

**THE CHANGING ROLE OF CHINESE LANGUAGE  
SCHOOLS IN THAILAND BEFORE AND AFTER THE 1990s**



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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Thai Studies

Faculty of Arts

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2002

ISBN 974-17-1919-1

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การเปลี่ยนแปลงบทบาทของโรงเรียนสอนภาษาจีน  
ในประเทศไทยช่วงก่อนและหลังทศวรรษ 1990

น.ส. มาริสา โคตานี

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาอักษรศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาไทยศึกษา

คณะอักษรศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2545

ISBN 974-17-1919-1

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Thesis Title: THE CHANGING ROLE OF CHINESE LANGUAGE  
SCHOOLS IN THAILAND BEFORE AND AFTER THE  
1990s

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มาริสา โคตานี : การเปลี่ยนแปลงบทบาทของโรงเรียนสอนภาษาจีนในประเทศไทย ช่วงก่อนและ  
หลังทศวรรษ 1990 (THE CHANGING ROLE OF CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN  
THAILAND BEFORE AND AFTER THE 1990S) อ.ที่ปรึกษา : อาจารย์วรศักดิ์ มหัทธโนบล,  
อ.ที่ปรึกษาร่วม : รศ.ดร.ประพิณ มโนมัยวิบูลย์ 90 หน้า ISBN 974-17-1919-1

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาบทบาทของโรงเรียนสอนภาษาจีนในประเทศไทย  
ในช่วงก่อนและหลังทศวรรษที่ 1990 การศึกษานี้เป็นการศึกษาเชิงวิเคราะห์ในด้านเศรษฐกิจ  
การเมือง และวัฒนธรรม รวมถึงการตรวจสอบอิทธิพลของการศึกษาภาษาจีนที่มีต่ออัตลักษณ์ของชาติ  
พันธุ์จีนในประเทศไทย ตัวเลขและข้อมูลในการศึกษานี้ ได้มาจากการสัมภาษณ์และการสำรวจ  
ออกแบบสอบถามตาม “โรงเรียนภาษาจีน” ในกรุงเทพมหานคร 3 แห่ง รวมทั้งสิ้น 400 ชุด

การศึกษาบ่งชี้ว่า ในช่วงก่อนทศวรรษที่ 1990 โรงเรียนสอนภาษาจีนมีบทบาทในการส่งเสริม  
และปูพื้นฐานทางวัฒนธรรมและอัตลักษณ์แบบจีนของชาติพันธุ์จีนในประเทศไทย และเนื่องจาก  
ในขณะนั้นการเรียนการสอนภาษาจีนถูกรัฐบาลไทยควบคุมอย่างเข้มงวด ทำให้บุพการีชาวจีนตัด  
สินใจที่จะอนุรักษ์วัฒนธรรมจีนและภาษาจีน โดยการส่งบุตรหลานของตนไปเรียนภาษาจีนที่เปิด  
ขึ้นอย่างไม่เป็นทางการตามบ้านส่วนตัวของชาวจีนและเรียกการเรียนวิธีนี้ว่า “เรียนพิเศษ”

จากการสำรวจแบบสอบถาม พบว่า ทศนคติของนักเรียนที่มีต่อโรงเรียนสอนภาษาจีนเปลี่ยน  
แปลงไปอย่างมากหลังทศวรรษที่ 1990 ในช่วงนี้ผู้คนเริ่มให้ความสำคัญต่อการประยุกต์ใช้ภาษาจีน  
กลางมากขึ้น การเปลี่ยนแปลงนี้เป็นผลมาจากการเติบโตทางเศรษฐกิจของจีนแผ่นดินใหญ่ ในช่วง  
ทศวรรษที่ 1980 ในช่วงทศวรรษที่ผ่านมา ผู้คนโดยเฉพาะเยาวชนไทยเชื้อสายจีนได้เห็นคุณค่าและ  
ความสำคัญของภาษาจีนกลางเพิ่มมากขึ้น จุดสำคัญก็คือ เยาวชนไทยเชื้อสายจีนต่างๆ เหล่านี้อาจ  
พัฒนาอัตลักษณ์ความเป็นจีนผ่านการสัมผัสกับวัฒนธรรมจีนและแบบอย่างที่ดีในโรงเรียนสอน  
ภาษาจีน และเนื่องจากอัตลักษณ์แบบจีนซึ่งเป็นอัตลักษณ์ที่ถูกสร้างขึ้นใหม่ มีแนวโน้มต่างไป  
จากอัตลักษณ์ของชาวจีนอพยพในช่วงแรก ดังนั้น “ความเป็นจีน” ในหมู่นชนเชื้อสายจีนในประเทศไทย  
ไทยอาจจะเปลี่ยนไปในอนาคต

หลักสูตร	ไทยศึกษา	ลายมือชื่อนิสิต.....
สาขาวิชา	ไทยศึกษา	ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา.....
ปีการศึกษา	2545	ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา (ร่วม).....

