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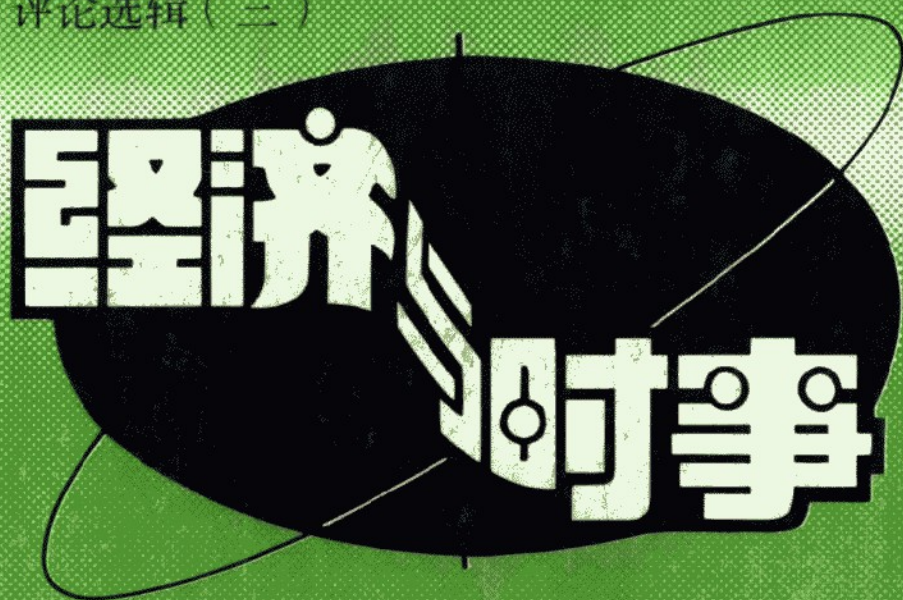
Volume 3

by

Professor Lim Chong-Yah

星洲日報

评论选辑（三）



第三集

林崇椰教授



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ECONOMICS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

经济与时事

第三集 Vol. 3

by

Professor Lim Chong-Yah

林崇椰教授著

星洲日報

SIN CHEW JIT POH

经济与时事(第三集)

ECONOMICS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS (Vol. 3)

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Preface

Royalty from the first volume in this series is donated through Sin Chew Jit Poh to the Singapore Labour Foundation.

Royalty from the second volume is donated to the Student Care Service, Singapore.

For this volume, that is the third volume, I propose to donate the royalty, also through Sin Chew Jit Poh, to the Singapore Boys' Town.

All the three volumes are in English and in Chinese. This is to enable the articles to reach a wider readership and to promote bilingualism.

The articles more often than not reflected the concern of Singapore, at least an important section of the Singaporean population, over the issues discussed at that time. At times, however, the articles advocated certain lines of action, which happened to come to pass later.

My hope is that these articles written by me every Sunday for Sin Chew Jit Poh since August 1978 do serve a useful purpose in some ways or another. I hope too that I have not projected too much my role and my profession as an educator and professor of economics at the University of Singapore.

28th December 1979

LIM CHONG-YAH

前言

“经济与时事”第一集出版所得版权税，曾通过星洲日报捐作新加坡劳工基金。

第二集的版权税，也捐给新加坡学生辅导会。

这一集，也是第三集的版权税，我想再通过星洲日报捐给新加坡儿童城。

这三部集子，都是华、英对照的，用意是使论文能传达给更广的读者群，并宣扬双语制度。

论文的内容，一般都是反映新加坡所关注的问题，至少也是反映新加坡人对当时争论的问题的关怀。

自一九七八年八月间开始，我每周写一篇论文，在星洲日报星期刊发表。我希望这些论文对读者会有一些益处，我也希望我不致于太过表现我身为一名教育工作者和星大经济系教授的职业和角色。

