

# Education in Hong Kong, 1941 to 2001

## Visions and Revisions

Anthony Sweeting



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The image shows a vertical column of four square characters in calligraphy, representing the Chinese name of Hong Kong University: '香港大學'. Each character is contained within a square frame, a style known as 'Square Word Calligraphy'.

Hong Kong University Press is honoured that Xu Bing, whose art explores the complex themes of language across cultures, has written the Press's name in his Square Word Calligraphy. This signals our commitment to cross-cultural thinking and the distinctive nature of our English-language books published in China.

"At first glance, Square Word Calligraphy appears to be nothing more unusual than Chinese characters, but in fact it is a new way of rendering English words in the format of a square so they resemble Chinese characters. Chinese viewers expect to be able to read Square Word Calligraphy but cannot. Western viewers, however are surprised to find they can read it. Delight erupts when meaning is unexpectedly revealed."

— Britta Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing*

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# INTRODUCTION: VISIONS AND REVISIONS

## COMMENTARY

### Rationale

This book is a sequel. Its rationale is, therefore, substantially the same as that which applied to its predecessor, *Education in Hong Kong, Pre-1842 to 1942: Fact and Opinion*. Like its predecessor, it attempts to present enough instances of information, ideas, attitudes, and skills to enable the reader to become his/her own historian of Education. If, however, at least in the beginning, this objective seems unrealistically ambitious, then it hopes to provide sufficient stimulus or, even, provocation to encourage the reader to enjoy browsing through it, reaching, perhaps serendipitously, her/his own conclusions about the latest phases in the history of education in Hong Kong.

The most salient differences between this book and its precursor relate, of course, to the actual factual contents and to their chronological scope. The earlier work attempted to tackle issues and developments, some of which could be traced back many centuries. Even its more detailed treatments focused on a century's worth of facts and opinions. The present work is confined to a little less than sixty years of modern and, perhaps, post-modern developments. With its correspondingly sharper and more familiar focus, it seeks to illuminate the visions and the revisions that typified education in Hong Kong in the years from the end of 1941 to beginning of the new millennium.

In a more general sense, it seeks to fulfill both the "main purposes" of History that Richard Aldrich identified: "to furnish an account of past events" and to "provide an interpretation of those events and by so doing to locate ourselves, both as individuals and as members in society, within historical time", recognizing, as Aldrich did, that "such location is particularly appropriate in the early years of a new century and a new millennium".<sup>1</sup>

The predecessor of this book emphasized the concepts of fact and opinion, together with the way their interactions shape an understanding of the history of education. Thus, two apparently contrasting concepts were seen as essentially connected in a manner that is reflected in the Chinese notion of *yin* and *yang*. In this sequel, a major content-oriented focus is on another pair of apparently

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1. Richard Aldrich (ed.), (2002), *A Century of Education*, London, Routledge-Falmer, p. 1.

opposing, but fundamentally complementary and reciprocal, *yin/yang*-like ideas: visions and revisions.

### Visions

In Hong Kong, the years from 1941 to the new millennium harboured numerous and varied visions, which had implications for education. They ranged from glimmers of the (Japanese) Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere to aspirations for a brave new (and “free”) world — once dictators and ultra nationalists had been defeated in 1945. Subsequently, in relation to the links between education and politics, they included Cold War-influenced concepts of ‘counter-communist activities’, Little Red Book inspired images of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and, eventually more pragmatic views of *Realpolitik* and modernization, with all the changes of direction and emphasis that these inspired. With regard to the economy, they varied from interest in *entrepôt* commerce to preoccupation with mainly small-sized manufacturing industry and on to a diversification that emphasized tertiary or service industry, such as banking, finance, and hospitality. In specifically educational terms, some were imbued with progressivist ideals concerning pupil-centred curricula, ‘relevance’, and ‘involvement’; more recently, others with New Rightist formulations for ‘effective schooling’, with focus on benchmarks, appraisal exercises, and other quality indicators. And, of course, throughout the years from 1941, there were students, teachers, parents, and administrators in Hong Kong (as elsewhere in the world), for whom the very concept of vision was practically irrelevant — or, if anything resembling a vision about education existed at all, it was a blinkered, “instrumental” one, directed towards survival or, optimally, prosperity. At times, the apparent predominance of such people at senior levels of education administration and in local politics, provoked commentators on more than a few policy documents to condemn them for their lack of (or, at best, very restricted) vision.

### Revisions

Visions varied, both between different people and within the same person at different times. They varied in nature and in clarity. This ensured that revisions were a recurring feature of developments in education policy and practice. As far as policy was concerned, for example, government attitudes about whether to support private schools changed radically in the second half of the twentieth century. Especially in a centralized education system, the distinction between policy as formulated at the centre and as implemented at the grassroots also generated the types of revisions that were either conscious or unconscious adaptations. Moreover, in an education system that was open to international influences,<sup>2</sup>

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2. At least, for all but the first few years (1942–45) of the period under study.

revisions of curricular, pedagogic, and heuristic, as well as of policy-related, approaches and day-to-day practices, according to prevalent world trends were neither uncommon nor unexpected. And these occurred, not only at the system level, but also at the level of individual schools, individual teachers, and individual students. This tendency was accentuated as more students returned from studies abroad and, from the late 1980s onwards, as more temporary emigrants returned to Hong Kong, having received their foreign passports or 'green cards'. It was also reinforced as Hong Kong residents became increasingly sophisticated in their use of information technology, such as via computer access to the Internet, the use of mobile telephones, etc.

As far as vision, revision, macro-level policy making, and prospects for the future are concerned, Hong Kong's track record reinforces the acuity of a prediction made, quite some time ago in another society, by one of the sharpest of its observers, H.L. Mencken: "To every problem, the solution will be found sooner or later, and that solution will always be wrong".

### **From 1941 to the New Millennium**

Education policy and practice during the three years, eight months of the Japanese occupation may seem totally different from those of the remainder of the century. In quantitative terms, it represents a contraction, when both the preceding years and, especially the subsequent ones were characterized by expansion. Efforts to control language use, both inside and outside schools, were far more draconian than they had ever been before or would be for at least the next half-century. Serious attention was paid to the messages conveyed by such channels of 'informal education' as the radio, the cinema, and the press — negatively to the extent of strict censorship, more positively via the use made of propaganda, which was, of course, anti-British and anti-colonial.

On the other hand, recognition of the relatively sympathetic reception of Japanese efforts to discredit colonialism by at least some Hong Kong residents<sup>3</sup> probably contributed to attempts in the post-occupation years by British officials to moderate any colonialist assumptions, especially since they were able to remind survivors of the occupation years about the harshness of the Japanese style of colonialism. Indeed, much of the remainder of the century, as far as both formal and informal education (and many other aspects of life) were concerned, consisted of progress towards "applied decolonization", followed by the experience of post-colonial realities. And other themes that characterized the later years were presaged, to an extent, during the Japanese occupation. Thus, concern about the equality of educational opportunities might have been pre-echoed by Japanese arrangements

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3. See, for example, K.S. Lo's reference to Chinese people shouting "Sing Lei, Sing Lei!" (Victory! Victory!) as the Japanese invasion succeeded, in Sweeting (1990), *Fact and Opinion*, p. 466. See, also, Lethbridge (1969), p. 127, for comments on how the "British mandarin ... lost its 'Peak mentality' and colonial arrogance in the post-war period.

to discuss the possibility of introducing free and compulsory education in December 1943. And later inducements to teachers could be compared with the readiness of the Japanese authorities to pay schoolteachers in rice at a time of rampant inflation and widespread hunger.

In order to translate some of these generalizations into a form of more personal meaning, one can imagine a young boy, named, say, Wong Wing-yan, who was about seven years old in January 1942. Wing-yan's chances of entering a primary school were non-existent at the beginning of the year. And, even if he was one of the few children accepted by the first twelve schools to open again in May 1942,<sup>4</sup> his chances of remaining in the same school until the end of the occupation in the summer of 1945 were not great, probably less than one in a hundred. If, however, one assumes that, one way or another, possibly by escaping into 'Free China', Wong Wing-yan managed to continue some form of schooling and, eventually (after returning to Hong Kong and probably after having repeated one or more years of primary school), he would have applied to enter a secondary school in, say, 1950. His chances, then, would have been worse than one in twenty for a 'public sector' school and the possibility of his entering the only university then in existence in Hong Kong seven years later were even more remote. If one's imagination is now deployed to consider Wing-yan's eldest son, born, say, in late 1964, then it would encompass a very different situation. The eldest son, Wong Tse-kwong, would certainly have secured admission to a primary school in 1971. Six years later, in 1977, he would have had a good chance (better than one in two) of entering a secondary school, provided that he performed reasonably well on the final occasion the dreaded SSEE<sup>5</sup> was set. If he made good progress through his secondary forms, his chances of proceeding to some form of tertiary education were much better than his father's had been, thanks to the establishment of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic — though entry into a fully-fledged university would have shown him to be part of the academically top 4% of his age-group! The educational opportunities he experienced, however, would seem limited, when compared with those presented to his son, or even his daughter, born, say, in 1988. For either or both of these, admission to primary and secondary schools could be assumed. Moreover, with the establishment of new universities and the elevation of older institutions to university status, with the expansion of distance

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4. All schools in Hong Kong had been closed on 8 December 1941, when the Japanese first invaded Hong Kong. They all remained closed at least until 12 May 1942, when twelve were allowed by the Japanese Occupation authorities to re-open. See the Commentary in Part 1 of this book, p. 69, and the Chronicle entries for February, April, and May 1942, below.