## 438-080-542-2 : MAJOR THAI STUDIES

KEY WORDS : CHINESE LANGUAGE / THAI-CHINESE / LANGUAGE SCHOOL / EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM / ETHNIC IDENTITY

MARISA KOTANI : THE CHANGING ROLE OF CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN THAILAND BEFORE AND AFTER THE 1990S. THESIS ADVISOR : AJARN VORASAKDI MAHATDHANOBOL. THESIS CO-ADVISOR : ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PRAPIN MANOMAIVIBOOL, Ph.D. 90 PP. ISBN 974-17-1919-1

The purpose of this thesis is to study the role of Chinese language schools in Thailand before and after the 1990s. The study covers analytic discussion in terms of economics, politics and culture. This thesis also attempts to examine the influence of Chinese language study on the identity of ethnic Chinese. The figures and data contained within this study were obtained through interviews and a questionnaire survey conducted in three Chinese language schools in Bangkok, of which 400 responses were collected.

The study identifies that before the 1990s the Chinese language schools served symbolically to enhance cultural groundings of ethnic Chinese in Thailand. Since Chinese language education was strictly controlled by the Thai government at that time, Chinese parents were highly determined to preserve Chinese culture and language by sending their children to informal Chinese language schools, which were usually private houses of volunteer Chinese.

The questionnaire survey shows that the attitudes of students attending Chinese language schools changed dramatically after the 1990s. People started to see the practical importance of studying Standard Chinese. This change is mainly attributed to Mainland China's economic growth during the 1980s. Within the past decade people especially young ethnic Chinese have shown a growing interest in the substantial value of Standard Chinese. The point is that those young ethnic Chinese possibly develop their Chinese identity through exposure to Chinese culture and role models in Chinese language schools. Since the newly produced Chinese identity is potentially different from early Chinese immigrants, "Chineseness" among ethnic Chinese in Thailand may undergo changes in the future.

Program	Thai Studies	Student's signature	.....
Field of Study	Thai Studies	Advisor's signature	.....
Academic Year	2002	Co-Advisor's signature	.....

## Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been achieved without the assistance of many people. I am especially grateful to my advisor, Ajarn Vorasakdi Mahatdhanobol, who gave me much precious advice and encouragement. His valuable guidance enabled me to pursue the research. Also, I would like to express my thanks to Associate Professor Prapin Manomaivibool, who is my co-advisor, for her suggestions and help.

My gratitude due to the Director of the Thai Studies Center, Dr. Sunait, and my thesis committee, Assistant Professor Carina Chotirawe and Assistant Professor Pranee Chokkajitsumpun, for sparing time and providing me with academic support and assistance. I also thank Khun Ann who has always helped me immensely with logistical matters.

Special thanks are due to Directors of the Oriental Cultural Academy, Inter-Continental Institute, Chinese Language Center and Department of Eastern Languages, Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University who allowed me to do research within their facilities. I would also like to thank all the students and individuals who permitted interviews and responded to the questionnaire.

My gratitude goes to Blaine Johnson and Anthony J. Stevenson for proofreading my English grammar. Apart from those already mentioned, I am also grateful to a number of friends in Thai Studies Center and Suksitnives Dormitory who supported and encouraged me whenever I needed it.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents who have always been my best supporters. Without their understanding and backing, it would have been impossible to finish my study here. I hope that the completion of this thesis might in some way repay their favors to me.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

“Chinese languages” are classified amongst the foreign languages taught in Thailand. However, the significance of “Chinese language education” in this country has been special due to the fact that it has been provided mainly for the Chinese themselves or offspring of Chinese immigrants, so called “ethnic Chinese.” The Chinese minority has existed in Thailand for a long time. Chinese traders have been settled in the country since the Sukhothai Period (Smalley 1994: 207).

During the Ayutthaya Dynasty, international trade was active in the ancient capital. At its peak, Ayutthaya had more than 40 international trade partners, and the Chinese were the largest group (Mahatdhanobol 2003: 42). Chinese people supported the king in managing his royal trade monopolies. Some of them were given a peerage. King Taksin, who overthrew the Ayutthaya throne, had a Chinese father. He defeated the Burmese with the help of Chinese from Southeast Thailand (Smalley 1994: 206).

The rate of Chinese migration increased in the early nineteenth century when the Chakri kings encouraged the expansion of trade. The opening of the Thai economy was greatly accelerated in 1855 with the conclusion of the Bowring Treaty, which was arranged between the British and the Thai governments. Chinese people were imported to work as laborers moving goods to and from the port of Bangkok. Some Chinese became middlemen who purchased rice and other products from producers and resold them to exporting firms (Keyes 1997: 5).



Besides the demands from Thailand, natural calamities and wars that plagued Mainland China encouraged Chinese migration. New Chinese immigrants, mostly from Southeastern China, arrived each year, seeking economic security. Some returned home after making some money, others remained in the country and formed Chinese communities (Smalley 1994: 208).

Skinner has estimated that Chinese migration increased from an average of 5.6% per decade for the period between 1850 and 1870 to an average of 12.1% per decade between 1870 and 1900 (Skinner in Keyes 1994: 6). By the middle of the twentieth century approximately 12% of the population of Thailand were either Chinese-born or ethnic Chinese (ibid., 6).

As the Chinese population increased, numerous Chinese schools were established in Thailand. They showed enthusiasm in passing Chinese languages onto their children because the languages were symbols of their ethnic identity. Regarding this point, the anthropological linguist Edward Sapir explains:

...a common speech serves as a peculiarly potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language... "He talks like us" is equivalent to saying "He is one of us" (1960: 16-17).

