

## ABSTRACT

Hoong, Yip Yat, Development of Higher Education in Southeast Asia: Problems and Issues, Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development, Singapore, 1973

"Higher Education in Laos with Special Reference to the Royal Institute of Law and Administration" by Dr. Tenh Teso

### ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE RILA

#### 1. Administration

The RILA is responsible for the 'training of civil servants as well as of junior and senior magistrates' and it operates under the Directorate of Higher Education. The Institute is a public establishment and not an administrative department operating under a Directorate or Ministry of Public Services, as would be the case in many other countries.

The RILA is administered by a Directorate under the control of an Administrative Council. The Director of the Institute, appointed by the Minister of National Education, directs and co-ordinates the overall activities, is responsible for internal discipline, and proposes to the Minister of Education the adoption of any measure he feels necessary to ensure maximum effectiveness in the Institute's mission. The Director is assisted by a Secretary-General, and also by an accounting department and a disciplinary service. The Secretary-General who collaborates closely with the Director, assists him in his administrative duties as well as with study programmes, examinations, student projects and in the preparation of texts and regulations concerning the operations of the Institute. The Secretary-General is assisted by a secretarial staff. The accountant is responsible for financial arrangements concerning students and staff as well as for the buildings and equipment, while the general supervisor takes care of disciplinary matters according to the Institute's internal regulations.

As for the Administrative Council, it gives advice and formulates recommendations on all important questions concerning the smooth running of the establishment. The council, presided over by the Minister of Education, is composed of representatives from each Ministry, the Director of the Civil Service, and such experts whom the President considers useful to invite. In addition, the Director

of Higher Education and the Director and Secretary-General of the Institute are automatically members. The Secretary-General acts as secretary to the Council. This body is by no means a purely formal organization. It meets at least once a year to evaluate results, elaborate or revise the teaching programmes and to assist the Director in his administrative tasks.

## 2. The Training Programmes

The mission of the RILA is a double one: to train civil servants and junior and senior magistrates, and also to complete the professional training of magistrates and bureaucrats already employed in the various administrative services. The training of civil servants and magistrates is undertaken by means of programmes at two levels of instruction:

- (i) The Secondary Cycle (series B) of three years of study is divided into two specialized sections: Public Administration and Judiciary, after an initial year of general training.
- (ii) The Higher Cycle (series A), for which the programme has been extended from three to four years since October 1971, is divided into three sections: Public Administration, Economics and Finance, and Magistrature. This distribution is subject to modifications in accordance with the needs of relevant ministerial departments. (It is for this reason that from October 1972 the Judiciary section of Series B will be eliminated from the programme since the Ministry of Justice will recruit no further than the magistrates after 1974.)

The four years of study are made up as follows: two years of general training common to all sections, followed by two years of specialization within the three sections. At the end of the third year, a project of three months is undertaken in the departments which the students are destined to join so as to give them experience of the real work which awaits them. After the project the students write a short dissertation which must be defended at the end of the fourth year in front of a jury consisting of the lecturer who supervises the project and the head of the department in which it is undertaken.

The institute also accepts personnel from the country's administrative services who are admitted to undertake a programme of in-service training for orientation of not longer than eighteen months.



### 3. Admission

The Institute is open to all Lao citizens of either sex who fulfill the following general conditions:

- (i) Having no past criminal or prison record.
- (ii) Being physically fit for active administrative service.

The admission of regular students is decided by competitive examinations, the number of places to be filled each year being fixed by the Ministry of Education. The examinations take place at the beginning of October in Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet and Pakse.

The examination for entry into the Secondary Cycle is open to candidates who have obtained the BEPC or DEPC (diploma awarded after four years of secondary schooling). Candidates must be between the ages 16 and 23. For candidates already in the civil service and aged under 33 years, the Certificate of Primary Studies (awarded at the conclusion of primary schooling) is required, and they must have served at least four years in the administration. The examinations consist of a paper on general culture written in French, an essay in Lao on traditions and customs of Laos, and a paper on Lao history written in French. These papers constitute a test of admissibility. Successful candidates in these papers must in addition take an entrance examination which consists of a commentary on a subject of general culture followed by an interview with the jury.

The examination for entry into the Higher Cycle is open to any candidate who has completed the course of study in the top class in the secondary school system. The age limit is from 18 to 23 years. Members of the civil service who hold the BEPC can sit the examination under the same conditions as for the Secondary Cycle. The test of admissibility consists of a paper on general culture written in French, an essay in Lao, and a paper on contemporary history. The entrance examination follows the same lines as that for Series B candidates. Finally, candidates having passed the Baccalaureat or the diploma of the RILA (cum laude) are admitted automatically.