5. For those readers who are too young to remember or too unfamiliar with the "nitty-gritty" of Hong Kong education to know, it should be pointed out that 'SSEE' was the acronym for the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination, which began as the Joint Primary 6 Examination in 1949, was renamed the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination in 1963, and was replaced by the Secondary School Places Allocation Scheme in 1978. The SSEE was widely criticized for its effects on the primary school curriculum and for its alleged encouragement of the rote learning of Chinese, English, and Arithmetic.

learning opportunities, and with increasing recognition being accorded to “continuing education” provision, undertaking some form of tertiary education became a realistic expectation. Thus, in personal terms, the years from 1941 to 2001 represented major changes in educational opportunities. Grandfather, Wong Wing-yun would almost certainly appreciate the value of these changes, though, as the elderly often do, he might underrate the educational problems (now mainly related to quality) still faced by the younger generation and disapprove of some of their actions and behaviour. During some of the occasions when the three generations were together, perhaps over a New Year dinner, they would show each other memorabilia of their schooling and their informal education — school magazines, report cards, examination question papers, press cuttings, photographs of pupils (and some, even of teachers) in school uniform.<sup>6</sup> These might facilitate a sharper appreciation of the changes that took place. Whether or not any of the three generations considered either the change of sovereignty in mid-1997 or the major time-change (identified as happening either at midnight on 31 December 1999 or at the same time exactly a year later) as “millennialist” in the more apocalyptic sense, depended on the vision he or she had of the future. Members of the Education Commission, together with their supporters among local politicians and some “front-line educators” tended to speak and write as if they possessed the key to some educational paradise — or at least the “blueprint” to a “diversified”, “flexible”, system that would guarantee “all-round education” and “lifelong learning”.<sup>7</sup> Other people (both practitioners and observers) tended to be rather more pragmatic and less millennialist in their expectations. These included not only spokespersons for the PTU, who focused on anticipated effects on the teachers’ workload, but even one of the “key architects” of the reforms, who subsequently claimed that the reform movement had been “hijacked by the bureaucrats”.<sup>8</sup>

### Structure: Similarities and Changes

Since the rationale underlying this book is fundamentally the same as that which governed its predecessor, the reader would be justified in expecting the basic structure of the book also to remain the same. In this, at least, he/she will not be disappointed. As was true of the earlier publication, the investigation of the various periods encompassed by this one finds expression through three allied, but conceptually distinct, formats. The first is a Commentary, which is intended to offer

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6. Whenever possible, samples of these sorts of materials will appear in the Evidence sections of the remainder of this book.

7. The expressions that are surrounded by inverted commas in this paragraph are ones that the authors of the education reform package use very frequently.

8. Personal communication from Professor Cheng Kai-ming, 11 May 2002. See, also, Katherine Forestier, ‘Education reforms fail to impress their key architect’, *South China Morning Post*, Education Section, 22 June 2002 pp. 4–5.

some sense of coherence to, and verification, of the period. The second is a Chronicle, in which the most salient developments within the period are briefly outlined in as objective a manner as possible. The third is an Evidence section, in which a range of (mainly) primary sources is displayed so that the reader may appreciate more immediately and, perhaps, more vividly the nature of educational experiences, as well as both the problems and the achievements of education policy-makers during the period.

The earlier work, structured in this way, earned a largely positive reception from reviewers in academic journals, as well as from numerous colleagues and acquaintances. As might have been anticipated, this reception included several suggestions about possible improvements. One of these concerned the length of some of the "chapters" that made up the publication. Another related to the relatively brief Commentaries, which did not seem to signal the author's interpretations and views. A third suggested that the Chronicles were merely lists of events, with no obvious effort made to highlight themes. And a fourth indicated that the Evidence sections comprised mainly 'macro-level' sources and could, therefore, be open to the criticism of being excessively concerned with 'top-down' pronouncements.

Again, as might be anticipated, I have responses to each of these points. Concern about the length of chapters, for instance, derives possibly from a strict, perhaps rather rigid, definition of "chapter", when each of the content-units appearing in *Fact and Opinion* consisted of three, conceptually distinct and stylistically different sub-units. Moreover, as the Preface and the Introduction of the publication made clear, the book was not intended primarily to be read as a narrative or necessarily studied sequentially chapter by chapter, but, instead, used and browsed through as a work of reference. Secondly, I had deliberately made an effort to minimize the number and length of my personal opinions appearing in the Commentaries so that the readers would feel more comfortable about seeking, reaching, and justifying their own conclusions. Thirdly, again with full awareness, I had attempted to produce reasonably complete registers of the relevant events in each period, as far as possible, in the order of their occurrence (i.e. organized chronologically), rather than organized into subsequently-conceptualized (and hindsight-influenced) themes. In this way, I had hoped to emphasize the difference between commentaries, chronicles, and items of evidence. Finally, my own impression was that a compilation of evidence that included such items as samples of students' work, examination questions, newspaper advertisements, school rules, extracts from school magazines, and their like was clearly making an effort to offer alternatives to macro-level, top-down generalizations.

Despite these convictions, I concluded that these constructive suggestions from readers merited considered amendments within any future publication of the same type. but with a different chronological span. With regard to the terminology of the new book's structure, I had no reservations about re-titling "Chapters" as "Parts"; in fact, the newer expression was probably more accurate because it accommodated less pre-judged conceptual baggage. As far as the Commentaries were concerned, I suppose I felt flattered by suggestions from colleagues and friends as well as reviewers that they would gain by becoming more openly

indicative of my own judgments. This led me to become more comfortable with the prospect of filling out academic allusions with more personal impressions, as well as with the addition of sub-headings indicating themes and meaningful sequences as far as the actual content of a “period” was concerned. In connection with the Chronicles, I persuaded myself that, especially since the initial selection inevitably involved subjectivity, then the inclusion of some reasonably sustained narratives, to qualify and alternate with lists of unrelated events, could only help — both the readers and the writer! Finally, with regard to the ostensibly top-down emphases within the Evidence sections, I promised myself to ensure that, for every part of a future publication, I would seek (and hope to find) evidence that could be defined as micro-level, rather than macro, and that was typical of the education-related memorabilia possessed by individual families in Hong Kong. This effort ensured that I would also seek to make more consistent, and in a sense to systematize, the compilations of evidence for each period, rather than allow subjective impressions/memories of the period to control the selection of items. Table 1, below, indicates how the evidence reproduced in the various parts of the book alludes to different levels or aspects of education.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Evidence according to levels or aspects of education

Part of Book	Level or Aspect of Education											
	ECE	Prim'y	Sec'y	Tert'y	Cont	Teach	Tech	Special	Informal	Curr'm	Lang	Admin
Intro		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Part 1	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Part 2		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Part 3	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Part 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Part 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Despite efforts to systematize the selection and presentation of evidence, inevitably overlaps occurred, both as far as the levels or aspects of education and as far as the type of source and medium used were concerned. For example, some items contained references to more than one level or type of education and photographs appear in the category labelled Family/Individual Sources as well as in Graphic Sources. In order to assist some readers and expedite understanding, I felt that various forms of ‘processed’ sources merited inclusion, despite the possible qualms of the type of historical purist who feels more comfortable with those that can be termed ‘original’ and ‘primary’. Among these processed sources, ‘summary tables’, which offered concise and impartial information, seemed as useful and as justifiable as various forms of graphs and charts. On the other hand, I remained convinced that source material warrants the status of “Evidence” only if it can be seen to provide clues to the answering of questions or solution of problems that are explicitly recognized by the reader. For this reason, as in the preceding volume, I have included some specific questions in each of the Parts of

this one. These are not intended to be exhaustive and exclusive, but, instead, to stimulate each reader to concoct her or his own.

As part of the quest for an overview of education in Hong Kong, the reader of this Introduction may wish to consider (and supplement) the following questions:

- What have been the main strengths and virtues of education in Hong Kong during the whole of this period and what have been the main weaknesses and vices?
- Why has language policy been such an important aspect of schooling in Hong Kong in the period from 1941?
- Who were the most seminal agents (individuals) and the most potent agencies (organizations) influencing educational policy and practice in the whole period?
- What were the most important exogenous factors that affected the development of education in Hong Kong during the period?
- What were the most important endogenous factors that affected the development of education in Hong Kong during the period?
- Which type of influences were most instrumental in shaping educational developments in Hong Kong over the whole period — political, economic, or social (including demographic and cultural)?

### **Uses of This Book**

Offering advice to readers about how to use a book could seem presumptuous or even pointless. I hope neither characteristic is true of the following suggestions.