The number of Chinese schools kept increasing from 1909 until the Constitutional Revolution of 1932. The newly established government after 1932 was concerned that the increasing number of Chinese schools might weaken Thai nationalism. Furthermore, the Postwar Communist scare made Thai-Chinese relations very tense. Under the nationalistic and Anti-Communist policies, the Thai government implemented various measures to suppress Chinese schools. It took almost six decades before the Chinese schools were freed from severe regulations imposed by the Thai government.

This long persecution on Chinese language education accelerated the assimilation of young Chinese into Thai culture. Guskin explained that the denial of Chinese languages, Chinese culture, and Chinese behavior in school forced Chinese students to behave like Thais (1968: 62). Gradually, ethnic Chinese spoke Thai language better than their native Chinese languages. Chirakraisiri even predicted that in the near future, there would be no ethnic Chinese youth (*yawachon chin*) who speak a Chinese language anymore as they receive Thai education (1988: 110).

However, political persecution could not eradicate the Chinese determination to maintain their original languages. Regardless of the Thai government's strict Anti-Chinese language policy, some Chinese parents secretly sent their children to study Chinese a language after school.

Those places that secretly provided Chinese language education to Chinese children were sometimes called "night schools" as they opened in the evening. The government continued to ignore them, as they were regarded less politically dangerous (Caughlin 1960: 150). This informal Chinese language school played an important role in preserving the identity of ethnic Chinese.

The situation of Chinese language education in Thailand changed dramatically around 1990. The end of the Cold War and Mainland China's economic growth after the late 1980s dissipated the Thai government's caution towards the Chinese language education. In 1992, the government allowed the teaching of Standard Chinese in the Thai school system (Ministry of Education, 1992). Along with this, the establishment of private tutorial Chinese language schools was permitted. Secret "night

schools” were replaced by “day light” language schools. More and more people have come to study Chinese languages.

So, how has the situation of Chinese language schools changed after the 1990s, when various regulations over Chinese schools were removed? Have the students’ attitudes towards Chinese language study changed since the 1990s? The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of Chinese language schools before and after the 1990s. The thesis also attempts to consider the influence of Chinese language study on the identity of ethnic Chinese. The figures and data are obtained through interviews and a questionnaire survey conducted in three Chinese language schools in Bangkok. The study will be based on analysis of responses from the interviewees. Since the sampling group is small, the research results may not reflect the entire situation surrounding Chinese language education in Thailand. Generalizations will be based on my assumptions only.

## **Definitions of Terms**

### Chinese languages

Chinese is a family of spoken languages with a single writing system (Smalley 1994: 212). The varieties of Chinese spoken in Thailand can be classified into two categories: the standard form and the non-standard forms of Chinese (Chokkajitsumpun 2001: 146). The Standard Form of Chinese refers to the official spoken language in Mainland China.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it is a Beijing-based regional language, which is sometimes called Mandarin. It will be referred to in this thesis as “Standard Chinese.” The non-standard forms of Chinese refer to the regional languages of Mainland China, except for Standard Chinese. There are five

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<sup>1</sup>Instead of using the term “People’s Republic of China,” the term “Mainland China” will be used, following the Thai term “*chin phendin yai*.”

non-standard forms of Chinese spoken by ethnic Chinese in Thailand: Teochiu, Hakka, Cantonese, Fukien and Hainanese. In this thesis, the term “a Chinese language” will stand for any of the variety of Chinese languages. “Chinese” refers to a cultural tradition, to a written language, and to a family of spoken languages. Individual Chinese languages will be referred to by their individual names. Some call these languages “dialects,” but they are sometimes as different from each other as French is from Italian (Smalley 1994: 212).

### Chinese language schools

There are two types of “Chinese schools” in Thailand. One type of schools uses the formal educational system. The curriculum of this type of schools corresponds to that of elementary schools in Thailand. system, where various subjects are taught in Chinese. The second type is tutorial language schools that use the non-formal educational system. The second type of schools teaches only Chinese languages. The students of the former school type are kindergarten, elementary and secondary school students. The students of the latter school type include all age groups. Before the 1970s, the latter school type was sometimes called “night school<sup>2</sup>” mainly because it was operated at night. Of the two types of Chinese schools, the main subject of this paper is the tutorial language school. The term “Chinese language schools” will be used to show that this type of school is different from Chinese schools in the formal educational system. Nevertheless, in this thesis the term “Chinese schools” refers to both types of schools.

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<sup>2</sup> Some people regard “night schools” (*rongrien piset glang kuun*) as only those acknowledged by the government that accept only adult students. In this paper, “night schools” refer to both those acknowledged schools and secret schools.

## Ethnic Chinese

Legitimately there is no category of “ethnic Chinese” in Thailand because the government has bestowed the equal rights to everyone who has Thai nationality (Suzuki 1996: 115). Thus it is difficult to set an accurate standard capable of distinguishing the “ethnic Chinese” from the Thai.

Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, the Chinese in Thailand have been well mingled with the Thai through intermarriage. That is why there is no exact expression of “ethnic Chinese” in Thai.

