PROBLEMS OF IMPERIAL TRUSTEESHIP

NATIVE EDUCATION
Ceylon, Java, Formosa, the Philippines, French Indo-China, and British Malaya

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

This essay deals with the western Pacific where one Asiatic and five Western powers are responsible for dependencies and for the education of their inhabitants.

The pioneer of discovery in this area was Portugal, and it still bears the impress of the work which she accomplished. She was, however, unable to retain her position in it, and she now owns no more than the Port of Macao and the eastern half of the island of Timor. She plays but a small part in our narrative, being staged only in the opening scenes of Europe’s connexion with Ceylon, where she was followed first by the Dutch and afterwards by the British. This explains the inclusion of the five chapters allotted to Ceylon, which is not in the western Pacific. Although Malacca had a similar experience it was on too small a scale to serve our purpose. The Dutch have exercised a control over Java since the beginning of the seventeenth century, interrupted only by the short French and British periods early in the nineteenth century. The Spaniards ruled the Philippines from the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth centuries, when they were taken by the United States. At the same time the Japanese acquired Formosa from the Chinese, who had held it since the middle of the seventeenth century. Great Britain’s connexion with the Straits Settlements has existed for less than a century and a half, and the French possession of Indo-China is even younger. Thus the educational policy of only four of the eight powers we have named—Portugal, Spain, Holland, and China—comes up for discussion during the first three centuries of our narrative; then Great Britain and France join in, to be followed by Japan and the United States.

Our object is to attempt to indicate the educational policies of these governing powers during the four centuries which the book covers. The chief emphasis is therefore given to the school education of the native
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inhabitants of the dependencies throughout our period. The special problems connected with technical, professional, and university training are for reasons of space not as fully dealt with as they might be. Similarly some very recent developments which are still in process of evolution are not mentioned.

We can also limit our subject to some extent by concentrating on the chief points of contact of the colonizing powers and the dependencies and on the predominant element of the native populations. Portuguese and Dutch authority in Ceylon was confined mainly to the western and northern maritime provinces, and the interior highlands resisted penetration until the British brought the whole island under control. Its population, which now numbers 5½ millions, is predominantly Sinhalese and Tamil. The aboriginal Veddahs and the so-called Moors are small groups and need not come within our cognizance. The Dutch have made the most of Java, while the other islands of the Netherlands Indies were comparatively neglected until the beginning of the twentieth century. Java has a population of over 4½ millions, more than 800 to the square mile. All are of Malayan stock with the exception of about 200,000 Europeans, half a million Chinese, and some thousands of Arab traders, whom we can ignore. In the Philippine Islands the Christian Filipinos greatly outnumber the rest of the population; and 44 per cent. of the total of 20½ millions live in the island of Luzon. The Formosans are predominantly Chinese. Of the 4½ million inhabitants only 86,000 are aboriginal natives, who live in the eastern fastnesses cut off by a guard line. In Indo-China French policy can be studied to greater advantage in Cochin-China, in Annam, and in Tonkin than in Laos or Cambodia. They have a homogeneous Annamese population which represents 85 per cent. of the total of 20½ millions for the whole of French Indo-China. The people of British Malaya were, until the nineteenth century, predominantly Malay; but recently the influx of Chinese and of Tamil immigrants has effected a radical change which we shall have to take into
account. The British Government has greater control over the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States than over the Unfederated States. We deal, therefore, with the two former.

With the exception of Ceylon and Indo-China, all the dependencies included in our study contained Malay populations; and, apart from Formosa, had been wholly or partly assimilated to one or other of the ancient and highly organized civilizations and religions of Asia. Before Europeans discovered the Philippine Islands Islam had secured no more than a foothold in Luzon in the neighbourhood of Manila. Only in the Western half of Mindanao and in Sulu was it sufficiently firmly established to withstand the proselytizing zeal of the Spanish missionaries. The Portuguese found the Sinhalese to be Buddhists who maintained the Hindu caste system, omitting the Brahmins, as the basis of their social and economic organization. The Brahmins, however, still held sway amongst the Tamils of Jaffnapatam in the north, who were Hindus.

The Dutch found Java, which in the fourteenth century had been the centre of Hindu influence in Indonesia, almost entirely converted to Islam. It had been obliged, however, to adjust itself to many of the political institutions and religious beliefs which it found already established there, some of which were of Hindu origin and others relics of the earlier paganism. The Giao Chi of Tonkin, from whom the Annamese descend, were thoroughly assimilated to Chinese culture and, carrying it southwards, before the close of the eighteenth century had spread it over the present-day Annam and Cochin-China, absorbing in the process the Chams and the Khmers who had previously been under the influence of Hinduism. Siam barred the way to their further extension and protected the Malay States of the present Federation, which remained Malay in population until the nineteenth century created the existing diversity in their inhabitants. When the Dutch embarked on their missionary campaign in Formosa early in the seventeenth century, the Chinese
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numbered approximately 20,000 who were mainly engaged in trade. The rest of the country was still in the hands of the Malay people who had occupied it since the sixth century. After the ejection of the Dutch by Koxinga, the Chinese entered it in overwhelming numbers and pursued their customary policy of stringent assimilation. The Spaniards found the Philippines somewhat more advanced than the Dutch had found Formosa; but they continued in undisturbed occupation of them for over three centuries, and their influence was therefore more permanent.

