The Professional Status of Taiwanese Primary School Teachers: A Historical Analysis

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1. Introduction

Following the notion of the division of labour argued by Durkheim (1933), Structural-Functionalists contend that professionals fulfill irreplaceable and crucial functions for maintaining social equilibrium and civilization. As a result, they have devoted a great deal of effort to searching for one set of traits that will serve as criteria for judging whether a specific occupation is qualified to claim the status of professional or not (e.g. Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1933; Davis and Moore, 1966; Lieberman, 1964). In contrast, Marxists argue that the development of capitalism significantly enlarges the size of the bureaucratic system, significantly merging most individual practitioners. Alongside this trend, most employees suffer from the impact of proletarianization (Apple, 1990; Braverman, 1974; Connell, 1985; Johnson, 1972; Ozga and Lawn, 1981).

Although these two sociological schools have uncovered different influences of industrial society on practitioners, their predetermined positions may underestimate the influence of social cultures on shaping the professional status of primary school teachers in a given society (Chiang, 1996, 2008a). Some scholars, for example, argue that it is important for comparative

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researchers to recognize the important position of cultural differentiation among individual societies, which generate a profound influence on shaping their own social contexts, and, then, educational systems and contents (Schriewer, 2003). Furthermore, individual cultures are developed within a specific social context so that unique meanings are always embodied within those cultures. Therefore, without awareness of such contexts, it is hard to discover such unique meanings and their interactive relations with the development of educational systems (Hall, 1973; Holmes, 1981).

The history of the industrial movement of Western teachers' associations shows that 'bread and butter' has traditionally been the central concern of teachers. Such a linkage further indicates that when a society bestows high rewards upon teachers, they will develop a strong professional image. If it does not, they will tend to reject the notion of professionalism and employ industrial action to fight for their own interests, as witnessed by the cases of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) (Myers and Myers 1995; Sadker and Sadker 1997; Spring 1994) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) (Barber 1992; Gosden 1972; Tropp 1957). Those associations have conducted long-term direct actions, including strikes and protests against employers, in order to improve the material rewards of their members. Both cases suggest that the degree of broadly defined 'reward' affects the degree of professionalism attached to teachers' status and their reactions towards their collective actions.

In contrast, the influence of Confucianism in Taiwanese education has ensured that teachers are seen as a key element in protecting social morality and social solidarity (Tsurumi, 1977). This has influenced their rewards in Taiwanese society, resulting in them being viewed as professionals and given

high levels of social status, prestige and salary (Chiang, 1996; Kuo, 1988). The interplay of these factors has led to the construction of a very protected context for teachers, and deeply formed their professional ideology. Considering socio-cultural influences, this essay focuses on the historical development of education in Taiwan as it relates to the professional status of primary teachers. Four key phases can be identified. The period from 1624 to 1894 can be seen as the first phase, when the Taiwan educational system assumed its early form. The second phase (1895-1945) occurred when Taiwan was a colony of Japan. The third phase ran from 1945 to 1987, which was broadly the period when the KMT (Kuo Ming Tang Party) government exerted strong centralized control over education. The final phase commenced in 1987 when Martial Law was abolished, and has been marked by a series of education reforms that have devolved some powers to educational institutions.

2. The First Phase: 1624 to 1895

Before 1661, no national system of education existed. Successive European colonial governments were only concerned with their political and economic interests and not with establishing an education system. Education as it then existed assumed its form and control from colonial religious teaching in all-age schools, particularly for adults, though many children attended. Teaching focused on introducing the Bible. When there were insufficient priests, soldiers were engaged to teach (Chiang, 2000).