For those readers who wish to obtain a coherent sense of the narrative and thematic development of education in Hong Kong since the beginning of the Japanese occupation, their most effective strategy is likely to be perusing the Commentary sections of each Part of the book sequentially. For those who wish to look up specific facts (e.g. about policy statements, the opening or closing of schools, curriculum changes, etc., etc., etc.), the sections most directly useful are the Chronicles, which are, of course, structured chronologically by year and, whenever possible, by month, and which, in order to minimize distractions, deliberately keep footnotes to a minimum. And for those who seek a sense of atmosphere, their goals may be achieved, perhaps even serendipitously, by browsing through the Evidence sections of the book. For any and all readers, including those few unhappy souls who will be earnestly seeking errors to publicly correct, I wish you well and attempt to help, but not distract, by setting up such signposts as cross-references between sections and various other forms of subsidiary comment.

There are a few points concerning terminology, which may also be most suitably addressed here, near the beginning of the book's Introduction. One of the more important of these concerns the designation provided in English for the group of schools that were associated in one way or another with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). To call them "pro-China schools", although generally accurate, could be taken to imply that all other schools were anti-China. To refer to them as "leftist schools" is open to the criticism that, especially in international Marxist terms, this



term has become increasingly inappropriate for supporters of the Beijing Government in the second half of the twentieth century. I eventually decided to use the term “Patriotic Schools”, fully realizing that unsympathetic commentators will argue that this could be taken to imply that all other schools were unpatriotic. The simple reason for my decision was that this term seems closest to the expression in Chinese that their organizers, teachers, and students most frequently used.<sup>9</sup> A less important matter concerns the title adopted for the men and women who were at the administrative “head” of a school. People unfamiliar with the day-to-day situation in Hong Kong sometimes assume that there is a “default” expression for this and that it is the non-gender-specific “Principal”. Although there are many schools that have adopted this usage, there are also many that retain the titles, “Headmaster” or “Headmistress”. In this book, I adopt the title used by the particular school to which I am referring. In a similar spirit, I also make use of the Romanization schemes most commonly adopted in Hong Kong in the early twenty-first century. On the whole, this has led to the frequent use of Pinyin expressions. There are, however, several quite significant exceptions to this, including “Hong Kong”!

### Declaration of Interests

As someone who was involved professionally and personally in education for quite a large part of the period covered by the book (i.e. from 1969 to the present), I believe that I should, even at the risk of appearing self-concerned, be open about my own “connections”. These clearly include my employment, from late October 1969 to the beginning of July 1998, as someone involved in teacher education via the Department/School/Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. This has enabled me to benefit from the insights of my students and my colleagues. For much of the same time, I was a member or chairman of various committees, both within the University and appointed by the Hong Kong Government, involved especially in curriculum development and evaluation. Thus, I gained some knowledge of the working processes that contributed to (and sometimes hindered) policy appraisal and policy change. My personal involvement in various sports and arts led me into close associations with people in these fields and, sometimes, to interesting committee or council memberships and, thus, to some appreciation of the vitality of aspects of non-formal education. Especially during the 1970s, I was also a member of the Education Action Group, the Educators’ Social Action Council, and the education committee of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service. As the bibliography shows, I co-authored several articles and a few books with other people who were actively involved in educational practice, policy, and/or analysis. What the bibliography doesn’t show is that, in 1975, I married one of them — Ms

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9. Where appropriate, however, I make use of the more accurate and specific term, “Workers’ Children’s Schools”. See, especially, Chronicle entries in Part 2, below, for 1947–49.

Sansan Ching Teh-chi! In the early 1990s, I accepted a commission from Mr. K.Y. Yeung, then the Secretary of Education and Manpower, to carry on the analysis of education policy in Hong Kong, which I had begun for my Ph.D. thesis, by taking it up from 1955 to 1991. I submitted my report to the (then) Education and Manpower Branch of the Hong Kong Government in 1995.

I would like to think that, far from disabling me from creating an impartial account of educational developments in Hong Kong, these connections and their numerous by-products have very substantially increased my eligibility, my resources, and my compass as an analyst. If, despite the best of intentions, any of my personal biases intrude into this book, I ask for the readers' indulgence. At least, there is a possibility that what social scientists call a "participant observer's" perspective will add a sense of immediacy and a dash of commitment to the work I am now publishing. In this sense, and considering the use made throughout the book of field-data collected over three decades, perhaps it deserves to be regarded as the outcome of an ethnographic as well as an historical approach

The remainder of this Introduction comprises a brief explanation and sample of a chronicle that may also provide an overview for the whole chronological scope of the book and several examples of each type of evidence that I have searched for in order to add substance and flavour to the book.

## CHRONICLE

One of the most important tasks involved in creating a set of chronicles for the new book derived from the requirement to create a set of coherent 'periods' and, therefore, 'Parts' that would make sense historically and in terms of structure. After a number of false starts, provoked mainly by a wish to keep the book tidy by ensuring that the ensuing periods would not be too much lengthier than the historically constrained phase in which Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese, I decided to opt for longer, rather than shorter, chronological spans. As it (i.e. the actual events and their repercussions) actually happened, it made most sense to create periods of about two decades in duration for all but the most recent, and still incomplete, phase of development. Thus, in a general sense following the guidance of E.M. Forster with regard to the difference between story and plot, but more specifically heeding David Phillips' observations<sup>10</sup> about the importance of periodization within histories of education and their likely connections with other aspects of history, I identified the following periods for the new book:

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10. David Phillips (1994), 'Periodisation in Historical Approaches to Comparative Education: Some Considerations from the Examples of Germany and England and Wales', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, XXXI, 3, 261-272.

1942–1945: Occupational Hazards (and Therapy?)

1945–1964: Reconstruction, Expansion, and Transformation

1965–1984: Policy, Pressure Groups, and Papers — on the way to mass access

1985–1997: Planning for a More Certain Future

1997–2001: A More Certain Future? — the Pleasures and Perils of Post-Colonialism

An attempt to explain and justify each of these periods, their beginning-date and end-date, appears near the beginning of each subsequent Part of the book.

## EVIDENCE

*As was true of the items of evidence that appeared in the Introduction to Education in Hong Kong, pre-1841 to 1941: Fact and Opinion, the items presented below have been selected to give an impression of the range and type of possible sources, rather than to encapsulate a coherent set of messages, reflecting a comprehensive overview of the whole period. Indeed, if the latter were possible, there would be no need for the five Parts of the book that follow (and owe some of their distinctive shapes to) this Introduction).*

### 1. Newspaper Sources

*More conspicuously than in many other parts of the world, education in Hong Kong is, and invariably has been, a major item of news and, especially, newspaper comments. Below is a selection of mass media commentary and reportage, which also offers some evidence of an important channel of informal education in Hong Kong.*

(a) *The Hong Kong News*, 8 February 1942 p. 2.

*The Hong Kong News was a Japanese-controlled local newspaper. It had first appeared as an English language weekly in 1939. Briefly, it ceased publication on the outbreak of actual hostilities (8th December, 1941), but resumed on 26th December, the day after the British surrender, in the offices of the South China Morning Post. Its Managing Director was Toshihiko Eto, who also published two other newspapers from the same office: The Hong Kong Nippo (in Japanese) and The Hong Kong Yat Po (in Chinese). All three newspapers reflected the views of the Japanese occupation authorities. The Hong Kong News was supplied to the internment camps. As a source of news and of propaganda, it was generally despised in the camps. Elsewhere it was probably taken more seriously, especially since the few local Chinese newspapers which were permitted to reopen their presses carried much the same sort of message. For the historian, despite and sometimes especially because of its lack of impartiality, it is a valuable source.*

## OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS (AND THERAPY?), 1942–1945

### COMMENTARY

The Japanese occupation of Hong Kong remains an emotive subject. Most readers, today, will readily recognize the hazards that the people of Hong Kong experienced during these years. Familiarity with published histories, journalistic accounts, and folk-memories of the way the Japanese treated their conquered territories will ensure that dangers and risks in education, as in other fields, receive attention and respect. Thus, evidence about the regimentation of the schools, their students, teachers, and curricula, will seem almost predictable. Fewer readers, however, at least on first consideration of the matter, are likely to accept the idea that the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong might also have acted as a form of therapy. The therapy concept includes the view that anti-colonialist propaganda disseminated by the Japanese and their own harshly colonial policies paradoxically combined to create an antidote to any future resurgence of British colonialism. It interprets discussion by the Occupation authorities of even the possibility of compulsory primary schooling as providing an important, clearly defined target for future policy makers, especially since this was the first officially sanctioned discussion of such a possibility since Frederick Stewart's rather naïve suggestion in the 1860s.<sup>1</sup> It accepts that other discussions about future educational provision, which took place in the internment camps of Hong Kong and in the committee rooms of the Colonial Office in London, also had cathartic and therapeutic effects and, eventually, some influence upon both policy and practice. Unfortunately, the existing publications on the history of Hong Kong and especially those on the history of education in Hong Kong, almost totally neglect consideration of schooling during the years 1942–1945.<sup>2</sup> Given the complexity as well as the emotiveness of

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1. See Sweeting (1990), *Fact and Opinion*, p. 224.