Another fact must be noted. The Dependencies we have chosen for our study are nearly all islands. Only British Malaya and French Indo-China are continental. It is even arguable whether the description should be applied to the former, for it is contained within a narrow peninsula. Annam also is separated from the continent by a mountain range. Its population, before the Annamese penetration, was Malay rather than Mongol. The large river systems which flank it and which are the chief geographical features of Cochin-China and of Tonkin, were not suited, as the French discovered, to be outlets of wide continental hinterlands. The Annamese, also, before they secured control over it and over Cochin-China, had freed themselves from their dependence upon China and had successfully resisted the Manchu invasion. And, although towards the end of the nineteenth century they deliberately revived their former vassalage to the Chinese Empire, they did so only as a convenience and for diplomatic reasons.

The insularity of our territories conveniently emphasizes the predominantly maritime character of the early Portuguese and Dutch Empires in the East. In this they differed from the continental empires of Portugal and Spain in Central and South America. On the other hand, Spanish policy in the Philippines, although of necessity insular, was similar in its social objectives to Spanish policy on the American continent. With this exception, therefore, and with the exception also of the Chinese in
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Formosa, contact between the governing powers and their dependencies in the western Pacific was at first largely local and indirect; and, at the end of the eighteenth century, after three hundred years of commercial activity, the native political and social organizations of Java and of Ceylon still survived or could without difficulty be restored.

With the arrival of the nineteenth century, however, this abstentionist period closed and a remarkable cycle of assimilation was opened. The new movement was inspired by high humanitarian motives, by faith in the beneficent influence of individualism, by a conviction that European civilization was the best for all mankind, and by an awakened sense of the duty of trusteeship for native races. It was, therefore, more destructive of native polities and societies than had been the previous three centuries of commercial selfishness. Its instruments and their effects were economic, social, and political. They were less conspicuous during the first half than during the second half of the century, which can, for this reason, be divided into two almost equal periods.

The beginning found Ceylon in the hands of the British, who soon demolished the independence of the interior kingdom of Kandy and embarked upon a policy based on introducing the English language, on undermining the authority of the native rulers, and on revolutionizing the economic basis of Sinhalese society. The country was opened up by roads, capital and labour were imported, and the plantation system, for which the interior was more suited than were the maritime provinces, was inaugurated. Education, to use the contemporary description of it, was diffused. The pace was much slower in Java and in the Philippines. After the uncompromising attempts at reform of Sir Stamford Raffles in the former during only five years of government, the Dutch, with characteristic caution, hesitated to preserve such parts of his work as appeared to be out of harmony with the structure of Javanese society; especially that part of it which was designed to introduce a system of individual peasant
proprietorship, which to Raffles appeared to be in accordance with ‘the universal forces’ by which mankind is actuated. Still more reactionary was van den Bosch’s Culture system. It was a return to the methods of the previous century, and provided a large revenue for the mother country from which the cultivators of Java reaped no benefit at all. The second half of the century, however, saw it abolished, and in its place a paternalism was introduced into the Dutch native administration which fully made up for the previous exploitations and was distinctly assimilative in effect. In the Philippines there was no more than the beginnings of an awakening, which became wider during the second half of the century. The opening of the Suez Canal brought them appreciably nearer to Europe. At the same time the contemporary disturbances in Spain caused an unwonted emigration to them and imported new liberal and anti-clerical doctrines. Nevertheless, when the United States of America assumed responsibility for them at the end of the century, the Filipinos could still be correctly described as living in ‘an atmosphere of retarded progress’.1

The middle of the century also saw the missionary campaign in Formosa, which the Dutch had been obliged to abandon two centuries before, renewed by the Dominicans and by the English and Canadian Presbyterian Churches. In the meantime the island had become predominantly Chinese, with the exception of the mountainous interior, where a remnant of the former Malayan inhabitants still carried on head-hunting operations. Still more important was the beginning of the Government of the French in Indo-China. They have always been believers in assimilation and they showed but little hesitation in applying it logically to Cochin-China. On the other hand, the experience thus gained caused them to proceed more circumspectly in Tonkin and to be still more abstentionist in Annam.

The nineteenth century left as a legacy to the twentieth, in all our territories except Formosa and Malaya, a growing

1 *The Times*, 9th April 1932.