After 1661, when Taiwan was dominated by Cheng-Gong Jeng who, having failed to defend against Manchuria's invasion which eventually established the Ching Dynasty, moved his troops to Taiwan, education as it then existed had as its primary purpose the creation of a national identity in

opposition to the Ching Dynasty (Chiang, 2001a). Various types of primary school were set up, such as state primary schools (Confucianist schools), private primary schools (Shu-Farng institutes) and state Taiwanese aboriginal primary schools (Tunn-Fan schools). Except for Taiwanese aboriginal primary schools, schools were mainly concerned with the preparation of students for national examinations in order to enable them to become officers or qualify for the rank of literati (Lei, 1980; Wu, 1983). The school curriculum was thus designed to enable students to meet the requirements for selection. Teaching content focused on classic books based on Confucianism which functioned indirectly to reinforce the emperor's power. School textbooks included the Four Books (the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Analects and the Books of Mencius) and the Five Classics (the Confucian canon comprising the Books of Changes, the Books of Odes, the Books of History, the Book of Rites and the Spring and Autumn Annals). Because no institutions devoted to teacher education existed before the second phase, the period of Japanese colonisation, well known scholars from Mainland China were recruited as primary school teachers (Chiang, 2000).

In order to meet the demands of these examinations, school lessons were divided into reading, repetition, calligraphy and composition, and their contents focused on the Four Books and the Five Classics. Teachers thus exercised very little control over what was taught. They were like skilled technicians, implementing someone else's policy. Teaching was little more than exercises in drill (Tsurumi, 1977). While primary schools existed throughout this period, very few children had the chance to attend them, particularly, after the war of 1683 when Taiwan returned to the control of the Ching Dynasty, who treated the island as a source of criminals (Wang, 1978).

Schooling was confined to those who had wealth and power (Tsurumi, 1977). Although this situation was slightly improved later, the connection between schooling and elite status was not changed until the period of Japanese colonisation.

3. The Second Phase: 1895 to 1945

After the Sino-Japan Jia-Wu War in 1894, Taiwan became a Japanese Colony in 1895. In general, its early educational policy followed the 1890 Education Order issued by the Emperor of Japan, Mutsuhito (1867-1912), the purposes of which were to enlighten, discipline and indoctrinate Taiwanese people. Alongside the creation of subjects loyal to the Emperor, Japan intended to inculcate Japanese ways of life and thought into Taiwanese society (Jang, 1979). In other words, education was intended to serve the government's political interests. All state primary school teachers had to be appointed by the Taiwan Viceroy government in order to achieve this intention (Tsurumi, 1977).

However, a formal primary school policy was not introduced until 1898, because the Japanese Colonial Government had first concentrated on gaining an understanding of Taiwanese culture and language (Wu, 1983). During that period, the first Taiwan Viceroy, Akashi Motojiro, was primarily engaged in suppressing the Taiwanese people's opposition to Japanese authority. In response to this situation, the head of education bureau, Izawa, introduced an assimilation policy in which education came to be seen as a weapon in this struggle. In July 1898, the Taiwan Viceroy issued the State Primary School (Gong Shyue schools) Order which established a system of state primary schools. The new system was funded by the local government. However, the

order required that all primary school heads be Japanese (Wu, 1983).

Izawa saw the teaching of Japanese language and ethics as a key means to transform Taiwanese people into Japanese subjects. Thus, the 1898 State Primary School Order introduced ethics, Japanese language, classical Chinese (composition, reading and calligraphy), arithmetic, music and gymnastics as the elements in a six-year state primary school curriculum (Tsurumi, 1977; Wu, 1983). In response to the assimilation policy, spoken and written Japanese were seen as a top priority in the school curriculum. The Taiwan Viceroy's textbooks, teachers' manuals and instruction manuals and other classroom materials were published and supplied to Taiwanese state primary schools, paralleling the use of school textbooks published in Japan in Japanese state primary schools (Chiang, 2001b; Wu, 1983). The introduction of such a national textbook policy can be seen as a hallmark of centralized control over education in terms of determining what was taught in classrooms and how. Education became part of the state's mechanism to achieve its political interests. Teachers were required to carry out the assimilation and other policies stipulated by the Taiwanese Viceroy.

The 1898 State Primary School Order, however, increased the demand for Taiwanese teachers, with the result that the establishment of Teachers' Schools was announced in July 1898. Besides meeting the objectives of the 1898 Order, it was also argued that the introduction of teacher education was needed because it was difficult to recruit Japanese teachers to Taiwan, given the severe shortage of primary school teachers in Japan, and the fact that their salaries were too high (Wu, 1983). These schools offered three-year teacher training courses to primary school graduates. Subjects included ethics, Japanese language, composition, reading, arithmetic, bookkeeping,

geography, history, science, calligraphy, music, gymnastics and pedagogy. With this introduction of teacher education, the Taiwan Viceroy explicitly exerted its centralized control over teacher supply by requiring that it appointed all state primary school teachers, so as to ensure implementation of the assimilation policy for transforming Taiwanese to Japanese.