2. E.g., the chapter on the Japanese Occupation in Frank Welsh (1993), *A History of Hong Kong*, London, HarperCollins, contains one very short paragraph on education (p. 421). Alan Birch (1991) provides a similarly short paragraph on schools, the University and its library in his *Hong Kong: The Colony That Never Was*, Hong Kong, Odyssey (p. 68). Nigel Cameron (1991), *An Illustrated History of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, makes no reference to it whatsoever. Bernard H.K. Luk (2000), *A History of Education in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong, Report to the Lord David Wilson Heritage Trust Fund, also omits all reference to education in Hong Kong during the Occupation. On the other hand, Philip Snow (2003), *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China and the Japanese Occupation* New Haven, Yale

the issues, perhaps it is best to make a preliminary attempt to understand the various dimensions of occupational hazards and therapy via reference to relatively objective statistics and formal documents. To provide a context for consideration of schooling during the occupation, firstly the general situation in Hong Kong requires impartial appraisal.

### Reports of the General Situation

The Japanese Census of 1943 claimed a total population for the territory of 968,524. This should be compared with the estimated 1,639,337 for mid-1941. At the end of the War and, therefore, of the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong (August 1945), the population was estimated to be slightly below 600,000, this last figure indicating an average reduction of about 23,000 people *per month* throughout the whole Occupation. Such a large and continuing drop in population was the combined result of deliberate Japanese policy, the escape or withdrawal of Hong Kong Chinese into "Free China", and war-associated deaths (from starvation, disease, executions, allied air-raids, etc.).

There were at least 120,000 pupils in school in early 1941.<sup>3</sup> By February 1944, however, the Japanese, themselves, estimated the school population of Kowloon to be 7,705.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the Occupation, according to British sources, there were about 4,000 pupils enrolled in the whole of Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories. As mentioned in the Introduction, however, this estimate should be treated with caution since it appears to be based on a misinterpretation of a newspaper source and, of course, it was clearly in the interest of British propaganda to accentuate the destruction and decay caused by the Japanese occupation. On the other hand, two of the more recently published histories of Hong Kong put the figure as low as 3,000 or even 2,500.<sup>5</sup>

Some impression of Japanese attitudes to Hong Kong may be gained from the following extract from the "Order of the Day" (20 February 1942) by Lt. Gen. Resuke Isogai, then the Japanese Military Governor of the territory:

The previous condition of Hong Kong must be swept clean before it can take its position in the East. The present strength and culture of the place

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University Press, provides an impressive exception to the general trend, offering some interesting comments about education (e.g., on pp. 99, 130, 175, 226, 263), as well as several examples of the effects of the Occupation on British attitudes towards Hong Kong (e.g., on pp. 197–205, 288–290, 302–304).

3. The EDAR for 1939 reported a total attendance of 118,193, representing an increase of 14,059 over the previous year, (p. O1).

4. *Hong Kong News*, Thursday, 24 February 1944, p. 2.

5. Frank Welsh (1993), *A History of Hong Kong*, p. 421, indicates the number to be 3,000. Alan Birch (1991), *Hong Kong: The Colony That Never Was*, p. 68, declares it to be "a mere 2,500". Neither author provides a source for these figures.

must be elevated to the same spiritual stream in order to attain the kingly way which will shine upon the eternal basic prosperity of East Asia.

Social and economic conditions were very severe, especially towards the end of the Occupation. Corpses in the streets were a common sight. Some records even suggest that the practice of cannibalism was not unknown in this period of Hong Kong's history.

Other than the very marked reduction in the provision of schooling, the main educational developments in this period were, as might be expected, efforts to "Japanify" the curriculum and, especially, to spread the use of the Japanese language while prohibiting the use of English, which was deliberately associated with European colonialism and exploitation. Plans to make at least primary education compulsory were discussed by the Japanese authorities, though not implemented. A scholarship system was put into practice, but this had more value as propaganda than it had as a major contribution to the education of the common people. Newspaper and other sources show the Japanese authorities to have been especially interested in publicizing the small numbers of students from Hong Kong who, in the absence of a reopened university in the territory, were granted scholarships to proceed to higher education in Japan.

There was considerable destruction of school buildings (including Queen's and King's Colleges, the two show-pieces or "flagships" of the previous colonial government), and the disappearance or destruction of furniture and other equipment. This was caused mainly by looting,<sup>6</sup> especially at the beginning and end of the Occupation, although allied bombing towards the end of the war also contributed. Schools that suffered least in a material way were the Grant schools run by Neutrals (eg., Irish and Italian priests), which were usually allowed to operate throughout the Occupation provided that the Japanese language was included in the curriculum.

The preceding paragraphs offer an accurate, if rather broadly sweeping, overview of the educational situation in Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation. Subsequent ones, as supplemented by the year-entries in the Chronicle, seek to add at least some more precise detail and, thus, a sharper focus to the view.

### **Education and Background Factors during the Occupation**

All schools were closed by order of the Director of Education on the very first day of the Japanese invasion, Monday, 8 December 1941. It was to be a long school "holiday" which lasted through Christmas, the Western New Year, Chinese New Year, and several months after that, even for the few who eventually found places as either students or teachers.

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6. Oral sources suggest that most of the looting was motivated by a need to find wood and other combustible materials for fuel. See, for example, Evidence 6(a) and 6(c) in this chapter, below.

Local people, young and old, who survived the physical dangers of the battle and the consequent sacking, pillaging, and raping, reacted to the Japanese invasion and its increasingly obvious success in a number of different ways. In general, the Chinese masses regarded it with resignation. Many of them had witnessed Japanese incursions into China and had only recently reached Hong Kong in an attempt to escape their worst effects. Some local Chinese, however, were already committed to collaborating with the new rulers, having provided information about British military installations to the Japanese before and during the invasion. Others were ready to adopt an opportunistic approach. Many of these experienced at first something like a "School is Out" mood<sup>7</sup>, the feeling that, at last, the tables had been turned. The racial and cultural indignities of the past were now over. Amongst the lowest socio-economic segments of Hong Kong Chinese society especially, there were people who were only too willing to conduct a type of social civil war, venting their resentments on the more successful of their compatriots whom they considered to have been collaborators with British colonialism. Thus, the worst of the looting of private houses was often of those belonging to wealthy members of the earlier Chinese and Eurasian elite.<sup>8</sup>

It was, however, largely to members of the Chinese and Eurasian elite that the Japanese authorities turned in order to set up at least the facade of local participation in their rule. The first local Chinese resident of Hong Kong to make a public appearance as a leader ready to relate with the new Japanese authorities was Tung Chung-wei, the treasurer of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce. It was Tung who led the other members to petition the Japanese military on 10 January about such issues as food, fuel, public utilities (e.g., water, electricity, and telephones), public safety, the currency, and the need to formalize prostitution. It was also Tung who chaired a meeting of the Chamber which organized the new "Rehabilitation Committee". The latter, soon renamed "Rehabilitation Advisory Committee" consisted of nine leading members of the Chinese and Eurasian business community, including all the Chinese "unofficial" members of the Legislative Council, together with other prominent leaders of the Chinese community, and was chaired by Sir Robert Kotewall (now Lo Kuk-wo), with Sir Shouson Chou (now Chou Shou-son) serving as Vice-Chairman. Three other members were added on 6 February. Its main function was to arrange that public processions and other celebrations would appear to have the enthusiastic support of the Chinese residents and the endorsement of their leaders. As a channel to represent the business interest, however, it was of more than token importance. It was superseded on 30 March by the small "Chinese Representative Council" and the larger "Chinese Cooperative Council", which similarly consisted of Chinese and Eurasian notables. These Councillors were each no doubt influenced to different degrees by a sense of responsibility for their fellow citizens, a conviction of their

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7. H.J. Lethbridge (1969, 'Hong Kong under Japanese Occupation: changes in social structure', in I.C. Jarvie (ed.), *Hong Kong: A Society in Transition*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 97.

8. Interview with Mr. K.S. Lo, 2nd March, 1982. See Evidence 6 (a). below.

own importance, and an awareness of the opportunities which they might gain for themselves, their families, and friends. Amongst the whole group of local leaders who participated in Japanese-dominated governmental activities during the occupation, Chan Lim-pak and Lau Tit-shing were the two who most conspicuously acted out of sympathy for the Japanese cause. The others displayed a varying degree of enthusiasm for their tasks, with most serving the new authorities because they felt they had no alternative, but some also taking personal advantage of the situation

Among the non-Chinese population of Hong Kong, Indians were, on the whole, particularly susceptible to anti-British, pro-“Asiatic” propaganda. Even before Pearl Harbour, the Japanese had begun to cater for Indian resentment against British colonialism through the establishment of the “India Independence League” in Tokyo. This was formed by Indian nationalists, such as Rash Behari Bose and, subsequently, Subhas Chandra Bose, who had fled to Japan. Robert S. Ward, an American commentator, argues that the speed with which the League went into action after Pearl Harbour indicates that at least the framework of its organization had been prepared well in advance of the Japanese attack.<sup>9</sup> Early in January 1942, shortly after the Japanese victory, a branch of the India Independence League was set up in Hong Kong. On 25 January, the *Hong Kong News* announced that on the following day there would be a mass meeting under the auspices of the League of all Indians in Hong Kong to celebrate “Indian Independence Day”. Newspaper reports claim that the meeting was attended by “several thousand” persons, that it was presided over by Sohil Khan, M.R. Malik, and Zahoor Ahmed who had come to Hong Kong from Canton especially for the occasion, and that it passed two resolutions, one to sever all relations with the British, the other to “make the determination that we shall fight to the last, not only for the freedom of India, but for the freedom of the continent of Asia”. In March, D.M. Khan, described as the President of the Hong Kong branch of the India Independence League, broadcast a fiery message to Indians everywhere in which his peroration was: “Drive out the common enemy by force, to save yourself and your country from the most dreaded and obnoxious disease of the whole human race — Britain!”.