林崇椰

一九七九年十二月廿八日

CONTENTS

目 录

1.	THE GOH EDUCATION REFORM	1
	从教育工作者的角度看吴博士的教育改革建议	5
2.	THE GOH REPORT - FURTHER THOUGHTS	8
	再论教育改革一些基本问题	12
3.	ANOTHER REACTION ON THE GOH REPORT	15
	三论吴庆瑞博士教育改革报告书	20
4.	JAPAN'S VIEW OF SOUTHEAST ASIA	24
	日本眼中的东南亚	28
5.	THE FUTURE OF SINGAPORE'S CHILDREN	31
	新加坡儿童的未来	35
6.	THE WORLD IN 2001	38
	二〇〇一年的世界	42
7.	UNCTAD AND THE THIRD WORLD	45
	贸易发展会议与第三世界	49
8.	THE FUTURE OF THAILAND	52
	泰国未来动向	56
9.	THE NEW CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND BRITISH ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT	59
	新保守党政府与英国经济复兴	63
10.	HOW TO RAISE PRODUCTIVITY?	66
	如何提高生产率	70
11.	THE COURTESY CAMPAIGN	73
	再谈礼貌运动	76
12.	NIGHTMARES FROM VIETNAM	79
	越南所带来的阴影	83
13.	LABOUR SAVING CAMPAIGN	86
	展开节省劳力运动	90
14.	SEPECIAL PROBLEMS OF BECOMING BILINGUAL IN SINGAPORE - I	93
	掌握两种语文所面对的特殊难题	97

15	SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF BECOMING BILINGUAL IN SINGAPORE -II	100
	在政策上如何解决两种语文的问题	104
16	THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND THE UNITED NATIONS	107
	越南难民与联合国	111
17	THE BALI ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING AND VIETNAM	114
	亚细安外长会议与越南问题	117
18	SINGAPORE RESPONSE TO GLOBAL PETROLEUM PRICE INCREASES	119
	国际油价上涨对我国经济的影响	123
19	LAND UTILISATION IN SINGAPORE	126
	应该最有效地利用我国有限的土地	130
20	FROM SUNDAY CLOSURE OF PETROL KIOSKS TO SHORTAGE OF DIESEL	133
	从星期日油站休息谈柴油短缺问题	137

Appendix 附录

Contents In Vol. I 第一集目录	140
Contents In Vol. II 第二集目录	141

THE GOH EDUCATIONAL REFORM *

The education system in Singapore is a complex one. This complexity basically arises from, for a variety of reasons, the adoption of a bilingual educational policy. And bilingualism in Singapore in effect means English plus one of the three official languages, namely, Mandarin, Malay or Tamil.

I have deliberately avoided the use of the term 'mother tongue', as it is ambiguous in the Singapore context. For one thing, the mother tongue of a Singaporean Indian in the sense of the tongue used by the mother at home need not be Tamil; it may be English, Telegu, Punjabi, Bengali, or Gujerati, to name but a few of the Indian languages used in Singapore. Similarly, the mother tongue of a Singaporean Chinese need not be Mandarin. Indeed, it is likely to be Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, Hakka, Hainanese or Foochow. It can also be English! Indeed, increasingly in Singapore more and more mothers speak English at home, and so, strictly speaking, the proportion of Singaporean children who converse in English ('mother tongue') at home with their mothers is on the increase.

The Goh Keng Swee report, chapter one of which contains the main proposals, has been released. Obviously, the Report tries to find an acceptable and rational way (1) to raise the current unsatisfactory level of literacy rate among

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school-leaving children in Singapore, (2) to have compulsory effective bilingualism only for those who can cope up with it and (3) to reduce the current high wastage or attrition rate in schools.

The aims are laudable. The method may be discussed in two related parts:

- (1) primary education and
- (2) secondary education.

For primary education, the number of years for it, namely six years, remains unchanged. The Report too does not propose the lowering of the school-going age from the present 6+ to, say, 5+. The Report advocates the streaming of children after primary three into two groups; one, the main stream, for those who can benefit from a compulsory bilingual education. The other group, a sub-stream, for those who do not have that ability. For the latter group, Mandarin will be used as a medium of instruction, if the pupils come from Chinese dialect speaking homes. English will be used for the rest, namely, if the pupils are ethnic Malay, Indian and those ethnic Chinese who use English at home.

The objectives of the primary school sub-streaming proposal, as I see it, are basically two. One is to reduce the drop-out rate by not forcing effective bilingualism on those academically less able children. They will be given only one language. Two is that in having to concentrate only on one language, they can, hopefully, have a better chance of becoming literate. Given the special circumstances of Singapore. I support fully the principle of differentiation after primary three between the academically able and those who cannot cope up with compulsory bilingualism. I see considerable merits in the proposal to train the academically less gifted to be literate in Mandarin or English rather than to be illiterate in both.

However, chapter one of the Report does not state what is the educational development line for the primary sub-stream pupils. Specifically, it does not state how long will they be allowed in the primary school and whether a certificate will be given to them in passing a certain common examination. There is also silence on whether there will be a continuation of secondary education in the same one language for those who can make the grade. This is an important provision, as late-developers would find it too difficult to rejoin the main-stream after having moved to the sub-stream at the mid-primary level.

