especially true of theories in the field of science. The quantum theory has no boundary. Regardless of where you learn, the theory would hold true because it can extrapolate in time and space. It is a subject of value free and universally valid. But this is not the case in social science; even in that field there is a tendency to converge, thanks to the commonalities of the various social aspects.

One example of a difference of acquisition of knowledge which impacts upon the economy and indeed has political implications would be the subject of "creative economy." John Hawkins, in his book, The Creative Economy,[9] argued that all human beings regardless of where they were had creative ideas or creativity. But creativity would have to be supported by an atmosphere of freedom. Without freedom such as a closed political system which did not allow for freedom of expressions or unconventional ideas, creative thinking would be stifled or even killed. With creativity supported by freedom, there needed to be the third element, the market. For business, the market outlets for the merchandise have to be provided and for the academia the arena for academicians to have their works published, etc., have to exist. Hence, the creative economy would materialize when creativity was supported by an atmosphere

[9]*John Howkins,* ***The Creative Economy****, (U.S.: Penguin Books, Ltd., 2013).*

of freedom and a market was available. Creativity which is the innate nature of all human beings must have room for development and the society must have a system where freedom is allowed to have free thinking while the economy or the business operation or the educational institutions can benefit from a market in operation. In the case of the economy, it must be a market economy while in education it must be a system where freedom to seek the truth is encouraged and supported by society. Here there will be no difference whether it is the East or the West.

The East or the West, in the final analysis, there would not be major differences in the basic cultures, ideas and educational systems. They all share something in common, the thirst for knowledge and for freedom in pursuance of truth and answers in life. After all, the East or the West, they are all human beings. East or West, are in the final analysis all the same, pure and simple.

The common goal of education

A comparison between the East and the West, already discussed, has brought up an issue which serves as food for thought for scholars and policy makers. In the first place, there exists a concept about the difference between the Western culture and the Eastern culture in many aspects including the world view, education, way of life, religious belief etc. Indeed, the well-known saying often found in reading, as mentioned previously, is "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." That saying needless to say is an over generalization.

While it is true that differences do exist between the two cultures, broadly speaking, there does exist commonalities which people regardless of where they are will share. Take for example, every nation, be it England, France Germany, Japan, China, India, Malaysia, Thailand, etc., will inevitably have create an educational system which will have the salient features in common including teaching the children to learn how to speak, to read and to write the native language, to know his or her national identity, to learn the basic knowledge for getting along with other members in society, etc. All these aspects will be similar in all human communities. To be sure, the commonalities notwithstanding, there are different aspects of educational teaching methods and emphasis. The most quoted example, as already touched upon, is in the West students are usually taught to think, to analyze, to argue, to ask questions and to express their own ideas whereas in the East, students are taught to memorize from textbooks and are trained to learn by rote. Whatever they memorize is of supreme importance because it is taken as the truth. The teacher is viewed as an authority rather than a thought provoker so that the learning and teaching process will be dynamic and a two-way communication which will reinforce critical and analytic thinking. In many cases, teachers just repeat what is written in the textbook. This is a style of teaching which can be called “Kara-oke” teaching or teacher while the students are memorizing in the manner of learning how to pray mantra correctly in a temple. Ramifications and implications of the difference in the thinking and learning process including development of creative ideas between the two systems are far-reaching imaginable.

The difference in the method and emphasis of teaching and learning is not only confined to the issue of what type of knowledge one can learn but of more importance is the thinking system of the an individual. It is undeniable that a person who works hard can master mathematics and solve different questions, or an engineer may excel

in producing machine through good training. He or she can learn the skill to come up with a nice product. But there is a world of difference between learning how to come up with a machine through imitation and inventing one by oneself. To be able to make a machine by oneself, the person must have his or her own ideas through an independent thinking process not by imitation or by a process of copycat. An educational system which requires the students to learn the subject by heart is indeed no education. It is at best training or as the Chinese say, in effect, that it is a "learning dead knowledge" meaning fixed and without life or cannot grow in intellect.