The British, the Dutch, some of the Eurasian, and, for a time, the American civilian populations of Hong Kong were interned in the camp at Stanley. The Americans were repatriated within a year, but the British and Eurasians remained incarcerated until the end of the war.

## The First Year

The main feature of the first year of the Occupation was the establishment and organization of Japanese rule, which was deliberately linked closely with an infrastructure of local Chinese advisory bodies, at both central and district levels.

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9. Robert S. Ward: *Asia for the Asiatics? The techniques of Japanese Occupation*, University of Chicago Press, Illinois, 1945, pp. 179–180. See Evidence 3 (c) (i), below. See, also, Snow (2003), pp. 118–119.



The Japanese authorities made efforts to gain propaganda benefits from the contrast between their own "Asian" style of participatory government and the colonialistically aloof manners of the (defeated) British. Individual instances of courtesies shown by Japanese military or civilian officers towards the local population were, however, counterbalanced by cases of brutality — with face-slapping (or worse) as punishment if a Chinese person failed to bow to a Japanese soldier or answer him in Japanese being a very common occurrence. It soon became obvious that the Japanese did not consider Hong Kong important enough to merit the full-scale encouragement of an independence movement (similar to those they fostered in the Philippines and Indonesia). Instead it was treated as a "Conquered Territory", with some value strategically for the defence of the Pearl River Delta and the southern approaches to Guangzhou and as a small base which might manufacture equipment needed for the Pacific War. The Japanese realized that they would be able to seize some of the wealth of Hong Kong either as personal booty or as resources which could be siphoned off to Japan. They also drained off part of Hong Kong's wealth more indirectly by making it obvious to the new local advisory bodies that "donations" to the war effort and/or to "construction" would be appreciated.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the early part of the year did not witness much in the way of social welfare and relief work. The small and sporadic relief that was organized was almost entirely provided by local Chinese guilds, native-place associations, and lineage-societies. Schools did not reopen until May and, for much of the remainder of the year, were mainly confined to privately-operated Chinese Primary and Middle Schools.

In general, however, conditions were as good as they might be expected in wartime, especially considering Hong Kong's normal reliance on imports for its economic health and social survival. According to Lethbridge, it was a time "when many local businessmen thought that trade would sooner or later pick up, when cheerfulness kept breaking in".<sup>10</sup> During the year, local transport facilities were quickly restored. The tram and ferry services ran regularly again and there was soon a daily steamship connection with Macau and Guangzhou. The Kowloon-Canton Railway line was cleared and the service reopened. Though at a reduced level, food supplies and other necessities were maintained and were distributed through a series of rationing measures — rice in January, sugar in June, oil and firewood in July, salt in August, and matches in September. By the year's end, however, most of the Chinese in Hong Kong, with the exception of fully-fledged collaborationists, had already developed a strong dislike for the brutalities, corruption, and hypocrisy of the Japanese "New Order". In Lethbridge's view, "by the end of the year, the mood of 'school is out' was over: the Japanese had proved themselves to be more discriminatory, racist and arrogant than the British", though there were few, if any, indications of regret for the defeat and humiliation of the British at this time. Certainly by the early months of 1943, very few Chinese in Hong Kong felt that Japan would win the war. Consequently, not many families

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10. H.J. Lethbridge (1969), *Hong Kong under Japanese Occupation*, p. 96.

were willing to allow their children to take up opportunities for higher studies in Japan, even with the added inducement of scholarship awards.

### **The Later Occupation Period**

From early 1943 onwards, the situation deteriorated. Shortages of food and fuel became more and more critical. It became increasingly obvious that there would be no upturn in trade. Instead, there was a generally upward movement in prices which was at least partly connected with the banning of the Hong Kong dollar. Allied bombing began to take effect. By late 1944 and through the early months of 1945, conditions verged on the desperate. Inflation ran out of control. Starvation became a constant threat and, for some, a reality. The economy was in almost complete collapse. Though some schools remained open, more had closed because of the lack of teachers, students, and resources. In very few circles was schooling regarded any longer as an important priority, although even in the darkest moments, cinemas and theatres provided a mixture of non-formal education, entertainment, and, probably more significantly, escapism.

In the civilian internment camp at Stanley, discussions among a small group of academics about the future of the University of Hong Kong, which had begun in mid-1942, continued and became more specific. In London, a Hong Kong Planning Unit (HKPU) was created in 1943 and staffed mainly by former officials from the Hong Kong Civil Service who happened not to have been in Hong Kong in December 1941 or who had escaped shortly thereafter. The HKPU began drawing up plans for the post-war future of Hong Kong and was ready in August 1945 to assume the hands-on responsibilities of the civil affairs branch of the British Military Administration.

By August 1945, when the Japanese forces in Hong Kong had to acknowledge the unconditional surrender of the Japanese Empire to the Allies, education in Hong Kong had certainly experienced the hazards of Occupation. In retrospect, it appears that the experiences might also have been a form of therapy, facilitating the later growth of a less colonial and more home-grown education system, however purgative that therapy certainly would have seemed at the time.

Questions, which could help direct further investigation of the Japanese occupation period within the history of education in Hong Kong, include:

- In what ways was schooling different for a young Chinese boy or girl living in Hong Kong in 1943 when compared with the situation in 1940?
- How did students and teachers in Hong Kong adjust to the new regime?
- Why did student enrolments drop in the later months of the Occupation?
- What were the main types of informal education during this period? How popular were they?
- What was the significance for educational development in Hong Kong of activities and plans within the Civilian Internment Camp at Stanley and the proceedings of the Hong Kong Planning Unit in London?
- In what positive ways, if any, did the Japanese occupation contribute towards the development of education in Hong Kong?

## CHRONICLE

1942: *January* — On 1 January, the Japanese established the “Civil Department of the Japanese Army” (also known as the Civil Administration Department), under Major-General Yazaki, to take official responsibility for protecting the lives and property of Chinese residents of Hong Kong and non-enemy aliens.<sup>11</sup> Almost immediately, they also set up the Repatriation Bureau, assisted, after 12 January, by the Chinese Repatriation Committee (see below). In the first week of January, the Japanese authorities gave notice that all people who had no residence or employment would have to leave Hong Kong. It is clear that they were more interested in moving out of Hong Kong people they considered surplus to their own needs than they were in the conditions in which they departed (e.g., the sea-worthiness of the vessels taking them, difficulties in obtaining passages out of Hong Kong, rigid restrictions on what they were allowed to take with them, etc.).

On 5 January, the exchange rate between “military yen” (the new currency issued by the Japanese as notes printed on one side only, unnumbered, and with validity only in Hong Kong) and the Hong Kong dollar was arbitrarily fixed at two dollars to one military yen.

The Japanese military authorities contacted the heads of the various local trade guilds and ensured that they became associated under the “Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Assistance General Guild”, which was set up to deal with all matters concerning Hong Kong labour, subject to the assent of the Japanese.

The *Hong Kong News* succeeded in attracting the services of several of the best Chinese and Eurasian journalists who had been on the staff of the pre-war *South China Morning Post*. It was edited by E.G. Ogura, believed to have been brought from Japan especially for that purpose. On 25 January, the Information Bureau of the Japanese military authorities provided an official lunch for local journalists. The acting head of the bureau, Major Saida, addressed the gathering, explaining to them the important part they had to play in the development of the “Co-prosperity Sphere”. Another Japanese official, Mr. Takao, the chief of the Press Section of the Information Bureau, outlined the authorities’ view of the future course of newspaper work in Hong Kong and urged the guests to cooperate fully in this. A local newspaper owner replied in suitable terms, assuring the Japanese of the earnest assistance of the press and asking for

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11. The new administration was announced in the *Hong Kong News* on 2 January 1942. This report also scotched the rumour that Mr. Franklin Gimson, former Colonial Secretary, was to become Governor-designate under the Japanese, but required all former government officials, unless they were British, to resume their duties under the new regime. See G.B. Endacott (edited & with additional notes by Alan Birch), (1978), *Hong Kong Eclipse*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, Appendix 5.

appropriate guidance. It was at about this time that ten Chinese language newspapers were permitted to recommence operations, under the close supervision of the Press Section.