To consolidate further the Taiwan Viceroy's centralized policy, private primary schools were to be terminated as soon as possible. Accompanying the 1898 State Primary School Order, the Taiwan Viceroy regularly sent detailed guidelines to local authorities against which to check private primary schools. Private primary school textbooks also had to be approved. In this repressive political climate, private primary schools constantly faced a threat of closure if they did not obey the local authority's instructions, so it was also hard for private primary teachers to exercise real control over the selection of teaching materials. Similarly, their control over classroom teaching was also vulnerable to close supervision from the local authority (Tsurumi, 1977).

In July 1902, Teachers' Schools were divided into two sections: Section A for Japanese students and Section B for Taiwanese students (Chiang, 1996, 2001b). The duration of courses in Section A was shortened to one year and three months, and one year in February 1905 and December 1907 respectively in order to reduce expenditure and to cultivate more Japanese teachers. On the other hand, the duration of Section B courses was extended to four years because Taiwanese students needed more time to master the Japanese language.

In March 1910, sections A and B in Teachers' Schools were reformed as Taiwanese Primary School Teachers' Sections A and B in response to the rapid growth in the numbers of Taiwanese primary school students, from 157 in 1897

to 5,412 in 1907 (Wu, 1983). Subjects included ethics, Japanese language, composition, reading, arithmetic, bookkeeping, geography, history, science, calligraphy, music, gymnastics and pedagogy. Later, a new Japanese Primary School Teachers' Section was created expressly for Japanese student teachers. The course was extended from four years to six years.

In 1914, the Taiwan Viceroy issued the Taiwanese Aboriginal Primary School Order, which decreed the establishment of State Aboriginal Primary Schools (Tuu-Fan schools) to extend the influence of the assimilation policy to Taiwanese aborigines. Thus, a three-tier-primary-school system was created, each catering to a different kind of student: Japanese students, Taiwanese students and Taiwanese aboriginal students. In 1919, the 7th Taiwan Viceroy, Den Kenjiro, insisted that education was a vital way to transform Taiwanese people into pure Japanese people (Tsurumi, 1977). He demanded the opening of more primary schools for Taiwanese students, issuing a Taiwanese Education Order that led to the creation of a more comprehensive system of primary education. In response to this more comprehensive system of primary schooling and Taiwanese people's increasing concern with improving teacher quality, teachers' schools were divided into two sections, preparatory and main. The one-year preparatory section took Taiwanese state primary school graduates. The subjects that they took were moral culture, Japanese language, Chinese, Mathematics, fine art, music, vocation and gymnastics. The main four-year course took Taiwanese students who possessed the preparatory section qualification. Additionally, subjects taught were education, history, geography, science and business. In order to meet the immediate need for more primary school teachers through this more extensive system of primary schooling, Taiwanese State Primary School Teacher Training Sections were

established both in Taipei and Tainan, in Teachers' Schools which offered one year courses (Wu, 1983). These were later extended to two years in 1933, the same duration as Teachers' Schools in Japan (Tsurumi, 1977). Subjects were moral culture, education, Japanese language, Chinese, geography, mathematics, science, housekeeping, handicraft, fine art, music and athletics.

In 1937, classical Chinese was banished from the state primary school curriculum (Tsurumi, 1977; Wu, 1983), and students were prohibited from speaking the Taiwanese language (Wang, 1978). Den Kenjiro also believed that compulsory education had to be brought in as soon as possible. However, it was not introduced until 1941 because of financial considerations (Wang, 1978). The introduction of compulsory education through the 1941 Primary School Order made all private primary schools (e.g. Shu-Farng institutes) illegal. It also unified Japanese state primary schools and Taiwanese state primary schools into state primary schools. Following unification, differences between Taiwanese Teacher Education and Japanese Teacher Education were extinguished.

