

CONCLUSION

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The research workshop on Overseas Chinese, held in Manila in June, 1974, under the sponsorship of De La Salle University, brought together scholars with special knowledge and interest regarding the sizeable Chinese communities in five Southeast Asian countries.

The perceptive papers which they prepared for discussion at the workshop offer ample evidence of the dynamic human resources which the ethnic Chinese are busily putting to work in the economic, social, and educational development of their host countries. The voluminous bibliographies submitted at the workshop show a steady growth in the skills and concern of scholars — whether indigenous, Chinese, or Western — regarding the diaspora Chinese.

To share ideas on how research and scholarship might contribute to the wise, just, and effective application of these energies and talents of the overseas Chinese to the development of their several countries and of the region, was one chief purpose in holding this workshop. It is hoped that government, university, and private research groups will be encouraged to build upon and use well the studies that have been done, that they will discover useful new lines of policy-oriented research to pursue, and that they will coordinate their efforts in some common projects.

The economist sees the Chinese intensely active in commerce, industry and finance, wittingly or unwittingly making themselves indispensable to the overall prosperity of their host countries. The educator watches Chinese youths in the delicate but highly important process of inculturation and integration in the values and life-patterns of proud, newly-

independent nations. The sociologist pays attention to family customs and authority structures, to the generation gap, intermarriage, religious beliefs and practice.

The paper of Dr. Lau Tiek Soon brought up the direct concerns of the political scientist: What is the legal status of the overseas Chinese? What is his access to full citizenship in his land of domicile? How firmly committed are the overseas Chinese to the patriotic interests of their host countries? To what extent will they regard themselves, or still let themselves be used, as outposts, of China, tools for the extension of its ideology and the implementation of its foreign policy?

The degree of their commitment to the countries where they reside may vary considerably from one land to another, and can shift from year to year. Research measurement of this commitment has constituted a major element of the studies listed in the bibliographies. The years 1974 and 1975 saw the relevance of this research heightened sharply by Peking's resumption of diplomatic relations with Kuala Lumpur, Manila, and Bangkok. The same period was marked by a steep decline in American military presence and a shrinking of SEATO's profile as an organ for mutual defense.

If well-planned and thoroughly-pursued research on the various Chinese communities can help policy-makers and the moulders of public opinion to reduce ethnic tension and discrimination within their countries, and, in international affairs, to foster respect for the sovereign dignity and non-interference in the domestic problems of each Southeast Asian country, it will indeed serve the cause of long-range peace in the entire region.

The participants at the workshop had this service in view throughout discussions that were carried on with fine mutual respect and good feeling. De La Salle University is to be congratulated for its ready cooperation on the

workshop project; Ford Foundation is to be thanked for its generous logistic support. It is hoped now that publication of the papers and bibliographies will extend and prolong the influence of the scholars who met in Manila.

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