During the first week, the old radio station, JBW ("Hong Kong Calling") resumed operations as Station JPHA, operating on 1,154 kilocycles or 260 metres on the medium wave. Its daily schedule of broadcasts lasted from 6.00 p.m. until 10.30 p.m., with programmes including recorded music, news in Japanese, Cantonese, and Mandarin, and lessons on the Japanese language.

Street lighting was resumed on 11 January, gas supplies on 23 January. Water reached all districts on 20 January when all meters had to be registered. For the poor, the Japanese provided street fountains.

The larger cinemas were reopened for the showing of propaganda films. By 20 January, five cinemas (the Central, the Cathay, the King's, the Queen's, and the Oriental) were open on Hong Kong island and twelve in Kowloon, nine showing Cantonese films, one a Japanese film, and two presenting Japanese stage-shows.

On 12 January, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which had petitioned the Japanese military authorities on 31 December 1941 and again on 10 January 1942 about such difficulties as the disruption of public utilities and of supplies, the currency problem, and prostitution, formed the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, originally with nine members,<sup>12</sup> increased to twelve on 6 February.<sup>13</sup> This Committee was chaired by Sir Robert Kotewall (now using the name Lo Kuk-wo), with Sir Shouson Chow (Chow Shou-son) as vice-chairman. It held fifty-nine meetings before it was dissolved and replaced.<sup>14</sup> Its main concerns were with such matters as the sale and distribution of Japanese flags for display at celebrations, the organization of a welcome for the incoming Japanese Governor, and ways of ensuring the presence at such celebrations and official welcoming ceremonies of prominent businessmen, former justices of the peace, and other notables.

Partly as a result of the representations made by the Executive Committee of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce urging "protection for family women through the reopening of brothels", the Japanese authorities established special red-light districts, one at West Point for Chinese and another in Wanchai for Japanese.

On 21 January, the Japanese set up a new form of local government, known as District Bureaux (or Offices). Twelve District Bureaux were

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12. The original members, in addition to the chairman and vice-chairman, were Messrs. Lo Man-kam, Li Tse-fong, Li Koon-chun, Tam Nga-shi, Li Chung-po, Tung Ching-wei, and Wong Tak-kwong.

13. The three additional members were Dr. Wong Tung-ming, Mr. Kong Tai-tung, and Mr. Cheng Tit-sing.

14. See the Chronicle entry for 30th March 1942, below.

created for Hong Kong island and, a few days later, six for Kowloon. Each had a Chinese head and was made responsible for repatriation, public health, business, and the welfare of the residents of the particular district, representing their problems and requests to the central authorities. In the Civil Administration Department, a District Affairs Bureau was established to serve as a link between the central government and the district bureaux. The Director of the District Affairs Bureau was Sin Ping-hsi, a prominent Chinese lawyer, who had also been appointed Head of the Central District Bureau.

The educational and cultural officers of the Japanese Army arranged a meeting of well-known educators in Hong Kong and persuaded them to organize a body called the Hong Kong Overseas Chinese Committee on Education. This Committee, under the "guidance" of the Japanese Army began holding meetings to discuss the reopening of schools. At one of these meetings, Japanese officers announced that all former school teachers would need to join courses set up by the military authorities in order to learn the Japanese language. Teachers who successfully completed the Japanese language courses would then be allocated to schools.

Headmasters were directed to register their schools with the Japanese authorities. The teachers were again publicly instructed that they would have to learn the Japanese language. The general public was informed that the Japanese language would be used compulsorily in school education as "a fundamental principle" and warned that without the permission of the Japanese military authorities no school could reopen.

*February* — Early in the month, a scheme for dividing each district (as defined by the District Bureaux) into wards was announced, with each ward consisting of thirty families. The first to proceed was the Central District Bureau which named 131 Chinese ward leaders.

The capacity of the radio station was increased and on 11 February it began broadcasting simultaneously on short and long wave with an extended programme. On 9 February, the *Hong Kong News* noted that the resumption of short-wave broadcasting by Station JPHA would have the effect of offering an opportunity to "Hong Kong Indians to tell their brothers at home of the very generous treatment they are receiving at the hands of the Japanese, which is such a welcome relief from the tyranny they suffered under the rule of the Union Jack".

By mid-February, the telephone system had reached 90% of its former capacity.

A four-day campaign to remove all shop signs in English began on 15 February. Various members of the new District Bureaux were prominent in this work. The eradication of the English language from public view in Hong Kong was extended to road signs and the major hotels in April.<sup>15</sup>

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15. See the Chronicle for 20 April 1942, below.

A "Fly Week" was held from 14 to 20 February, when members of the public were offered one catty of rice for every two taels of house-flies they brought to the authorities.

On 18 February, the celebrations of the fall of Singapore to the Japanese (which had taken place on 15 February) were held. Preparations had begun before the actual fall and involved a five-man Chinese committee, selected with the approval of the Japanese to organize the occasion. According to the *Hong Kong News*, 30,000 Chinese joined in the parade held on Hong Kong island and 20,000 the one held on the Kowloon side of the harbour. Lo Kuk-wo (the former and later Sir Robert Kotewall) gave the signal for the Hong Kong side parade to start and his own performance included standing on a table in Statue Square and jumping up and down three times while he shouted "Banzai!". It was reported that the parade was two miles in length, included the usual dragon dancing, and, in addition to the many Chinese participants, also incorporated groups of Indian, Filipino, Thai, and Macanese celebrants. Banners were strung across the streets and all business premises and private homes were instructed to fly Japanese flags of prescribed dimensions. The Kowloon parade featured two clowns, who, directly following the large "victory banner", led the march in formal dress, complete with top hats. They were meant to represent President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill and, to the visible amusement of the commander-in-chief of the Japanese forces, were kicked and beaten with brooms and spades.

The Civil Government took over from the Japanese military authorities on 20 February, with the appointment of Lieutenant-General Rensuke Isogai as first Japanese "Governor of the Conquered Territory of Hong Kong". This heralded major administrative changes. The "Governor's Office" or Secretariat replaced the Civil Administration Department, which now disappeared. The new body was headed by Major-General Ichiki, assisted by a Japanese civilian, and was divided into departments or bureaux. These included a "Civil Affairs Bureau", which appears to have been the main policy-framing body, exercising supervision and control over the other government bodies and advisory committees. Among the other bureaux were those dealing with "education and culture", "foreign affairs", "economic affairs", "finance", and "land and housing". Three special bureaux — those of Communications, Information, and Repatriation — were made more directly responsible to the Head of the Governor's Office because they were regarded as vital matters for Japan's security, propaganda needs, and relations with the Hong Kong Chinese. There were also several more technical departments, dealing with public works, water supply, medical and health services, and electricity.<sup>16</sup>

The first two-month training course for teachers (150) started in the buildings of St. Paul's Girls' (later Co-educational) College. No fee or

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16. The Electricity Department included the telephone service in its set of responsibilities.

deposit was required. The course comprised Japanese language, Japanese affairs, general knowledge, and physical education. According to press reports, three hundred persons completed the application forms and took the competitive entrance examination. Of these, one hundred and fifty men and women were selected and admitted to the course. They were provided with free board and lodging in what had been a fashionable school for the daughters of wealthy Chinese and Eurasians before the war. Further courses were held every three months until numbers began to dwindle.

*March* — On 1 March, the District Bureaux were made responsible for rice rationing. This automatically entailed responsibility for census control.

On 17 March, another spectacular victory celebration was held to mark the capture of Rangoon and the fall of the Dutch East Indies. This included eighteen lion dance displays, the participation of six aeroplanes and the performance of one stunt plane. Thousands of propaganda leaflets were dropped and it was reported that some foreign neutrals took part in the festivities. Bags of rice were distributed as a reward for those who marched and about a fortnight later every participant received a memento of the occasion.

The Rehabilitation Advisory Committee succeeded in persuading the Japanese authorities to permit a visit by rice merchants to Annam to take place during April in order to re-establish the rice trade and, thus, help feed the Hong Kong population.

Laws were announced on 28 March for the control of Hong Kong affairs. These strictly regulated people entering, leaving, or residing in the territory, as well as the import or export of goods and the setting up or operation of any business. Details had to be provided to the Gendarmerie Headquarters in quadruplicate. People had to register their requirements for the basic utilities (water, gas, electricity, and telephones). All householders had to register their property and apply for permission to make repairs. All doctors, lawyers, herbalists, market stall-holders, and hawkers had to provide full details when they registered themselves.

On 30 March, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee was replaced by two bodies: the Chinese Representative Council, with a membership at first of three and, from early April, of four, including two who had been members of the pre-war Legislative Council; and the Chinese Cooperative Council, chaired by Chou Shou-son and consisting of over twenty members from a wider cross-section of the Chinese Community. The former body met daily and the latter twice weekly. Neither body was actually entrusted with any real power, but both were expected to make "recommendations", to organize donations and public displays of support for the Japanese, and to share the blame for unpopular laws and regulations.

In "Free China", the British Army Aid Group (BAAG) was founded by Colonel Lindsay Ride, a former Professor of Physiology at the University of Hong Kong (and future Vice-Chancellor of the University), who had escaped from the military internment camp in the very early days of the occupation. At first, BAAG was a small unit focusing on helping others

escape Hong Kong and evade the Japanese. It grew into a guerrilla-linked informal army, responsible for intelligence reports, propaganda, and sabotage, officially a part of the British Army of India.