In 1943 when Teachers' Schools in Japan became the equivalent of a three-year specialized college, the Taiwan Viceroy upgraded them all to the level of junior college, from which students normally graduated at the age of twenty (Tsurumi, 1977). The two-year preparatory section took advanced primary school graduates normally at the age of fifteen, making it equivalent to junior high school. The three-year main section took preparatory section graduates or high school graduates, normally at the age of eighteen. The Taiwan Viceroy also issued the Woman Teacher Education Order to allow Teachers' Schools to educate female teachers. This change arose because of the shortage of male teachers in the period of the Pacific War (Tsurumi, 1977).

Subjects for male students in the preparatory section were civics, science, mathematics, physical exercise, skills and foreign language. Beside these subjects, female students also took housekeeping. In the main section, education and vocational studies were added for male students and education for female students. By 1945, there were six Teachers' Junior Colleges (Central Daily News, 1995).

4. The Third Phase: 1945 to 1987

After the Pacific War in 1945, Taiwan was governed by the KMT (Chinese) government. The KMT government continued the centralized control over education experienced during the period of Japanese colonization. In 1949, when the Chinese civil war ended, the KMT government moved to Taiwan and this control became even tighter. Education was now viewed as a key means to construct Taiwanese people's national identity in opposition to the Chinese communist party. Primary schooling, the primary school curriculum, teacher education and teacher supply were all dominated by the KMT government.

The development of primary education after 1945 led to fundamental changes. A unification of the primary school system meant that there was only one kind of state primary school. State Taiwanese aboriginal primary schools were integrated into state primary schools. Compulsory primary schooling was abandoned by the KMT government as it was not yet established in Mainland China. The National Curriculum Policy was introduced in 1945 to replace the different kinds of primary school curriculum developed in the colonial period. The 1945 National Curriculum Policy also contained the National Curriculum Standard Regulations that embodied the details of the National Curriculum

Policy. Primary school subjects were group training, music, athletics, civics, history, geography, arithmetic, Chinese, social studies, general knowledge, natural science, organized group play, and painting and crafts. This curriculum was designed to end the influence of Japanese culture and to develop national identity in Taiwan. The KMT government also extended legislation dating from 1932, by which all state primary school teachers had to be appointed by the government. The 1932 legislation also allowed the KMT government to control the development of teacher education and teacher supply and introduced free (no-fee) teacher education to Taiwan. Because the 1932 Act defined Teachers' Schools as being at the level of high schools, all existing Teachers' Junior Colleges were down-graded from the level of junior college to the level of high school (Her, 1980; Yang, 1981) and now took junior high school graduates. The curriculum for teachers in training included Chinese, Mandarin, mathematics, geography, history, natural history, chemistry, physics, athletics, hygienic, civics, fine art, music, introduction to education, the management of education, teaching methods, teaching materials, and general psychological testing and statistics. In order to overcome the extreme shortage of teachers caused by the expulsion of Japanese teachers, two more Teachers' Schools were set up in Shing Jwu City and Ping Tong City, located in the north and south of Taiwan respectively. The Taiwan Provincial Taipei Female Teachers' School was also established in order to improve and extend female teacher education.

In 1946, the Taiwan Provincial Council re-introduced the National Textbook Policy because in the minds of Councilors no difference existed between Mainland China and Taiwan (Department of Taiwan Provincial Education, 1984; Her, 1980). The Taiwan Textbook Shop was also established

to supply primary school textbooks, a list of which was issued for supply only by central government or KMT owned book stores, such as Jeng Jang and Kai Ming (Her, 1980). In 1947, the Chinese Constitution was passed by the main legislature, the People's Representative Congress. The Taiwan provincial government, then, issued the Compulsory Primary Education Act (Ministry of Education, 1985). In response to the introduction of compulsory primary education, the Textbook Supply Committee of Primary Schools was then established to supply national textbooks (Lii, 1984). This Committee was later reformed as the Edition and Translation Committee in July 1947, and was charged with the revision of the primary school curriculum. A new primary school curriculum was then introduced in 1948, which defined nine school subjects: civics, music, athletics, Mandarin, arithmetic, social studies, natural science, fine art and handicraft.

