

KINGDOM OF LAOS

ROYAL DECREE

We, Boroma SETHA KHATYA SOURYA VONGSA PHRA MAHA SRI SAVANG
VATTHANA, King of Laos

ORDER

Article 1. National Education is reformed according to the following principles and arrangements:

TITLE I

Principles of the Reform

Article 2. Education is the handing down of culture from generation to generation; it also prepares human beings and communities for the future. Education is both traditional and progressive. We could not, without misinterpreting it, put the stress on one of these terms to the detriment of the other.

Education, which is the basis of the continuity of our country and our people, cannot belong to a party. It must be beyond the politics of the moment.

Article 3. Education is at the service of the whole Lao community. It is not made to perpetuate privileges, but on the contrary its national role will be to let the most talented children, whatever their extraction, acquire through their education positions of responsibility which they can best fulfill for the development of the country.

A special effort will be made to assure a real equality of access to education for women, villagers and ethnic groups. Whenever possible, ethnic minorities will receive their first instruction in their own language parallel to the national language.

Article 4. Education is not the only the education of the intellect but of the whole person: intelligence, character, social mind, body.

Lao education will contemplate helping create physically healthy men, morally balanced, having the sense of social life, men skilled in their professions, men devoted to their villages, happy in their villages, all of them having, at their level, a genuine if modest culture and real wisdom.

To reach this end, the new programs of the elementary school should leave out purely academic knowledge and stress what the child should know to live better and work for a better output in his community.

Article 5. These programs, strongly oriented toward the practical, ought to emphasize the practical rather than the theoretical.

The attainment of good habits will come before the attainment of knowledge.

Systematic teaching will be reduced to a minimum. It will be better to use the method of "center of interest" when it is possible. Then the school will become a small agricultural, mechanical, productive undertaking.

Audio-visual techniques will be used extensively, especially the radio. Textbooks will be kept up to date with the new programs and the new methods; any unnecessary knowledge which the pupil cannot remember will be left out; illustrations will be used continually (illustrations with simple and realistic lines) so that the textbook will be as enjoyable as a modern magazine or a book of entertaining reading.

Article 6. The pupil will take a more active part in the school and school life. With this end in view, the teachers will encourage, in their classrooms, the setting up of small school groups with leaders and rules chosen by the pupils, who will have a certain field of initiative and responsibility.

These organizations of school youth will permit the use of methods and will become, for the children, a school of social life where duties and freedom will balance.

Article 7. Education starts at birth and lasts for a lifetime. Especially during a time of great technical, economic and social change, the education of adults is as important as the education of the children and should not be separated. If, coming out of school, the

children were thrown into an uncultured community, they would forget very quickly what they had learned. That is why not only the children but the whole community must be taught the main rules of hygiene, agriculture, animal husbandry, modern techniques and must be literate. With this end in view the teacher must also be an educator for the adults as well as for the children.

Article 8. Most of the Lao are Buddhist. Nothing is more foreign to the spirit of Buddhism than to force conversion. Buddhism, which cherishes freedom of thought, has never persecuted any faith.

Schools of any religion, or without religion, are authorized in Laos, but they must abide by the regulations set forth by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health in the matter of school hygiene and must respect this freedom of conscience among the pupils and the teachers.

The public schools will bring a Buddhist education to the Lao population which is impregnated with Buddhism. Given the peculiar nature of the Buddhist religion, such an education will not be sectarian or denominational. Buddhism with its doctrine of rationalism, of peace and self-denial, is the best way to achieve the material and social progress of our people, understanding between human beings, and stability of human beings in the universe.

Article 9. The school, the normal means of education in the world of today, is a relatively new institution. When there was no school, the handing down of civilization, its customs, its races, its techniques, and its culture was done by various elements of society: families, professions, communities, religious establishments.

Until there are enough schools for all the children, Laos will call on all the latent educational possibilities of the country. Education will interest not only the Ministry of Education; the radio, newspapers, the administration, Religious Affairs, the Army, Health, Agriculture, Public Works, Economy, Planning, Youth and Sports, women's associations, parents, ex-servicemen, etc., should cooperate with the Ministry of National Education in the common task of educating the country.

TITLE II

Public Schools

Article 10. Public education is divided as follows:

Elementary school, 1st cycle: Pathom 1, 2, and 3
2nd cycle: Pathom 4, 5, and 6

Technical and professional school: Preparatory cycle, 1st and 2nd cycles

Secondary academic school: 1st and 2nd cycles

Higher education: 1st and 2nd cycles

These divisions, made for administrative purposes, must not form a rigid framework nor obscure the continuity of education.