The above observation is now commonly acknowledged and many nations which suffer from the drawback attempt to rectify the problem. But it is easier said than done. There is a problem of culture here. There is also the problem of the political system. Creativity needs to be supported by a atmosphere of free expression and ideas. Freedom is a ***sine qua non*** for a liberal education. The reward for creative thinking plays a role here. If coming up with one's own analytical idea is frowned upon and scored low in examination, one would soon lose the zeal of coming up with something new. The alternative of learning by heart and stick to the text books will be more rewarding. In a worse case, initiative may be viewed as a defiance of authority and a display of disrespect for the senior person such as the teacher. Such a culture may even be extended to the officialdom. People who toe the line of the organization would be awarded with promotion and praise while those who showed too much initiative may be viewed as maverick. The ramifications of such an atmosphere on the educational system is self-explanatory.[10]

Be that as it may, the nations that have adopted such an educational system have registered growth in many aspects most notably economics and physical buildings. Many countries fared even better than the nations which claimed to have a better educational system in regards to its teaching and learning and evaluation methods. Admittedly, this may be the case. But it has to be pointed out that many of the countries that have made impressive progress in national development have many of their key figures educated in the nations which have an educational system which puts a great emphasis on critical and analytic thinking as opposed to learning by heart.

The above observation is a topic which can be discussed for a lengthy period of time. The topic is challenging for educationists and policy-makers alike. In the final analysis, regardless of what kind of historical and cultural environment one society has, the educational objectives for most countries have in common will be as follows.

First, the basic education through the socialization process of the family is to have a healthy social being. Once a baby born, he or she as ***a biological being***, has to be nurtured to have a good health. But of importance is to be socialized to be ***a social being*** to be able to live in a society. He or she has to learn the language, to learn how to behave and interact with other people, etc. This process will continue in educational institution and in the society at large.

Second, the next educational imperative for a person is to be trained or educated to become ***a professional being***. He or she has to learn some profession in order to earn a living by technical training by being a medical doctor, an engineer, a lawyer, an accountant, a businessman, etc.

Third, the person who lives in a society has to learn to be ***an organizational being***. He or she has to work in a government institution, or a business firm or any other

[10]*Cf. Likhit Dhiravegin, "The patron-client system and its impacts," in www.dhiravegin.com*

social organization. But most importantly he or she is a citizen of a country. He or she has known something about politics and government. After all, no one can escape living under the organization of a state. He or she must understand the concept of rights and freedom and responsibility. This is to have political education to be ***a political being***.

Fourth, but a person who has all the above aspects will have to fulfill the attribute of the noble creature of having ethic and morality. He or she has thus to be socialized to be ***a spiritual being***. Without morality, a human being may not be any different from the brute animals fighting for food and mating.

Fifth, men do not live by bread alone. He or she has to be cultured, having aesthetic values, appreciating art and beauty. He or she has to take in some culture to be ***a cultured being***.

Sixth, of all of the "beings," one important item cannot be overlooked. Thai is "***individual being***." "Individual being" means a person must have selfhood and personhood. He has to have a free spirit. He must have freedom of thoughts and expressions as long as they are not against morality and law. Despite all the "beings" above a person has become, without this last item the person would not have what comprises a "man." And such a society would be in essence an oppressed one automatically. A "man" worthy of the term must have a free spirit. He must be ready to fight for rights and freedom, equality, justice and human dignity.

Regardless of the geographic areas where a nation is situated, east or west, north or south on the planet globe, the above aims of educational system would be the shared commonalities.

The above is the common features of an educational system which can be generalized to be a common aim of education. As to the objectives of education per se, it can be summarized as follows.

First, to give ***data*** to the students. (data)

Second, to know how to ***analyze*** and synthesize. (analysis and synthesis)

Third, to learn how to conduct ***research***. (research)

Fourth, to come up with ***theory***. (theory)

Fifth, to acquire ***values***. (values)

Sixth, to be able to ***apply*** knowledge for use. (application)

These six objectives of education have to be elaborated. But this has to start with the difference between education and training.

Training is a process of teaching to someone is able to do something such as making a table. That person may become an expert in table making to the extent that it was very popular and orders for it kept pouring in. But he could only make a table. Education, on the other hand, is to educate the person to know the various kinds of wood and the quality of each which would be good for particular product. The person would also be taught to know how to make curves and angles on the pieces of wood. Then he would be taught to read blue prints for furniture making which ranges from table, chair, desk to bed and dressing desk, etc. Then he would be assigned to make various kinds of furniture by reading the blue prints and to come up with the products. After a period of time he might come up with his own designs and blue prints. This is an example of education as opposed to training for skill in doing some specific things.