As for secondary education, the Report recommends a five-year course for those academically less gifted to reach the 'O' level requirements instead of the present four-year course. At the secondary level, as the only difference between the main stream students and the sub-stream students lies in the number of years to take the course, students can still switch from the sub-stream to the main stream or vice versa. This flexibility is the merit of the system. The demerit is that there is bound to be social stigma for those who have to pursue a five-year course.

It is further suggested that for the secondary sub-stream students, a common Lower Certificate of Education be considered at the end of year four. At the end of year five, there is the 'O' level examination. The setting of two common public examinations in two years, if avoidable, I think, should be avoided.

My own preference is for a common secondary school system of five years. The streaming should be done at the end of year three. For those who pass the common, say, Lower Certificate of Education examination at the end of year three reasonably well, they may proceed further for two more years to do the 'O' level. For those who merely pass, they can have the benefit of having a Lower Certificate of Education. This is vertical streaming, rather than horizontal streaming.

Consideration can be given to lower the proper primary school going age to 5+, so that the age for the main stream students to get through the 'O' level examination can still be at 16+. Worthy of note is that countries that have a comparable education system as we have but without the 'burden' of compulsory effective bilingualism, the corresponding 'O' level school leaving age is 17+.

The case for a younger school going age can be easily made. Most parents already send their children to some sorts of 'pre-school' at an even earlier age. The proposal is but to put the current practice on a proper footing. It also gives those children who do not currently go to 'pre-schools' a less unequal advantage. The schools too can become analogous to creches for working mothers. Of course, care must be taken not to overload the young pupils, but that is a separate consideration.

Similarly, the lengthening of the school period up to 'O' level by one more year with suitable spread of the curriculum will, hopefully, lessen the current well-known heavy pressure of work on the Singaporean school children. A generally less tense and less pressured school environment can thus be created. It will also contribute towards a lower wastage rate even at the PSLE level. The present ten-year system up to 'O' level, including the proposed 2 sub-systems, one at primary and one at secondary, still retains the basic feature favouring the academically gifted children. Those not so gifted go to the sub-streams. The eleven-year system with suitable adjustment in curriculum will contribute much more to lower the wastage rate besides enabling vertical streaming rather than horizontal streaming at the secondary level. The primary sub-streams can also be made to lead to the level of Lower Certificate of Education.

从教育工作者的角度看

吴博士的教育改革制度

新加坡的教育体系是相当复杂的。这种复杂性的形成有各种各样的原因，不过，基本上是因为采取两种语文教育政策所引起的。新加坡的两种语文实际上是指英文加上三种官方语文，即华文，马来文和淡米尔文中的任何一种语文。

我故意避免使用「母语」这个名词，因为在新加坡的环境下这个名词的含义模糊不清。举个例来说，从在家中母亲使用的语言这个意义上来说，印籍新加坡人的母语未必是淡米尔语，它可能是英语，特拉古语，旁遮普语，孟加拉语或者古遮拉地语，这只是在新加坡常用的几种印度语罢了。同样的，华籍新加坡人的母语也不一定是华语，它可能是闽语，粤语，潮语，客语，琼语或榕语，也可能是英语！的确，在新加坡愈来愈多母亲在家里讲英语，因此，严格说来，新加坡儿童在家里和母亲以英语（母语）交谈的比例日益增加。

吴庆瑞博士有关教育改革报告书的第一章经已发表，有关教育改革的主要建议包含在这一章里头。显然，这份报告书尝试探求一个可以被接受且是理智的途径，以便：

(一)提高新加坡离校儿童的识字水平。目前离校儿童的识字水平不能令人满意。

(二)只为那些有能力应付的学童采行强制性的有效掌握两种语文的政策。

(三)减少目前学校的高度失学和辍学率。

这些目的是值得赞扬的，其实行方法可以分开两个相关部份

来讨论，即：(一)小学教育和(二)中学教育。

小学教育的就读年数没有改变，照旧是六年。报告书也没有建议把入学年龄从目前的六岁多提早到五岁多。报告书主张小学三年级之后把学童加以分流而成为两大组，一组是主流，给那些能够应付强制性的两种语文教育政策的学童，另一组是支流，给那些没有这种能力的学童。在后一组里，如果学生是来自讲方言或是讲华语的家庭，那么，华语将作为教学媒介。如果学生是巫族、印族或来自讲英语的家庭的华族，那么，英语将作为教学媒介语。