Chapter I - Elementary Education - 1st Cycle

Article 11. In each village a rural center of community education will be created and will be, at the same time, an elementary school for the 1st cycle, a youth center, and a center of basic education for adults. The responsible person of the rural center of community education will be the teacher and he will also be the overseer for youth and for adult education.

Article 12. The rural center of community education can be: (1) A school in the wat, in all the villages where there is a wat or where one can be built; (2) The government public elementary school; (3) Where there is no wat, and no public school, a rural school will be built on the villagers' initiative with a teacher chosen and supported by the villagers teaching half-time if necessary.

Article 13. The public schools will gradually be relocated so that they do not duplicate the wat schools.

Article 14. Decrees by the Presidency of the Council will prescribe for:

- a. The establishment of new wat schools and their organization.
- b. The measures to be taken to promote the establishment of rural schools built by the villagers, with a teacher chosen and supported by them.
- c. The fair allocation of school costs.

Article 15. Decrees of the Minister of National Education will fix the programs and the methods of the rural centers of community education, as well as the ways of starting and administering the centers.

Chapter II - Elementary Education - 2nd Cycle

Article 16. The elementary education, 2nd cycle, will be given in the groupes scolaires but there will not be a rigid formula and the rural centers of community education may, in accordance with their means and abilities, open classes of Pathom 4, 5, and 6.

Article 17. The groupes scolaires will be gradually located so that all the villages will have a school within less than half an hours walk.

Article 18. All schools will have a school canteen so that the children of the nearby villages may attend school; transportation between the school and nearby villages will be arranged.

Article 19. A certain number of spaces will be kept for the best pupils of nearby villages.

Article 20. Teaching of a foreign language is mandatory in all classes of the second elementary cycle.

Article 21. Decrees of the Minister of National Education will fix the programs and methods of elementary education, 2nd cycle, as well as its modes of organization and administration.

Article 22. The last year of the 2nd elementary cycle (Pathom 6) will include a class in vocational guidance. The pupils will receive useful information about the occupations they might enter, about further studies, their advantages, their difficulties and their opportunities.

Article 23. Completion of elementary studies of the 2nd cycle will be certified by a diploma given according to theoretical knowledge as well as hygienic practices, professional capacity, and diligence in the youth organization. A pupil who does not get this certificate upon leaving school can get it later on, either through the local youth movement or by way of adult education.

Chapter III - Technical and Professional Education

Article 24. Technical and professional education includes

Agriculture and animal husbandry

Industry, construction and handicrafts

Business and administration (shorthand and typing, secretarial techniques, languages)

Article 25. Instruction is divided into three cycles:

A preparatory cycle of study which last two years, equivalent to Mathayom 1 and Mathayom 2 of the secondary school, and leading to an elementary professional certificate (D. E. P.)

First cycle of study, involving two years, equivalent to the Mathayom 3 and Mathayom 4 of the secondary school, and leading to a certificate of professional efficiency (C. A. P.)

Second cycle of two years, equivalent to Mathayom 5, 6, and 7 of the secondary school, and leading to the National Technical Baccaalaureate.

Each cycle of study is a complete unit of instruction.

Article 26. The technical and professional training of the preparatory cycles will be given in professional schools attached to the groupes scolaires.

The technical and professional training of the 1st and 2nd cycles of study will be given in secondary schools, as technical sections connected with the lycees or in the provincial centers of education.

The various technical ministries may create and manage technical schools in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education.

To provide a technical education answering the needs of the national economy in various branches, various levels and various provinces, technical schools will have to be erected by the Ministry of National Education or by other ministries. Their creation, the level of studies, the kind of specialties taught and their staffing will have to be submitted to a special committee appointed for this purpose.

Article 27. Technical and professional education will be essentially practical. Wherever possible, technical and professional schools or vocational schools attached to the groupes scolaires will be organized as small undertakings (farm, camp, repair shop, commercial office) and should be self-financing.

Where it will not be possible to create this kind of school immediately, the pupils will work alternately at school and by apprenticeship (half-days or in rotation) in public or private undertakings.

A Presidential Decree will fix the modes of self-financing of the technical and professional schools.

Article 28. Youths must not only know a trade but they must also be able to use this knowledge and improve it. We must stress, for that purpose, the commercialization of agriculture and industry; the pupils must be shown that enterprise without technique is useless. In that respect the schools will have to take proper measures as soon as this Decree is published.