Usually the Thai call those descendents of the immigrant Chinese “*khon mii chuasaai chin*,” which literally means a person who has Chinese blood. So, “*khon mii chuasaai chin*” may be racially 100% Chinese or a half Chinese or even a quarter Chinese. In this paper, the term “ethnic Chinese” will be used to express the same meaning as “*khon mii chuasaai chin*.”

## **Conceptual Definitions**

### Chinese Identity

According to Lomatawekul, who studied the ethnic identification of the second generation Chinese in Thailand, the term identification is defined as the “process of affiliation with one or more persons, groups, or institutions, which tend to become models” (1968: 16). Attitudes, values, and other behavior are imitated, and may be internalized by the imitator (ibid.,16).

Wang has presented four types of identities that represent Chinese identity in Southeast Asian countries today: namely, national identity, cultural identity, class identity and ethnic identity, each of which is determined by political, cultural, economical and physical norms respectively (1988: 10,12). He explains that most Chinese may have more

than one identity at the same time and the range of identities differ according to each person (ibid.,11). Of the four types of identity defined by Wang, this paper will focus on cultural identity. The explanation for the four identities is listed as follows:

### *National Identity*

Modern political norms refer to ideas of political loyalty to the state, to the need for commitment to and participation in the tasks of nation-building and, often in the background, to the ideals of democratic rights (ibid.,12)...National identity is now common to the vast majority of Southeast Asian Chinese...but at this stage, it is still regarded as little more than a legal and political identity for public and official use only (ibid.,9).

### *Cultural Identity*

Cultural identity has absorbed the traditional historical identity. ...I prefer a narrower definition of culture which focuses on two kinds of norms. The first are Chinese cultural norms which the Chinese consider binding on them as Chinese....They include the learning of the Chinese written language, the preservation of family ties especially through observing norms about birth, marriage and death, and the support given to clan, district, and other similar organizations which enhance Chinese social solidarity. The second are the modern cultural norms which the Chinese have found useful and necessary to accept. They include educational standard and career patterns outside the Chinese community...(ibid.,9,14).

### *Class Identity*

These refer to modern, rational standards of behavior that influence the conduct of the national economy (overlapping here with political norms) and those standards regulating each group's pursuit of livelihood and profit....In the long run, of course, a strong commitment to class identity could weaken the identities of Southeast Asian Chinese as Chinese. But there are other variables involved. For example, economic success may depend on the persistence of Chinese cultural values and the presence of Chinese ethnic identity and these may override class interests (ibid.,13).

### *Ethnic Identity*

...ethnic identity, however, underlined differences which could only be reduced by long periods of physical intermingling through intermarriage between members of separate groups. Furthermore, ethnic identity had a strong political dimension through bringing out a link between identity and the organized actions of disadvantaged minorities....In this context, ethnic identity usually referred to the identity of minority groups seeking, or even fighting for, their legal and political rights (ibid.,6).

### Assimilation

According to the fourth edition of Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the term "assimilate" means to "become part of another social group or state." Cordon argued that cultural acculturation, characterized by the adoption of cultural patterns such as language, dress, food habits, and so forth, of the host society, is the first type of assimilation to occur, either alone or simultaneously with others (Cordon in Lomatawekul 1968: 17).

So far, there are two schools of scholars who discuss the assimilation of ethnic Chinese in Thailand. One school uses the word to describe a tendency among the Chinese in Thailand to adopt a Thai identity and to abandon their Chinese identities (Mackies 1998: 226). Skinner represents this school. On the other hand, another school argues that the notion of "assimilation" does not presuppose a loss of cultural or ethnic identity (ibid.,226). Coughlin explained that the Chinese in Thailand are characterized by double identities and their degree of Thai-ness or Chinese-ness varies depending on the circumstances and their own self-interest (1960: 193-94). Basically, the paper uses the term in a manner of the first school because this conception is more common.

### Symbolic Value

According to “Dictionary of Lexicography” edited by R. R. K. Hartmann, “symbol” means a visual or verbal sign used to represent a meaning or a sound. The way I use the term “symbol” in this thesis is different from this linguistic context. The term “symbol value” in this thesis will be used as a contrary concept to practical utility. In other words, “symbolic value” refers to non-communicational aspects of Standard Chinese.

### Instrumental Value

The term “instrumental value” in this thesis has opposite meaning to “symbolic value.” It refers to pragmatic aspects of Standard Chinese, such as practical communication skills. A linguist Edward Sapir also used the term “instrument,” but he used the term in the context of explaining the nature of language. Here is an example how Sapir used the term “instrument.”

...language is primarily a vocal actualization of the tendency to see realities symbolically, that it is precisely this quality which renders it a fit instrument for communication and that it is in the actual give and take of social intercourse that it has been complicated and refined into the form in which it is known today.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- The study did not undergo participant observation because of time constraint.
- The study solely reflects the opinion of the small sample group.
- Results of the questionnaire survey are based on the interviewees’ own judgment.



## Chapter 2

### Background

#### 2.1. History of Chinese Language Education in Thailand Before 1990

##### 2.1.1. The Rise of Chinese Schools

Prior to the establishment of Chinese schools in Thailand, education for Chinese children was conducted in houses and temples (Purcell in Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 56). Chinese children's education before the modern era was domestic, conservative, and free of politics, thereby attracting little attention from the Thai authorities (ibid., 56).