有关小学划分支流建议，我看基本上具有两项目的，其中一个目的是不要强迫那些学习能力比较差的儿童有效掌握两种语文，以减少辍学率。他们只需学习一种语文。另外一个目的是由于只集中学习一种语文，希望他们能够比较好地提高认字水平。

由于新加坡的特殊环境，我完全支持在小学三年级之后进行区分学习能力强和那些无法应付强制性的两种语文政策的学童的原则。我认为使用华语或英语而不是两种语文来训练那些语言天份较差的学童使他们认字的建议，是具有很很多优点的，也是值得我们全力支持的。

不过，报告的第一章并没有阐明小学支流学生的教育发展路线，对于允许他们在小学就读多久以及在某种共同考试及格后是否能得到一张文凭的问题，报告书的第一章没有提到的是那些能够及格的学童能否继续接受以同样一种语文教导的中学教育。这是一个重要的问题，因为发展较慢的儿童在小学中间阶段转入只用一种语文的支流之后，要再加入使用两种语文的主流是不可能的。

关于中学教育，报告书建议让那些学习天赋较差的学生读五年的中学课程才达到「普通水准」'O' Level，以取代现有的四年中学课程。在中学阶段，由于主流的唯一分别是就读的年数，学生可以从支流转入主流或从主流转入支流。这种伸缩性是这个体系的最好优点，但对那些就读五年课程的学生，势必会使他们在社会上包括在学校或家庭里蒙上一些污点而引起一些自卑感。

报告书进一步建议在第四年结束时为支流学生举行新的共同

初级教育文凭考试，而在第五年结束时让他们和四年制的主流学生，共同参加「普通水准教育文凭」的考试。我认为在两年内举行两次共同公开考试，如果能够避免的话，应该避免。

我认为一律采用五年中学学制，是更好的。这样一来，分流就能在第三年结束的时候进行。那些在第三年结束时参加初级教育文凭共同考试成绩良好的学生，可以继续读多两年达到「普通水准」。那些只是及格的学生可获得教育初级文凭。这是纵的分流而不是横的分流。

我们的教育部也应该考虑把小学生的入学年龄从现在的六岁多提早到五岁多，这样一来，主流学生考获「普通水准」的仍然只有十六岁多而已，值得注意的是那些拥有和我们同样的教育制度，但没有强制性的有效掌握两种语文政策的负担的其他国家，他们的相应「普通水准」学生的离校年龄是十七岁多。

提早入学年龄的论点是很容易确立的。大部份家长在孩子正式入学之前就已经把孩子送去「幼稚园」或「启蒙班」。这项建议不过是把目前家长的做法正式纳上轨道。这也使到那些目前没有上「幼稚园」或「启蒙班」的儿童不至于处于较不利的地位。

那些必须出外工作的母亲也可以把这些学校当成和托儿所一样而安心地去工作。当然，必须小心注意，不要让年纪小小的儿童在学业上的负担过重。不过，这已是另外一个问题。

同样的，中学的「普通水准」学制延长多一年，使到课程能够适当分配，希望可减轻目前众所周知的我国学童所承受的沉重功课压力，由此便可以创造一个比较没有那样重的学习环境。这也会有助于减少辍学率，甚至在小学教育阶段也是如此。目前到达「普通水准」的十年学制，包括建议中的二个支流，一个在小学，另一个在中学，还是保留基本的特点，即有利于学习天资强的学生。那些天资较差的就得进入支流。除了在中学阶段能够进行纵的分流而不是横的分流之外，十一年学制，配合课程的适当调整将能大大减低辍学率而且小学支流学生也有机会达到初级教育文凭的水平。

一九七九年三月八日

THE GOH REPORT —

FURTHER THOUGHTS *

The Goh Report, released to the public by instalments, is now completely out. It is undoubtedly a frank report. It also represents a serious attempt in finding the best solution to the educational problems Singapore faces. In particular it aims to:

- (1) cut down the illiteracy rate among school leavers,
- (2) reduce the attrition rate of school-children, and
- (3) promote bilingualism in Singapore among those who can manage it.

The Goh Report is also a very important document. It will form the basis for Singapore's education policy for the years to come. It marks an important turning point in the Republic's bilingual education policy.

Last week, I commented on the first chapter of the Report. The fifth and last chapter came out last Thursday. The recommendations in the fifth chapter are not just an extension of those of the first chapter. In some important ways they are not the same.

Chapter One, for example, speaks of a sub-stream for the "monolingual" students and main-stream for the "bilingual" ones. Chapter Five, further sub-divides the "bilingual" cate-

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