Article 29. When pupils leave school they will be encouraged to start, among themselves, production cooperatives which, during a certain time, will be helped directly or indirectly by the government (loan of supplies, orders, fiscal aid). Education will lead towards the formation of such cooperatives.

Regulations for the cooperatives will be fixed by decree.

Article 30. A Presidential Decree will fix the minimum percentage of the national manpower needed for each undertaking with minimum wages for various technical qualifications.

Article 31. Decrees of the Minister of National Education will determine the programs and methods of preparatory cycles and of the 1st and 2nd cycles of technical and professional education, as well as the modes of organization and administration.

Article 32. For the time being the technical and professional education of the preparatory cycle is attached to the Department of Elementary Education, and the education of the 1st and 2nd cycles to the Department of Secondary Education. Within the Ministry of National Education a committee will be created to take care of the coordination of technical and professional education, which will pave the way for the creation of a Department of Technical Education.

Chapter IV - Secondary Education

Article 33. Secondary education is given in the lycees, provincial centers of education, and junior high schools.

Article 34. Secondary education leads to the baccalaureate. Programs will be adapted, whenever possible, according to the constitution of this country and to the background of the Lao people. These programs should lead, in the humanities, to a synthesis of western and far-eastern civilizations.

Article 35. An entrance examination is necessary to enter the schools of secondary education. The number of places to be provided in each school will be set forth annually by a decree of the Minister of National Education. To allow the children from rural areas and the highlands to have the same rights of admittance to secondary education there will be two lists of admittance, one for the townchildren and one for rural and highland children. This departmental decree will set the minimum quota reserved for candidates proposed by the groupes scolaires or by the schools from rural and highland areas.

Article 36. Failure in the French language part of the examination will not constitute failure in the entrance examination. Pupils who do not have a sufficient knowledge of French will be sent to a preparatory class where they will get intensive and practical training in the French language.

Article 37. The essentially academic character of present secondary education must be balanced by a systematic apprenticeship,

leading to an appreciation of the realities of life.

For that purpose, the pupils will have to take care of general upkeep and maintenance of the school.

Article 38. Decrees of the Minister of National Education will fix the programs and methods of the 1st and 2nd cycles of study in secondary education as well as the modes of organization and administration.

Chapter V - Higher Education

Article 39. A presidential decree will determine the reorganization of higher education, according to the following principles:

Article 40. The expenses of creating and maintaining each faculty in Laos should be studied, as well as the cost of sending and supporting Lao students abroad. When the cost is equal or only slightly greater, a given faculty will be organized in Laos.

The studies abroad might deeply isolate the student from the circles in which he will have to work afterwards; on the contrary, a university education in the country raises the general competence of the country and establishes a center of higher culture which is very important for national development.

Article 41. It is necessary that future Lao teachers of higher education be sent abroad without delay. This is a long-term task which must be undertaken at the earliest date.

Article 42. It is very important for a developing country that the senior officials have a clear understanding of the sociological problems of the country.

The programs of general knowledge of all the faculties (at the first existing lower division level as well as at the upper division level which has yet to be created) will be led toward the historical sociology of Laos and the Far East, particularly in the studies of problems involved in changes in the economic structure.

TITLE III

Teacher Training

Article 43. Because of the insuperable financial difficulties in paying for a large number of school teachers, the National Center of Education and other teacher training centers will have to emphasize quality rather than quantity. Each year, before December 31, the Minister of National Education will fix the number of candidates to be accepted at the centers the following year.

Article 44. The programs and methods of the National Center of Education and other training centers must conform precisely to their purpose, such as preparing the students to be school teachers in the countryside and in the towns of Laos. Programs will be based on the programs of elementary education; methods will be the use of practice teaching in the elementary schools. Student-teachers will be, at the same time, prepared for their duties as community teachers and youth overseers; they will organize a school youth movements in their own classrooms.

The Minister of National Education will fix by decree the new programs and methods.

Article 45. Presidential or departmental decrees will fix:

The training program for teachers of the 1st cycle of study of secondary education, as well as the terms of admittance to classes at the National Center of Education following this training;

The training program for teachers of technical and professional education, as well as terms of admittance to classes in the institutions giving this training.

Article 46. In addition to training students as teachers, the National Education Center and other teacher training institutions will provide in-service training for the improvement of teachers and other personnel. Duration and programs of in-service training courses will be fixed by decree of the Minister of National Education.