Thailand's first Chinese school was established in 1782. The school was called "Kor-rien" (an island for schooling) since it was located on an island of Ayutthaya province (Kong Rongrien Nayobai Phiset in Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 56). This school, whose founder is unknown, had 200 pupils and was outside the jurisdiction of the Thai government.<sup>1</sup>

After "Kor-rien" was closed, the Western missionaries undertook the Chinese language education in Thailand. In 1852, Mrs. Matthoon, an American missionary, founded a private Chinese school beside Arunrajchavararam Temple in Thonburi province. In this school, a China-born Chinese missionary named Kiang Kuasib taught various subjects in a

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<sup>1</sup> No more is known about the school (Rattanaphon 1974: 183).

Chinese language<sup>2</sup> (Kong Rongrien Nayobai Phiset in Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 56).

Later, more mission schools were opened alongside Bangkok, such as the French-operated Assumption College that opened in 1885 and the American-operated Bangkok Christian Boys School that opened in 1901. They became popular among Chinese boys hoping to enter Western companies and banks (Skinner 1957: 168). Some of those mission schools gave instruction to their Chinese students in Teochiu.

Chirakraisiri explained that the Chinese in Thailand before the twentieth century were not ready to establish Chinese schools by themselves because most Chinese immigrants were poor and uneducated (1988: 95). The idea of establishing Chinese schools by the Chinese arose along with the Chinese nationalist sentiment. The tide of Chinese nationalism that swelled after China's defeat by Japan in 1895 was reflected in overseas Chinese societies (Skinner 1957: 154).

The Chinese in Thailand started to think about establishing a school so as to embody their Chinese national politics. In 1909, the followers of Dr. Sun Yat-sen founded Huayi School. Although the school was sponsored by all Chinese language groups, Teochiu was used as the language of instruction (Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 57). Later, each Chinese language group association formed its own school, in which the particular Chinese language of the sponsoring association was used as the instruction medium.

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<sup>2</sup> Chokkajitsumpun assumes that Kiang Kuasib, the teacher in the Matphoon School, was a speaker of Teochiu and conducted his class through this language (1998: 56).

A Hakka school was established in 1913, a Cantonese school in 1914, a Fukien school in 1915, and a Hainanese school in 1921 (Coughlin 1960: 146). By 1920, there were about thirty Chinese primary schools in Thailand. The first Chinese secondary school was established in 1925. The number of Chinese schools was over 200 in Thailand by 1932.

Landon connected the rise of Chinese schools during the early 1900s with the increased immigration of Chinese women, which strengthened Chinese social and cultural life (Coughlin 1960: 146). Skinner saw the increase in Chinese schools as a response to the demands of the growing Chinese business community, such as in banking, bookkeeping and filing in large firms (ibid., 147).

Coughlin explained that the demand for Chinese language education arose from various aspects: pride in one's cultural heritage, Chinese nationalism, economic opportunism, shortage of adequate alternative educational institutions, and the sudden availability of teachers, mainly due to intellectuals that fled the chaotic conditions and economic depression in China after 1920 (ibid., 147).

### **2.1 2. The Decline of Chinese Schools**

Along with their prosperity during the first half of the twentieth century, the schools encountered strict control by the Thai government in the wake of the rise of the nation-state concept (Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 59). The newly established government, after the Thai Revolution of 1932, sought to replace the old popular loyalty to the King with a new loyalty to the Nation by encouraging Thai nationalism.

The government argued that language should be a feature of the common national identity. Thais, therefore, should be able to speak, read, write

and communicate in Thai (Sachaul in Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 59). Chinese schools that served to perpetuate minority differences were viewed as a divisive force to the new leaders (Coughlin 1960: 149).

In 1933, the government enacted regulations to limit the time of teaching foreign languages in schools, such as Chinese, to no more than six of the 28 hours in the school week (Landon in Coughlin 1960:49). By 1939, it was further restricted to only two hours each week in Chinese primary schools (Coughlin 1960: 149).

In addition to the restriction of the class hours of the Chinese language, the government controlled Chinese education by curtailing Mainland Chinese teachers and abolishing textbooks that dealt with political theories, such as Communism. The Thai government's anti-Chinese attitude is well explained in the following statement that was delivered by the Ministry of Education in 1935:

Chinese schools teach students to respect Sun Yat-sen, have them memorize the most important day of Kuomintang (Chinese, National People's Party), namely, the Independence Day from Manchuria, and instruct them to become leaders of the Chinese. Thai Ministry of Education cannot overlook this Chinese educational system. The Chinese today teach people political ideology that might threaten Thailand. The Ministry of Education must prevent it ("National Archives of Thailand" in Murasima 1993: 285).<sup>3</sup>

During the Second World War, the regulations over Chinese schools were made even stricter. Chokkajitsumpun connected the government's restriction of Chinese schools in this period with the relations between the Thai government and Japan: Under the leadership of Prime Minister P. Phibunsongkram, the government allied itself with Japan and faced external pressure from Japan to suppress the Chinese (1989: 59). The

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<sup>3</sup>A translation from Japanese

Thai government shut down so many Chinese schools that by 1945 only two schools survived (ibid., 59).