In 1949, the KMT government moved to Taiwan following its defeat in the civil war against the Chinese communist party. This led to tighter control over the primary school curriculum. In 1953, primary school textbooks began to be supplied by the National Edition and Translation Institution controlled by the Ministry of Education (Yu, 1987). In 1960, Teachers' Schools were elevated to three-year Junior Teachers' Colleges (equal to the age group of twenty one) in response to rapid economic growth in Taiwan, and to improve teacher quality (Chiang, 1996, 2001b). Later in 1963, they were reformed as five-year Junior Teachers' Colleges, taking junior high school graduates (Lii, 1984). Three years had come to be thought too short to offer proper training, and three-year junior colleges were unable to recruit academically excellent high school students, whose first choice was university. Moreover, they produced about 3,000 graduates more than the estimated need of about 1,000 teachers

per year (Lii, 1984). The five-year teacher college curriculum was composed of General, Professional and Optional subjects. General subjects were the Three Principles, Chinese, Mandarin, mathematics, civics, history, geography, natural science, chemistry, physics, English, music, fine art, handicraft, athletics and military training. Professional subjects were logic, introduction to education, child development and guidance, educational psychology, educational sociology, the introduction of curriculum, teaching materials and methods, psychological and educational measurement and testing, primary school administration, the history of education, comparative elementary education, educational philosophy, audio-visual education, health education, research of language and literature teaching, research of arts and crafts teaching, research of music teaching, research of natural science teaching and practice in teaching. All students had to finish a total of between 260 and 280 credits in five years.

Nine years of compulsory education was instituted as a minimum requirement for all students, commencing in September 1968. In response to this, the National Curriculum Standard Regulation was revised and re-addressed the importance of national identity in opposition to the Chinese communist party. The overt political purpose of education was later intensified, for example, when in the following year primary school textbooks were published and supplied only by the National Edition and Translation Institution in order to unify them (You, 1993).

The Teacher Education Act introduced in 1987 raised all Teachers' Junior Colleges to the level of college or university in response to increasing pressure to improve teacher quality and global trends in teacher education (Chen, 1995; Lin, 1981; Yu, 1979). The curriculum was divided into three

sections: general, profession, and special subjects. Every student was required to complete 148 credits in four years, 74 (50%) for general subjects, 44 (29.7%) for professional subjects and 30 (20.3%) for special subjects.

5. The Fourth Phase: from 1987

It was a milestone for Taiwan in history when Martial Law was abolished in 1987. This new situation forced Taiwan to move into a new era, a democratic society in which people demanded more voice and called on the central government to conduct a series of educational reforms. In September 1988, because of increasing pressure from legislators, the Ministry of Education announced a reduction in the school textbook monopoly by the National Edition and Translation Institution (Bulletin of the Ministry of Education, 1982/165). In February 1989, the Ministry of Education further permitted primary school teachers to use different editions of school textbooks (Bulletin of the Minister of Education, 1989/170).

On 2 May 1989, the Minister of Education set up the Primary School Curriculum Reform Committee (Kuo, 1994). In September 1993, based on its suggestions, the Ministry of Education introduced a New National Curriculum Policy, which went into operation in 1996. This policy modified the existing primary school curriculum and reduced the range of materials covered by primary school textbooks. It also introduced some teaching periods over which primary teachers were able to have full control and for which they were permitted to devise their own teaching materials and their own assessments.

Although the New Right started to become a dominant influence in western countries such as the USA and the UK in the 1980s (Chiang, 1997, 2008b), its influence in Taiwan didn’t emerge until the 1990s, because of the constraints imposed by Martial Law, which was abolished in 1987, as noted

previously. However, the extension of the New Right's influence to Taiwanese teacher education in the 1990s is manifest in the 1994 Teachers' Education Act.