TITLE IV

Bonze Training Schools

Article 47. Pali schools prepare bonzes to be secular as well as religious leaders.

Article 48. The Institute of Buddhist Studies prepares teachers of Pali schools and also maintains the level of Far-Eastern Buddhist culture in Laos.

Article 49. For the coordination of schools within the control of the Ministry of National Education and the schools of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Pali school studies are planned as follows:

The former preparatory year is combined with the three first years of the elementary cycle (rural community centers of education).

Former Pathoms 1, 2, and 3 are known as Pathoms 4, 5, and 6 and are equivalent to the 2nd cycle of studies of elementary education.

The pre-university year becomes Mathayom 4 and the four years of Mathayom are equivalent to the four years of the secondary cycle.

The three years of the Institute of Buddhist Studies are equivalent to the three years of the 2nd secondary cycle.

Article 50. The programs of the Pali schools and the Buddhist Institute will lead towards:

An effective presentation of Buddhism, which is a doctrine of rationalism, of human and universal brotherhood, of toleration and peace,

The bonze's role in the development of rural communities,

A simple and practical pedagogy,

An historical statement of the technical development of mankind,

A general knowledge of the Far-Eastern Buddhist civilizations.

The new programs will be set forth by decree of the Ministers of Religious Affairs and National Education.

TITLE V

Youth Movements

Article 51. The advisors, inspectors, school directors and teachers will encourage their pupils, at all levels of education, to organize school youth movements.

Article 52. The basic organization of the school youth movement is the class or, in schools with several classes and only one teacher, the age group. The activities and the program of the movement are focused on the class. The activities at the group level and the movement structure at this level must be kept discreet; it must not be forgotten that the heart of the movement lies in the small class group which, alone, is at the level of the children.

Article 53. In each class the children will elect the responsible members of the class (leader, health officer, chief gardener, sports coaches, etc.); they will take care of the enforcement of the laws that they have drawn up and adopted.

In the two older groups of the rural centers of community education (P-2 and P-3), each group will have a group leader. The group chief of P-3 will also be the class leader. The children of the younger group (P-1) will only be full members of the movement after a certain time and a small test.

Article 54. The class clubs or organizations will be responsible for the cleanliness, orderliness and ornamentation of the classroom, the preservation of the furniture, observance of hygienic regulations, discipline when the teacher is not present, games and excursions, organization of teams in the activity centers, the garden, the nursery, the school henhouse which belongs to the class, and correspondence with schools of their friends. In those classes where there is only one teacher, the older students (P-3) will help in teaching the younger (P-1).

In the groupes scolaires and the secondary or technical schools,

the leader of the school movement and his assistants will be responsible for the school cooperative, the school canteen (in part), entertainment, sports, the cleanliness of the surroundings, yards, the dining halls and closets, and school participation in community life.

Article 55. The teacher will be the class advisor; he will not assert himself but will guide, propose and help.

In the secondary schools, we shall try to have in each class a leading teacher who will be the advisor of the class movement.

Article 56. The Minister of National Education and the Director of Youth and Sports will determine, by decree, the organizational details of the school youth movement.

Article 57. Young people, after having been active in a school movement, may belong up to the age of 20 to youth movements after leaving school.

In the rural areas, youth will join village youth organizations. In the towns they will join at their own choice either professional organizations, or organizations for which they have an inclination (team sports, scouting, non-political associations); one youth may belong to several groups. All the groups will form the school movement of the town.

Youth association activities after leaving school are:

Team sports, especially football, community games

Further professional and cultural training

Community education and improvement of community life

Mutual help

TITLE VI

Community Education

Article 58. Whether teacher or bonze, the leader of the rural center of community education is, in the village, not only the representative of the Ministries of National Education, Religious Affairs and Youth and Sports, but also the representative of the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Rural Affairs, etc.

Between the visits by representatives of the technical ministries, the rural teacher insures the continuity of progress. The Government must help him as much as possible; the main responsibility of the educators and of the representatives of Health, Agriculture, etc., is to give essential knowledge to the rural teacher or bonze which he can spread and maintain in the village.

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 59. Previously issued regulations contradictory to this text are and remain abrogated.

Article 60. The Prime Minister, President of the Council, the Ministers of National Education, Religious Affairs, Interior, Finance, Economy, Public Works, Agriculture, Public Health, Youth and Sports, Rural Affairs, and Planning are, each one, commissioned to implement this Royal Decree.

Done in our Royal Palace, Luang Prabang, 30th July 1962.

Signed: Sisavang Vatthana