*April* — On 2 April, the formal graduation ceremony for the first class of specially trained teachers was held. Mr. Nagao,<sup>17</sup> the head of the Education Department in the Civil Affairs unit of the Japanese administration, handed certificates to the 148 teachers who had successfully completed the course.

Three "Area Bureaux" were superimposed on the system of District Bureaux on 16 April. These strengthened the links between the latter and the Civil Affairs Bureau at the Secretariat. They comprised one for Hong Kong and the outlying islands as far as Cheung Chau, another for Kowloon, and the third for the remainder of the New Territories. Each had three sub-offices: one for general business, finance, education and culture; the second for the economy, transport, other forms of communications, and the development of raw materials; the third, a Health Office concerned with public health and the whole range of medical services. On the same day, the Governor, Rensuke Isogai, issued regulations for the bureaux under his Order No. 13. Also on 16 April, the Occupation authorities issued Public Notification No. 10, which stated:

All religious bodies, which are included in the governance of the Office of the Governor of the Captured Territory of Hongkong, should they wish to resume the practice or the preaching of religion or any other activity connected therewith, must furnish the information laid down thereunder and transmit their request for permission to the Governor's Office through the intermediary of their local Bureau.

If they failed to comply with this requirement, they would be 'considered to have contravened these instructions and will be ordered to discontinue their activities'. The information required included the name of the body, together with names of its 'various sects and branches', their address, the name of the 'Representative of the body (Antecedents to be attached)', the names of preachers of the religion, the date when teaching of the religion started, the languages used, the nationality and number of the followers, 'Activities attached to the religious body', with particulars of organization and position, and the expenses of running the organization.

A second teacher training class began on 17 April. At its inauguration ceremony, Mr. Ichiki, from the Government General, congratulated the new students, evenly divided by gender, as being the 250 specially selected from over a thousand applicants and exhorted them to recognize that they were

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17. The present writer was unable to find Mr. Nagao's full name in either English language or Chinese language sources.



“now working to make a good foundation for education in Greater East Asia”.

On 20 April, “Public Notification No. 12”, announced the new, Japanese, names for all the main roads and streets on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon.<sup>18</sup> The major hotels were also renamed. On the same day, the Education Department issued a statement announcing that “all schools obeying the Governmental regulations and [that] are efficiently managed in other respects will be permitted to function”. The statement added:

Teachers of schools here must realize their responsibility to aid civilization in the Greater East Asia Sphere. In the past the Hongkong education system has been an obstacle to the progress of East Asia reconstruction. Therefore, a stop should be made to this, and the future education programme must be shaped in accordance with the natural tendency of East Asian thought with the object of spreading Nipponese civilization.

The first post-invasion horse race meeting was held at Happy Valley race course on 25 April, with all the ponies renamed either in Japanese or in Chinese.

On 28 April, prescribed charges were imposed to cover the telephone service. By November, only about ten thousand telephones were in use, compared with the pre-war figure of about 170,000.

*May* — The first twelve schools re-opened. Originally, twenty were scheduled to reopen on 1st May, but none of these was found up to standard. By 15 May, however, twelve schools were declared to be satisfactory and permitted to open. Nine more opened soon after.

*June* — Reports stated that 46 private Chinese schools were now in operation, employing about 200 teachers, 80% of whom knew no Japanese.

The Chinese Press Association was formed, comprising journalists from the ten local newspapers which had been permitted to reopen earlier in the year and which had been amalgamated into four in May.

By mid-June, 71 religious organizations had registered with the Japanese authorities as the latter had required and all 71 received permission to carry on their activities. The Japanese-controlled local press reported this and added the warning that “if any of the [religious] bodies which have been granted permission to continue are found to be acting contrary to the interests of the Government, they will be suppressed immediately”.

Official currency was revalued during July at four dollars to the yen and the yen was made sole tender for official purposes. Articles for sale had to be marked or their prices otherwise quoted in yen. However, dollars

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18. See, also, Evidence 2 (a), below.

continued to circulate partly because they were believed to be fully supported by the British Government.

New regulations issued on 20 July arranged that while the head and deputy head of each District Bureau were appointed by the Governor, the rest of the staff were appointed by the District Bureau head. District Bureau Councils, consisting of from five to ten members selected from the residents to approve the actions of the head, were organized. The names of the heads and deputy heads of the district bureaux were announced on 23 July.

*August* — It was announced that MY40,000 had been donated in response to a request from the Chinese Representative Council for financial support to be shown to the "construction of East Asia". Bishop Jose da Costa Nunes of the Roman Catholic Church of Hong Kong<sup>19</sup> approached Sir Robert Kotewall with an offer to make available MY5,000 from Church funds for the relief of the starving.

The Japanese Government General of the Conquered Territory of Hong Kong developed out of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Assistance General Guild, the existence of which they had "encouraged" during the first month of occupation, a more elaborate "Hong Kong and Kowloon Labourers' General Association", which was formally chartered. Its basic objectives, according to the charter, were (1) to serve in the reconstruction of Greater East Asia; (2) to help workers in the Conquered Territory to find work; (3) to render mutual aid; and (4) to help the workers gain the techniques necessary to improve the standards of their labour.

*September* — At a meeting of the Chinese Representative Council on 1 September, the Governor, General Rensuke Isogai, offered to make the East Asia Construction Fund money so far collected available for the relief of the starving. He also directed the Chinese Representative Council, Bishop Nunes, and the Board of Directors of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals to submit plans for further relief work. This led to the establishment of the General Association of Chinese Charities.

The Hong Kong Bureau appointed 777 persons, deemed to be "responsible" citizens, to look after conditions in the streets where they lived. Thus, the Japanese administrative system now reached street-level, via the use of local "leaders".

*October* — The head of the Wanchai District Bureau complained to the Governor that there was only one school in his District, whereas there had been thirty before the war.

The National School opened, with 97 pupils. By 1943, the National

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19. This is the term used to describe Bishop Nunes by Kwan Lai-hung (1984), p. 181. It may clarify matters to note, however, that Bishop Nunes was visiting Hong Kong, in order to help Bishop Valtorta, then the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong, from Macau, which was not occupied by the Japanese and was administered by Portugal, a country that was neutral during the Second World War. I am indebted to Fr. Louis Ha Kee-loon, the archivist of the Roman Catholic Church in Hong Kong for this additional information about Bishop Nunes.

School had nine classes, 10 members of staff (8 male and 2 female), 364 pupils (177 male and 187 female) in the "ordinary level" classes and eleven (5 male and 6 female) in the "higher level" class, or, in other words, a total enrolment of 375.

Hong Kong experienced its first air raid by the allies on the night of 24 October. The planes returned with incendiary bombs the next day. This led to black-out restrictions and a promise by the Governor that the injured would receive compensation.

*November* — Aw Boon-haw donated MY 12,000 towards social relief. This helped trigger off further public donations.

On 16 November, Chan Lim-pak, on behalf of the Chinese Representative Council, announced that the Japanese were considering allowing a business syndicate to run a "pleasure resort" centre (i.e., brothels) in Shamshuipo.

*December*: Horse-drawn carriages began to operate in Kowloon.

1943: Air raids resumed during the year, the first being on 28 July and the total number of raids nine. In each case, the local press was silent about the number of casualties.

*January*: Chan Lim-pak, Lau Tit-shing, and Lo Kuk-wo (Sir Robert Kotewall), all members of the Chinese Representative Council, made explicit public statements in support of the declaration of war against the United States and the United Kingdom by the puppet Government of China, presided over by Wang Ching-wei.

*February*: A scholarship scheme was launched by the Chinese Representative Council. This initially benefited 400 pupils from poverty-stricken backgrounds in selected schools. Applicants had to sit examination papers at the schools. The number of scholarships gradually grew. Eventually, the number of beneficiaries was increased to 1,000. On 18 February, the *Hong Kong News* reported that the Japanese Head of the Civil Affairs Department had provided a lunch party for three Chinese students who were about to depart for Japan in order to further their studies.

A census conducted in February gave the figure for the total population as 968,524.

Apart from the numerous private tutorial colleges, there were 39 schools specializing in the teaching of the Japanese language.

Under orders from Tokyo, the Government General issued a proclamation announcing the unification of the eighteen different Protestant sects in Hong Kong into a single Hong Kong "Christian" sect. Representatives of each of the eighteen Protestant churches were required to attend the inauguration ceremony of the new unified body on 27 February. Following instructions from Tokyo, where the same policy had been implemented earlier, the Japanese authorities in Hong Kong registered the different orders and congregations of the Roman Catholic Church as a single, separate entity, different from the "Christian" sect. This policy facilitated Japanese control over religious bodies.

*March:* A Hong Kong Fertilizer Syndicate was formed and the Taipo Experimental Farm set up under the Taiwan Engineering Company. This company also organized large-scale irrigation schemes and distributed vegetable seeds. A year later, it also produced and distributed an improved rice strain.