After the war, a number of Chinese schools, both licensed and unlicensed, were reestablished within a short period of time. The number of Chinese schools sprang from 2 in 1945 to some 500 in 1946. Chokkajitsumpun explained that such an immediate, large increase in the number of Chinese schools within a single year reflected the strong united resolution of the Chinese to pass on their languages and culture to their offspring (ibid., 59).

These schools were not under the control of the Thai government. On the contrary, newly established Chinese schools received support from the National People's Party, which had established their embassy in Thailand in 1946 (Suzuki 1996: 116). Some schools taught only Chinese with the exclusion of Thai; and did not even fly the Thai flag, flying the Chinese flag in its place (Manomaivibool 1976: 96).

In 1947, the Thai government made an agreement with National People's Party over the management of Chinese schools. The Thai government confirmed that those schools were not "ethnic schools for the Chinese," but "private schools for Chinese language education" (Suzuki 1996: 116). Along with the agreement, the Thai government allowed Chinese schools to teach Chinese 10 hours per week (out of a total 30).

However, the postwar communist scare gradually exalted the government's caution toward Chinese schools. The curriculum for Chinese schools that was proclaimed in 1948 limited the number of Chinese schools in each province, which practically prohibited the establishment of new Chinese schools. Moreover, in the 1950s, a score or more Chinese schools

in Bangkok and up-country were closed on charges of political activities (Coughlin 1960: 152).

Many fly-by-night schools simply folded up; others had their licenses revoked for violating regulations (Coughlin 1960: 150). Mainland Chinese teachers had their licenses revoked. In 1954 an Anti-Communist Act was passed and many leftist Chinese schools were closed.<sup>4</sup> The tables below show the number of Chinese schools and owners in 1954.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1**  
**The Number of Chinese Schools in 1954**

	Bangkok	The provinces
Formal schools (Day time) <sup>6</sup>	43	100
Non-formal schools (Night) <sup>7</sup>	8	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>105</b>

**Table 2**  
**Owners of the Chinese Schools in 1954**

	Bangkok	The provinces
An association or corporation	9	2
A private person	42	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>105</b>

<sup>4</sup> Chinese schools at that time were divided into three groups: left-wing, right-wing, and neutral (Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 60).

<sup>5</sup> The figures show only the number of schools that were approved by the government.

<sup>6</sup> Formal schools conducted Chinese language teaching for the first four years of primary education (Ministry of Education c.1975).

<sup>7</sup> Non-formal night schools provided only Chinese language education. Those schools opened at 6 to 9 p.m. (Ministry of Education c.1975).

**Table 3**  
**The Origins of the Owners of the**  
**Chinese Schools in Bangkok in 1954**

Teochiu	39
Hakka	3
Canton	3
Hainan	2
Fukien	1
Unknown	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, Thailand. Present State of Affairs and Problems of Private Schools Teaching Chinese Languages and Chinese Language Teaching as Foreign Languages. Bangkok: Government Publishing Office (GPO), c.1975.

### 2.1 3. The further decline

The Thai government continued to control Chinese schools throughout the 1960s and on into the 1980s. The following headings are examples of the regulations over Chinese schools that were enacted by ministry of education in 1966. These will help us picture the situation of Chinese language education at that time (ibid., c.1975).

- 1) Prohibit the foundation of new Chinese schools.
- 2) Prohibit foreigners from involvement in the management of Chinese schools.
- 3) The return of those who go abroad for the study of a Chinese language is strictly restricted.
- 4) Teachers instructing a Chinese language must know Thai, and textbooks must be published in Thailand.
- 5) Teaching Chinese at a night school is not allowed.

In 1975 the Thai government established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, which annulled the agreement with the National People's Party in 1947 (Suzuki 1996: 117). This gave the government additional justification for having control over Chinese schools. A cabinet resolution on October 28 resolved to keep prohibiting the establishment of new Chinese schools. Chinese was allowed to be taught only in Chinese schools before the fourth grade.<sup>8</sup> Teaching Chinese at a night school, which had been permitted tacitly, was entirely banned in 1977 (ibid., 117).

Not only Chinese, but also all foreign languages were regarded hostile for the government at that time. A cabinet resolution in 1977 prohibited all foreign language subjects in primary schools, both in public and private schools. Chokkajitsumpun explained that this resolution was aimed at encouraging children from all ethnic groups to acquire Thai, the national language, in order to promote national unity (1998: 61).

This policy was soon opposed by people and the mass media. Therefore, the government allowed private schools to teach a foreign language beginning in first grade. Nevertheless, the government still forbade the establishment of new private tutorial schools of any non-Thai language (ibid., 61).

In 1978, drastic educational reform was enforced and pre-university education in Thailand changed from a 4:3:3:2 system to a 6:3:3 system. Regarding the regulations over Chinese schools, a May 9, 1978, resolution mentioned: 1) Chinese is allowed to be taught only in Chinese schools before the fourth grade, 2) The Chinese language as a subject must not

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<sup>8</sup> Pre-university education in Thailand from 1960 to 1976 was on a 4:3:3:2 system.



exceed five hours a week, 3) The establishment of new Chinese schools will not be allowed (Suzuki 1996: 118).