In February 1994, because of dissatisfaction with the monopoly of primary school teacher supply by teacher colleges, the Teachers' Education Act was passed in the Legislative Yuan, destroying this monopoly. Although, the Act maintains the Government's right to appoint state primary school teachers, other higher education institutions are now allowed to provide teacher education. The policy of non-fee paying teacher education was also abolished. In December 1999, the Ministry of Education introduced the Post Graduate Certificate Program for higher educational institutes to provide teacher education for university graduates who would like to gain a teacher certificate. Those changes have produced a profound impact on teacher supply, shifting from a slight shortage to oversupply. This oversupply has intensified since the early 2000s as witnessed by the fact that very few graduates with teacher certificates are currently able to become primary school teachers. This phenomenon has brought in a new form of political pressure that has left the central government with no choice but to introduce new policies from the middle of 2000s directed at lessening the size of the teacher education market. As noted previously, the acceptance by the central government of the ideology of the New Right in the 1990s, has resulted in considerable political pressure, driving the state to implement a new ideology that is not free-market but planned under its direction. This new ideology has generated a series of new policies. The Ministry of Education, for example, initiated a new policy in 2004, cutting the capacity of Centers for Teacher Education in all higher educational institutes by 50%. In 2005, the Ministry of

Education announced a counter-market policy – that if teachers' colleges agreed to cut their intake of student teachers by 50%, they could upgrade to the level of teachers' university. Without substantial resistance, the existing teachers' colleges accepted this political arrangement and renewed their titles as teachers' universities in August 2005. Although these actions have greatly reduced the scale of teacher education, the problem of teacher oversupply hasn't been alleviated significantly. In other words, it has now become extremely difficulty to become a primary school teacher. Although this competitive selection mechanism has ensured the professional quality of primary school teachers, the employment rate of graduates as primary school teachers is very low – less than 3% from 2005 to 2008. This phenomenon indicates that primary schools have become professional, in the public's eyes. Generally speaking, Taiwanese primary school teachers have traditionally enjoyed a much higher degree of social status than their Western counterparts. This phenomenon is due to the influence of Confucianism, which bestows higher levels of psychical and material rewards upon them.

The influence of Chinese traditional culture has ensured that teachers have enjoyed a high level of social status in Chinese society (Lee, 1972; Liou, 1973, Lin 1992). In ancient Chinese society, there was a close relationship between the Emperor and the teacher. As a national leader, the Emperor had to behave as a model for his people, to whom he was also a teacher. This symbolic meaning gradually extended to both senior officials and teachers and their relationships. A very high level of social status thus adhered to teachers who were defined as one of the five superior-social-status groups (God, the Earth, the Emperor, the Family and the Teacher). They had an important symbolic position to sustain as guardians of social morality. They had to

possess a high level of academic knowledge, as well as sound social attributes, in order to influence other people.

This high social status was reinforced by Confucius's life and example. In the Chinese tradition, it has been generally agreed that he was the most remarkable scholar of the past two thousand years or more, as exemplified by the Four Books (Lee, 1977; Liou, 1973). Confucianism achieved an intense and extensive influence on Chinese culture. Furthermore, because of his long-term contribution to schooling, particularly as an inspiration for the movement for public education, he has been regarded as an icon of social equality and social morality. People tend to extend this symbolic meaning to school teachers. Teachers are thus expected, like Confucius, to have an important influence on maintaining or improving social morality. The declaration of the 28th of September, his birthday, as Teachers' Day in Taiwan indicates the length of his symbolic shadow on our school teachers.

During the colonial period, from 1894 to 1945, Taiwanese teachers continued to have a very high level of social status. This was mainly because the Taiwan Viceroy provided only two routes for academically excellent students: medicine or primary school teaching (Tsurumi, 1977; Wu, 1983). To become a teacher was extremely difficult (Her, 1980). J.T. Wu also argued that Teachers' Schools not only developed professionals but also leaders for Taiwanese society (see Wu, 1983). They thus constituted a social elite. Although the selection has been not quite so restrictive since 1945, passing the entrance examination was still very difficult. For example, only 6.3% of male and 3% of female examination candidates passed in 1966 (Lin, 1980). This academic selection further contributed to the high social standing of primary school teachers (Chen, 1992; Her and Liou, 1969; Lin, 1971; Lin, 1992;

Win and Chan, 1979; Taiwan Normal University, 1980).