*April:* A “Japanese Language Ability demonstration” was held. Numerous people took part, presumably in the hope of gaining one of the prizes for Chinese who had made most progress in their learning of the Japanese language.

Entrance examinations were organized on 21, 22, and 23 April at the premises of what was formerly St. Stephen’s Girls’ College and was about to become the *Toa Gakuin* (or East Asia Academy). The examinations on 21 April were in Japanese, Composition, Chinese penmanship, and Mathematics. On 22 and 23 April, candidates faced “Personality” and “physical examination”. An Oratorical Contest was held at the *Toa Gakuin* on 27 April to commemorate the first anniversary of the establishment of Japanese Language Schools.

*May:* The East Asia Academy (*Toa Gakuin*) formally opened on the first of the month. Its purpose was to serve as a centre for higher studies. It was coeducational and was staffed by Japanese lecturers. These devised and implemented a curriculum which, besides including “instruction in all things Japanese”, encompassed languages (predominantly Japanese), the “principles of public citizenship and public morale”, physical training, music, law, “normal school education” (i.e., teacher training), book-keeping, commercial training, the use of the abacus, and, for females, “training in house-keeping and domestic duties”.

*July:* The Governor presided over the foundation day of the *Toa Gakuin* on 8 July, declaring that “Education is one of the most important factors in the building up of culture in Hong Kong”. The principal of the Academy, in his opening address, said that “The chief object of the school is to offer higher educational facilities to Chinese in Hongkong, so that the people in the future will be able to assist and cooperate with Japan in the building up of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere”.

The football team from Tai Wah (Great China Sports Association) visited Hong Kong for a charity match. Proceeds from admission charges amounted to MY5,500, which was donated to the General Association of Chinese Charities.

The ’bus service was restricted, with several routes suspended, in order to save fuel.

The General Association of Chinese Charities became responsible for the management of twenty temples.

The Education Committee of the General Relief Association announced that the number of free scholarships for poor children at selected schools (six on Hong Kong Island, six in Kowloon) would be increased from 500 to 1,000.

*August:* On 1 August, a Japanese Language Teachers’ Training Course

was started. By the following March, it had already produced fifty specially trained teachers and had enrolled its second class.

By August 1943, scarcity had driven the price of rice, which had stood at 60 cents a catty in February 1942, up to 75 cents a catty.

Examinations for the 1,000 free scholarships for poor pupils were held in designated schools on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon on Sunday, 22 August.

A small planning staff was proposed in London to deal with post-war developments in the Far Eastern colonies and protected territories. Subsequently (i.e., in September), the Hong Kong Planning Unit (HKPU) was formed under the aegis of the British War Office and Colonial Office. At first, it was headed by Mr. N.L. Smith, a pre-war Colonial [Chief] Secretary in Hong Kong, who helped to recruit staff, chiefly from among former Hong Kong civil servants who had been outside Hong Kong in December 1941 (for example, on leave or retirement) or who had succeeded in escaping from Hong Kong during or immediately after the Japanese invasion.

*September:* A Japanese radio commentator reported that "everywhere in formerly foreignized Hong Kong, one can hear Japanese conversation". He claimed that all sorts of people — Chinese, Indians, Portuguese, and 'third nationals' were "enthusiastically learning the Japanese language" and were even using it to converse with each other.

Bicycles fitted to carry 'pillion passengers' appeared on the streets of Hong Kong, certainly outnumbering cars, 'buses, or any other transport requiring petrol.

*November:* The Japanese opened an Agricultural Training Institute at Fanling. The official entry was thirty-four students, although only twenty-one actually enrolled on the opening day.

*December:* Plans to introduce a system of compulsory education were discussed by the local Chinese heads of the District Bureaux.

1944: There were another nine air raids during the year, with the first taking place on 12 February.

During the year, teachers' allowances (i.e., sums they were paid on top of their salaries) were increased. By the end of the year, the general situation had become so difficult and the shortage of teachers so acute that many teachers were paid in rice.

Also during the year, the Japanese-controlled *Hong Kong News* commented on several occasions about the popularity of the Japanese language among Chinese students. The same source also remarked, however, on the "steady decline in school attendances".

The amount of scholarships (both in terms of money awarded and the number of students to whom awards were made) was increased.

A large public library was opened in the building on Garden Road previously (and subsequently) occupied by the Helena May Institute. The library stock included books which had been taken from the University of Hong Kong's library.

There were bombing casualties in, and destruction to, schools during this year and in early 1945.

By *January*, the price of rice rose to 75 sen (or the old HK\$3) a catty — i.e. by 500% since February 1942 and 400% since August 1943.

Mr. Jirō Kimura,<sup>20</sup> the new head of the Education Department of the Governor's Office arrived in Hong Kong from Tokyo on 21 January to succeed Mr. Nagao in this post.

*March*: On 1 March, the Association of Principals of Japanese Language Schools was formed. At about this time, it was claimed that there were approximately sixty large and well-organized schools in Hong Kong dedicated entirely to the teaching of the Japanese language and that these schools had, to date, graduated over thirty thousand students.

*May*: The Pat Wo Theatrical Association donated for charity the proceeds from two days' admission. This amounted to MY26,674, half of which went to the Theatrical Association's own needy members, half for distribution to other charitable bodies by the General Association of Chinese Charities.

In *August*, the price of rice rose to MY8.80 a catty (i.e., an increase of well over 1000% since the beginning of the year).

*September*: In London, Mr. D.M. MacDougall was appointed as Chief Civil Affairs Officer in the Hong Kong Planning Unit (HKPU) and, prospectively, head of Civil Affairs for Hong Kong after its liberation. T.R. Rowell, former principal of Northcote Training College, took up the responsibility for education within the HKPU on a part-time basis. Because of the War Office connection, MacDougall was also commissioned as a Brigadier and Rowell as a Colonel. The establishment of the HKPU indicates either considerable British confidence in the ultimate result of the war and/or a stratagem to boost morale and/or efforts to ensure that the British would be able to circumvent any attempts by Chinese Nationalists, as supported by their American allies, to take over Hong Kong at the end of the war.

Yamaguchi, a prominent Japanese civilian,<sup>21</sup> gave MY100,000 to the Chinese Relief Fund, specifying that half should be used for educational purposes.

*October*: An amateur theatrical group donated MY21,000 to charity from the proceeds of its admission charges.

On 16 October, a school received a direct hit from an allied air raid which had targeted the Kowloon dock yard.

In *December*, rice was MY18 a catty.

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20. As is true in the case of Mr. Nagao, the present writer was unable to find Mr. Kimura's given-name in English language sources. Thanks to the help of his colleagues, Dr. Flora Kan and Dr. Tom Stanley, he was, however, able to locate and romanize it from the reports in the *Hong Kong Yat Pao*, the Chinese language newspaper published during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong.

21. Yamaguchi had been arrested as a Japanese secret agent by the British in August 1940.

1945: There were eleven air raids, the first taking place on the morning of 15 January. A particularly severe air raid on 16 January caused casualties at Stanley Internment Camp. Another severe raid on 17 January caused numerous casualties in Wanchai and brought the race meeting at Happy Valley to a halt. On 4 April, about 70 planes bombed Wanchai, aiming at the *Kempeitei* [Secret Police] headquarters in the French Mission building, but creating heavy damage and many casualties in the French Mission Hospital. The last air raid, by 59 planes, was on Central District on 12 June, causing about a hundred casualties and making 2,000 people homeless.

During the year, many schools required that their fees be paid in rice. Classes in those schools that managed to remain open were quite commonly of up to about 60 pupils.

In *January*, the Tung Wah Hospital Committee announced that it had to sell some of the property belonging to the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals in order to continue to exist as a charitable body.

*February*: A new Governor, Lt.-General Tanaka took over from Lt.-General Isogai. The organization of the Governor's Office was slimmed down to two departments, instead of the former three. These were the Department of Commerce and Industry, subdivided into three sections dealing with Civil Affairs and Education, Manufacture, and Finance; and, secondly, the Department of Transport, also in three sections dealing with Trade and Sea Communications, Ship-building, and Posts and Telegraph. The more technical, functional departments such as public works and water supply continued in their earlier form.

*April*: A lending section was added to the Public Library on Garden Road.

A "rat week" was held during which people were rewarded with small amounts of rice for bringing in the bodies of dead rats.

In *July*, rice was MY90 a catty. Civil servants, teachers, and journalists received their salaries in rice.

On *16 August*: the Imperial Rescript, announcing the unconditional surrender of Japan, was read by a Japanese officer outside the Hong Kong Hotel, first in Japanese and then in Chinese. Mr. F.C. [later, Sir Franklin] Gimson, the interned Colonial Secretary, set up an interim administration.

*29 August* saw the arrival of a British naval force, commanded by Rear-Admiral C.H.J. Harcourt.

On *1 September*, the British Military Administration of Hong Kong was formally established under Harcourt as military governor. On 7 September, MacDougall and the advanced party of the Civil Affairs staff arrived in Hong Kong after a long and circuitous air voyage from Britain. In their luggage, they carried copies of Policy Directives which had been prepared by the HKPU (in most cases, themselves), including a rather brief Directive on post-war education policy.

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