The first objective of education is to let the students or the learners to have basic data of certain things. Basic data such as the number of population of a country, a city, the percentage of the various occupations of a certain country, etc. These basic sets of

data have to be known by the students. The objective is to be familiar with the environment. The focus is not on memorizing data but to use it as a background upon which other uses can be employed. For further data in detail, the students or the learners have to know how to dig up for it in statistic documents printed or by some other devices. In other words, education is not evaluated on the basis of the ability to know more facts and memorize facts or data but some other more important elements. This is the reason why learning by rote is a normal practice in certain societies and the criterion for a "learned" man is to be evaluated by how much facts or data he or she knows or remembers the significance of the basic data notwithstanding. The process of education, indeed a wrong word or a misnormer, is the three R's, read, remember and repeat. Read means knowing from reading or listening or watching and then try to remember or memorize what has been read to be used for answering examination questions by repeating what has been memorized. There is no process of critical thinking and analytic thinking with no ideas of one's own whatsoever. The process is a static one with no chance for new knowledge or ideas to come forth.

The second objective of education is to teach students or the learners to have critical thinking and analytic thinking with the ability to synthesize. For this purpose, the person must have an analytical mind. That is the tendency to ask "why" and try to come up with answers by searching for reasons or factors which have led to a certain thing or phenomenon. This answer is fine but it is tautology. The question is how to have an analytical mind. The answer may be as follows.

First, every human being since childhood has an inquisitive mind and analytic thinking. Young children would ask the mother how come that object is different from another object; how come he is different from his sister in some parts of the body; why dogs are different from cats, etc. The mother, if educated and is in a culture where the children are viewed as human beings, not as toys or innocent beings which cannot be reasoned with, would try to answer these questions in a serious manner and with tolerance and regard for the right of the children. But in a certain society, the questions asked by the children might be shunned and dismissed as nonsensical words from a child and would just kept silent or even reprimanded the children for causing a nuisance. Inquisitiveness would turn into something taken as a nuisance by the mother or the parents. The process if continues would discourage the children from asking further questions and would learn that if he or she just follows what the parents said or did would be more rewarding than having initiatives or creative thinking. This process would be reinforced by an educational system in which there is an emphasis on learning by rote and evaluation is corresponding done by the ability to repeat what is taught. The two processes, socialization in the family and the learning method and culture in school will kill the critical and analytic thinking of the children. The saying, in effect, the more one learns, the more stupid one becomes, is not further from the truth.

The second part is the culture of the society. In interactions, in mass media and in some other circumstances especially in religious beliefs which forbid the learning of different ideas or voicing of different opinions, the people would be instilled values and ideas which are taken as the truth and hence no questions would be raised, either in the mind or in conversations. What exists in the society to a great extent is taken for granted as the ***summum bonum*** and it is a taboo to question the "self-evident" truth." Under such a social atmosphere, the people are used to adhere to the conventional belief and norms because all things are taken for granted as said.

The above situation will never lead to the development of an analytical mind, let alone the ability to analyze and then to synthesize. Learning is done through a process of memorizing and slavishly taking all that have been taught as given and as the ultimate knowledge. What the teacher teaches is the truth and with authority. It is to be taken as words in a holy book.

The question is: how to rectify the problem? The following is offered as food for thought.

For the students or learners to develop a critical and analytic thinking, the parents have to change their attitudes and this can only happen when they are educated by a modern method. Otherwise, the effort will become futile because it is the fact that one cannot produce something different when the mode of production and the machine are of the old fashion.

The second part is the educational system most notably the teaching process. Teachers are supposed to teach students data but more importantly is to lead them to think, to develop critical thinking, analytic thinking and creative thinking. For the three processes, students must have freedom to present their own ideas and opinions. Teachers must show a keen interest in students' ideas and opinions and be tolerant against new ideas and outlandish ideas. Evaluation of performance should be based on knowledge but also initiatives. The practice should help encourage and develop a critical, analytic and creative mind which is the main objective of education. Memorizing data is important but data should serve to enhance and strengthen analysis rather than just memorizing data per se.

Research, theory, value and application are the remaining objectives to be discussed below.

The third part is concerned with research. Why do we have to conduct research? Research is to get data to serve as a basis for further study. But of importance is research is to confirm what has been postulated or analyzed as discussed above. To analyze is to exercise one's critical thinking and analytical capacity to serve as a first step of finding knowledge. It serves as a hypothesis. After analysis, one has to conduct research to look for more data to prove that what one has analyzed is borne out by empirical evidence. With no further research to prove to confirm or sometimes to inform the analysis, it will remain a hypothesis pending confirmation by more convincing data which has to be obtained from research.