Regarding all subjects except Chinese languages, the use of Thai curriculum was obligatory. This curriculum, whose purpose was to promote ethnic unity, Buddhism and loyalty to the King, was intended to enhance national integration (ibid., 118). The situation surrounding Chinese schools remained unchanged until 1989, when the government allowed the teaching of Standard Chinese from kindergarten to post-primary education (Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 67). The overall change of the above regulations had to wait until 1992.

## **2.2. The Impacts of the Thai Government's Restrictions on Chinese Schools**

What impact did the Thai government's restriction on Chinese schools cause to the society? Many scholars claimed that the adoption of Thai educational system accelerated the assimilation of the ethnic Chinese. Chantavanich mentioned that: "the post-war period saw the Chinese in Thailand more assimilated because of Thai schooling and generational factors" (1997: 256). Mahatdhanobol said, "the only characteristics reflecting their 'Chineseness' was their 'tee-tee-muay-muay'<sup>9</sup> appearance and their 'Western' outlook, which the Thai education system had instilled in them" (2003: 44).

Srinarawat conducted a survey of language use among the Chinese in Bangkok. She found that descendants of Teochiu speakers who had Thai

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<sup>9</sup> A Thai expression to indicate Chinese children who have white skin and single-edged eyelid

education spoke more Thai than Teochiu in daily life. She concluded, “Those who have most Thai education have apparently assimilated the most into Thai society and culture while immigrant Chinese have chosen to maintain their Chineseness and language” (Srinarawat1988: 282).

Skinner implied that without Chinese education, the ethnic Chinese would be totally assimilated into Thai by the fifth-generation. He said:

There simply were no fifth-generation Chinese in all of Thailand (except for the Malay South); that the only fourth-generation individuals (that is, great-grand-children of Chinese immigrants) who consider themselves Chinese in any circumstances are those who have received a Chinese education; and that the only third-generation Chinese who identify themselves in most social situations as Chinese are those educated in Chinese schools or reared in China (Skinner 1964: 89).

Similarly, Chirakraisiri predicted that in the near future, there would be no young Chinese (*yawachon chin*) anymore as they receive Thai education (1988: 110). The assimilation process of the ethnic Chinese was explained by both Guskin and Bao. They argued that Chinese languages, Chinese culture, and Chinese behaviors were the target of prejudice or mild punishment in schools, which forced Chinese students to behave like Thais. Here is an example:

I was the head of the class so I had the responsibility of giving flowers to the teacher. One day I was late to class. I handed the flowers to the teacher and I *wai* [salute by placing her hands palm against palm and raising them to her face] to her. She said, “Why did you not “*krap*” (prostrate yourself)? You do not demonstrate correct manners to your teacher.” I felt very ashamed. Why didn’t my parents teach me how to behave properly? (Bao 1994: 147).<sup>10</sup>

The statement above shows that being identified as a Chinese in a Thai school was a “shameful” thing at that time. Guskin called this mental

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<sup>10</sup> A comment of Bao’s friend who was an ethnic Chinese born in 1952

factor “desocialization” (1968: 61). To reduce the chance of being identified as a Chinese, many ethnic Chinese changed their Chinese names to Thai names (Bao 1994: 145). They tend to choose typical Thai first names while they kept the meaning or the sound of their native Chinese surnames in their new Thai surnames (ibid., 145). This is how the post-war ethnic Chinese strived for being naturalized in Thai society.

Not only “desocialization,” but also “upward status mobility” was regarded an important factor that promoted the Chinese assimilation (Maxwell 1972: 22). This is based on the concept that one tends to enter a group whose culture they accept as more prestigious. Smalley said that the adoption of a Thai name was completely opportunistic to improve business or social standing (1994: 218). Coughlin (1953: 437) and Skinner (1957: 307; 1958: 227-47) implied that the elite Chinese are more likely to assimilate than are the others because they regard Thai culture as more prestigious. Maxwell developed this theory by arguing that not only the elite, but also any class of ethnic Chinese tend to assimilate into Thai society: Most of them speak Thai at home and want to marry Thais (1972: 23, 29).

All of these arguments connote that the government’s anti-Chinese policy from the 1930s to the 1980s affected to degrade the status of Chinese languages both mentally and socially, while Thai language and culture were regarded as “high status” and “prestigious.” It can be said that this two-side pressure made the assimilation of the ethnic Chinese rapid and wide.

## Chapter 3

### Chinese Language Schools in Thailand Before the 1990s, The Government's New Policy and Study Method

#### 3.1. Chinese Language Schools in Thailand Before the 1990s

We have seen that the government's continuous anti-Chinese posture and Thai school systems promoted the assimilation of ethnic Chinese into Thai society. However, this does not mean that they completely abandoned their "Chineseness." Many Chinese parents hired private tutors to teach their children Chinese, while wealthy parents had their children attend Chinese schools overseas (Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 63). This should be the manifestation of their attachment to "things Chinese" (Coughlin 1960: 11).<sup>1</sup>

For the students who had no opportunity to attend formal Chinese schools and who could not afford studying abroad or hiring private tutors, tutorial Chinese language schools were acceptable alternatives. These Chinese language schools were normally operated by volunteers who opened their houses to teach neighboring children. Most of these schools had to be organized secretly because the government approved only a few of them. Sometimes these Chinese language schools were called "night schools" since many of them opened only in the evening.