#### 4. The Teaching

For the two cycles the common base of general training (one year in the Secondary Cycle, two years in the Higher Cycle) is intended to introduce the students to the principles of law and political economy. At the end of the first year of the Secondary Cycle, and of the second year of the Higher Cycle, the students follow different courses according to section, with the aim of acquiring a more specialized knowledge.

Concerning methods of work, stress is laid on the concrete and rational nature of the students' work, and this has allowed a reduction in the amount to be learnt by pure memorizing which leaves few marks in the mind once the examinations are left behind. Instead, tests requiring personal reflections are given, which stimulate the student's intelligence and mould his judgment. For this reason several half-days are devoted to practical work requiring study of Lao case-histories and also to debates, special lectures and use of the library. The library, though still modest in size with only a thousand volumes, today constitutes the centre of documentation on law and economics which Laos had previously lacked.

The lecturing staff are in the majority of Lao origin (nineteen out of thirty-three part-time lecturers) and these include experts in both practice and theory. They have in common a knowledge of Lao law and of the particular needs of Laos. The full-time staff, fourteen in number, are provided by the French Mission for Economic and Technical Aid (META).

#### 5. Passing-out Qualifications

At the end of each year the students undergo an examination consisting of written and oral tests to which are added the marks acquired in tests during the year, as well as marks for practical work and for work in class. Those students who have an overall average of ten out of twenty are admitted into the next class. Only a limited number are permitted to repeat a year, and those with an average of less than eight out of twenty are excluded from the Institute.

At the end of each cycle, those students who have passed the final examination are awarded the Diploma of the institute, classed according to cycle. Their entry into the various administrative



or Judicial services is determined according to their final grades. Each year the French META offers to the best students scholarships for further study at the IIPA in Paris. Administration personnel admitted for in-service training receive a certificate of attestation for the courses undertaken.

#### IMPROVEMENTS IN MATERIAL CONDITIONS

Parallel to the structural reforms of the Institute's programmes, conditions of study have gradually improved, thanks to a very considerable programme of site extension and to the aid of friendly countries. Thus in 1966 a dormitory with seventy beds, as well as office space for the administration, was put up with the aid of the Colombo Plan. In February 1972 work was completed on an auditorium, two class-rooms and the Director's office. The whole, at a cost of US \$100,000, was provided by META

#### ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Thirteen years after its foundation, the RILA can be proud of having trained a large number of the nation's administrative and legal personnel. In the early years about twenty, and more recently, around fifty, civil servants and magistrates have passed out of the Institute annually.

This statement in no way signifies that the School is content to sit back in foolish optimism and accept the congratulations and respect which it is accorded. On the contrary, the accent is now being placed on the need to improve structures and teaching methods continually with a view to adapting these increasingly to the realities of the country's situation.

An important programme of training for permanent lecturers of Lao origin constitutes, as we have seen, the basis for the reform of 1971. But already, with the help of the Asia Foundation, the RILA has plans to send some of the best students of 1971/72 class to Thailand (Thammasat University) and to Canada. On the other hand the RILA will continue to rely considerably on part-time lecturers who offer the invaluable advantage of introducing the students at first hand to the practical side of the work which they will subsequently be undertaking. A special effort is being planned for the training of future cadres in the economic and financial services since the need for qualified personnel in this field is particularly great. This effort is being supplemented by a policy of acquisition for the library of several hundred works in law and political economy.

Thus, along the path which it is following, the RILA must conserve the spirit which has been its own since the beginning, and which aims to train all the future higher civil servants and magistrates of the country. Through the variety of its courses, it provides for each student a specialization which gives him the maximum opportunity for carrying out effectively and competently the tasks which await him on leaving the Institute.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

December 30, 1974

TO : See Distribution Below

FROM : Hunter A. Fitzgerald, HRDD *H.A. Fitzgerald*

SUBJECT: Royal Institute of Law and Administration

Dr. Tenh Teso, former Director of the Royal Institute of Law and Administration and current Director of Planning MoE, wrote an informative essay concerning the Royal Institute of Law and Administration. The report was published in the book Development of Higher Education in Southeast Asia: Problems and Issues. It was published by the Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development which held its annual conference in Laos from December 14 to December 18, 1974.

The Royal Institute has not been involved in any USAID funded projects; however, since the objective of RILA is to train administrative cadres as well as junior and senior magistrates, it follows that those who are concerned with the development process should have a knowledge of the school. In recent years the student body has become a viable force within the country and has provided leadership to other student groups and associations.

Cleared for distribution: *HB*  
Henry Beyda, Chief, HRDD

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