The Taiwanese economy grew more rapidly from the 1960s, while still embodying much traditional Chinese and Japanese culture. Teachers no longer serve as the only knowledge suppliers. People are able to acquire knowledge in other ways, and an open society encourages people to develop multiple and pluralistic values, concepts and thoughts. In such a society, teachers' social status is likely to decline, and Taiwan has not been an exception to this trend. Nevertheless, Taiwanese teachers still have a higher social standing than their Western counterparts (Lin, 1980) and are perceived to exert a significant influence upon social morality. This is recognized, for example, by the annual presidential speech in appreciation of teachers' contribution to national development on Teachers' Day (Bulletin of the Ministry of Education, 1979/57; Bulletin of the Ministry of Education, 1980/70; Bulletin of the Ministry of Education, 1981/81).

Another piece of solid evidence to document the professional status of Taiwanese primary school teachers is their salary, which is much higher than that of civil servants. Teachers' salaries are determined by central government policy. Each year a central government budget plan specifies levels of the teachers' salaries. It is worth recording that primary school teachers' salaries are tax free. As well as receiving a twelve-month salary, at the end of the lunar year they have bonus of one and half months salary, which is standard within Taiwanese society. Promotion is partly determined on an appraisal process conducted each academic year. Most teachers are rated as 'excellent'. Once they have achieved this 'excellent' rating, their salaries jump to a higher level of the scale and the holders are given an extra bonus equivalent to one or two month’s salary. Two months of extra salary are given only to senior teachers,

on top of their ordinary teachers' salary scale

Salaries are based on a scale which takes into account post, school location, qualification and the length of teaching experience. This gives rise to a wide range of salaries. At present, the top levels of these scales offer some senior teachers other than school administrative staff, including the head teacher, department heads and assistants, about two thousand pounds per month, which is more than double a new teacher's salary of about nine hundred pounds per month.

In order to encourage teachers' professional development, teachers' salaries jump to higher scale levels when they achieve further qualifications, based on years of course duration. In relation to the bottom level, junior college graduates, Ph.D., masters' and first degree holders advance two, four or two extra levels on these scales, respectively.

6. Conclusion

The historical development of education in Taiwan suggests that education has been seen as an essential part of the ideological weaponry of central government. By and large, central government has determined who and what is taught, as well as how, as witnessed by the introduction of the National Curriculum Policy and the National Textbook Policy. Within this general framework, then, Taiwanese primary school teachers have been positioned traditionally as implementers of policy, and deliverers of curriculum content through classroom practices largely determined at the centre. The state also extended its control over teacher education and teacher supply. Nevertheless, when social changes occur, such as in 1987 when Martial Law was abolished, new beliefs may develop and drive the state to change its

means of domination, as witnessed by the adoption of the ideology of the New Right to initiate a free market for teacher education. Although this free market policy pushed teacher education institutes into a competitive arena, the problem of teacher oversupply became critical after 2000. This led to a considerable degree of political pressure on the state to reverse its direction back to a planned mode, the results of which are seen in the introduction of a series of policies to shrink the size of the teacher education market. These changes indicate that there is an interactive relation between the state and the social situation. Perhaps, the state has legitimate authority to initiate educational reforms, the effects of which are able to create new social/political situations which leave the state with no choice but to amend its way of domination. Such an interactive relation also suggests that the state cannot be viewed as an independent dominator with full power, but rather as a flexible initiator to meet social needs.

Overall, although, unlike like traditional professionals – medical practitioners, lawyers or engineers – Taiwanese primary school teachers do not possess a great degree of latitude in the conduct of their profession, they have long enjoyed a much higher level of professional status than their Western counterparts. Such a phenomenon is deeply connected with the influence of Chinese culture, which positions teachers as social guardians, protecting social morality and solidarity. Such a powerful social value, then, bestows on Taiwanese primary school teachers a high level of social status, prestige and salary. Despite a series of changes in teacher education and the impact of industrialization, their professional status hasn't significantly declined. The above analysis proves that socio-cultural influences need to be taken into account if researchers wish to gain a complete picture of teaching

professionalism.

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