Research will depend on the subject matter under study. Qualitative analysis will differ from quantitative analysis in regard to research procedure. There are a wide range of research procedures including the use of the available data, (official statistic records, company records, etc.), interview, questionnaire, experimental study, observation, participant and non-participant. It can also be a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Knowledge of statistic is also necessary to render weight to the findings.

The fourth part is theory construction. Once a study on a certain subjects has been repeatedly done and the findings are the same, one may venture to argue that there is a close relationship, for example, between the level of education and political consciousness. This is proven by studies and they would form into what is known as “partial theory”.

The fifth part of a study is to instill, either intentionally or unintentionally, values. Those who study law would almost automatically believe in justice, the rule of

law and the right procedure, the due process of law. To be sure, there are those who may not care much about all these values except to study law as a profession.

The last part is application. A person who has received a good education should have a better understanding about the world, the environment and above all himself. He or she should be able to apply what has been learned for work, for human relation and most importantly for solving personal problems so that life will be more livable.

The six items for objectives of an education are given here as food for thought and for further studies.

Conclusion

Education is the most important factor in creating a "desirable" man. As the Chinese philosophy, as already mentioned, would have it "how to be a good man." Education builds desirable men and men create a good society. Men are the creators. Creators must have good qualifications. They must be developed in the physical part or the body, the thinking part or the brains and the spiritual part or the soul. Body can be built by knowledge of food and physical education whereas mind and soul can be built by technical and moral education. In this sense, education is the key factor that can bring about human and societal progress.

The significance of education can hardly be over-emphasized. Education, as pointed out in our discussion, regardless of East or West will aim at the same goal and hence there are commonalities in objectives of education, differences in certain aspects notwithstanding.

Education is for national growth and national power, for social justice and for human dignity, etc. But indeed, education goes beyond what has been said. Education, it can be argued strongly, is related to peace domestically as well as internationally. Internally, if the people are educated to be able to stand on their own feet economically, with rights and freedom and human dignity, a society marked by peaceful coexistence with social harmony may not be a far-fletched dream. If the people are educated to be a person with an intellectual endowment, a good soul with spiritual value, loving of humankind, arguably there will be a good prospect for the world community to co-exist in peace. Education arguably can thus bring about social harmony for peaceful co-existence and in the final analysis for "Harmony of Humanity."

It is to be pointed here that it is a coincidence that the International Day of Peace, September 21, 2013 of the United Nations had as its theme "Education for Peace."Indeed, Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani girls' education campaigner who was shot on the head by Taliban militants discussed about education promotion as her ultimate dream. She also related educational promotion to the Nobel Peace Prize. Indeed, she was even nominated for the prize. She was not awarded but if she continues her sacred mission, there is a possibility that her dream will one day come true. The girl who risked her life fighting for her cause showed her determination to fight for the right of education for girls as well as boys. She said she believed that children whether black or white, Muslims or Christians should have a chance to go school (in her village). At the United Nations she said impressively that "one child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world."

The moral lesson that many of us can draw from the bravery of Malala is perhaps that if a girl of 16 has a strong determination to fight for the right of education for the children, cannot we the adults most notably governmental leaders do likewise for the noble cause, for the improvement of humankind, for social justice and for national development? Most notably, it should enhance the development of the nations of ASEAN through educational co-operation and collaboration which should foster connectity on the various aspects of the region.

Education should help build a good society based upon the principle, as already touched upon, that "Education builds men, and men build society and nation." A good and desirable society is one which guarantees human security which incorporates seven items of security of UNDP: Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, Personal Security, Community Security, Political Security. In the final analysis, it is to liberate men from ***want*** and from ***fear***.

The most desirable ultimate goal for education for humankind is, as already argued, to eradicate ignorance and poverty. It is to be geared toward human development, or the development of good character and for progress of society, of a nation or region most especially ASEAN or the world at large. In the final analysis, education is to build a good society where people, as said before, can develop their body, mind and soul and of more importance social soul which encompasses loving compassion, and kindness. A good education should be one which builds a society and a political system characterized by democratic spirit, rights and freedom, equality, justice, human rights and human dignity. The aim is to achieve a society which upholds human dignity and social justice which can lead to, as advocated by the UN, the ultimate goal of world peace.