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<sup>1</sup> Coughlin said, "Culturally and socially this minority in Thailand has learned to accept Thai ways without, however, losing its attachment to things Chinese. The question is whether these changes represent simply protective coloration or true identification with Thai society" (1960: 11).

To examine the role of Chinese language schools before the 1990s, I held interviews with eight people (four men and four women) who attended these schools during the 1940s to 1980s. The main questions posed during these interviews were centered on the following points:

- 1) Background of the interviewees,
- 2) Situation within Chinese language schools,
- 3) Motivation to attend Chinese language schools,
- 4) Benefits of Chinese language study.

The interviewees were 39, 41, 45, 46, 55, 60, 61 and 70 years old respectively. Their occupations were housewife, merchant, businessman and professor. Discussion developed in this chapter will be based on testimonies from these interviewees. Since the number of interviewees is small, the interview results covers only limited phases of Chinese language schools before the 1990s. Age brackets of interviewees, all of them are past middle age, also affects the interview results.

### **3.1.1. Background of the Interviewees**

#### Ethnic Origin

All the eight interviewees are ethnic Chinese born in Thailand. Seven interviewees are from Teochiu speaking families while one interviewee is from a Hakka speaking family. At least one of the parents of all the interviewees is a Chinese immigrant. Therefore, all the interviewees could speak at least one non-standard Chinese language, which their parents used, even before they attended Chinese language school.

#### Educational Background

Regarding educational backgrounds, three interviewees went to formal Chinese schools. They attended Chinese language schools after they

finished lower primary education (the fourth grade). According to a 45-year-old interviewee, there were no Chinese schools of upper primary education. If one wanted to continue Chinese language study, the choices were either to study with private tutors or to go to Chinese language schools.

Of the five interviewees who did not go to formal Chinese schools, three went to elementary schools of Thai educational system: There were no Chinese language schools near their homes. They attended Chinese language school after school was over.

Two interviewees have never been to elementary school. A 70-year-old woman was working in a factory when she was a teenager and studied Chinese after work. A 61-year-old man did not go to formal school because he could not afford it. Instead of studying at a formal school, he attended Chinese language school, where the tuition was cheap. For this interviewee, the Chinese language school was a substitute for primary school.

### **3.1.2. Situation within Chinese Language Schools**

#### **Location**

According to the eight interviewees, Chinese language schools were operated by volunteers who opened their houses to teach Chinese to neighboring children. Six of the interviewees went to Chinese language schools located in Bangkok; namely, Hua Lum Phong, Bo Be, Haa Yeak, Saphan Luang, and Ban Su.<sup>2</sup> The first four schools were in close proximity to each other. Two of the interviewees attended Chinese

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<sup>2</sup> One interviewee did not remember where the school was located.

language schools located in the provinces: One in Samutprakan and the other in Pattani.

#### Age, Number of Students in a Class

According to the interviewees, the age of students in Chinese language schools ranged from seven to more than twenty. Most interviewees attended Chinese language schools when they were around ten years old: Two interviewees went to Chinese language schools when they were eight to twelve, four interviewees in their teens. Only one interviewee went to Chinese language school when he was 30. He said it was embarrassing because he was the only adult in class. The number of students in one class was about 10 to 20. Sometimes a small class had less than 10 students.

#### Language of Instruction

The language that most interviewees studied in their Chinese language schools was Standard Chinese. Only one interviewee, who went to school in the 1950's, was instructed Chinese in Teochiu. One 55-year-old interviewee explained that the ability in speaking Standard Chinese was a status symbol among the ethnic Chinese. She said,

As most of the ethnic Chinese already could speak non-standard forms of Chinese languages, according to the origin of their parents, it was not special to be able to speak those languages. But being able to speak Standard Chinese meant we were well educated. So Chinese parents wanted their children to study Standard Chinese.

However, it was observed that sometimes, language teachers taught Standard Chinese with strange accents. One interviewee commented,

My teacher taught me Standard Chinese, but his pronunciation was curious. I have been to the Mainland China a number of times, so I know how bad his pronunciation was.

This happened because most of the teachers in Chinese language schools were either China-born or Thailand-born Chinese, whose families came from Southern China. As those Southerners usually used non-standard forms of Chinese languages, it was difficult for them to pronounce speech sounds of Standard Chinese correctly, which differs from their “first Chinese language.”

### Curriculum and Textbooks

Detailed information about curriculum and textbooks applied in Chinese language schools were collected from two interviewees who were 45 years old and 55 years old. The following is a schedule of a week in a Chinese language school where a 45-year-old interviewee used to go:

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday---Reading Chinese literature, articles and essays
- Tuesday and Thursday---Composition and letter writing
- Saturday---Either composition or abacus (alternative every other week)

What is remarkable is that the subjects taught in the Chinese language school focused on reading and writing. This would be meaningful in terms of helping students understand Chinese culture better. For example, learning Chinese literature would lead students to better understand the Chinese way of thinking.

Another interesting point is that abacus was taught in the Chinese language school. It was not allowed to be taught in formal Chinese schools because it was Chinese arithmetic. It follows then that Chinese language schools were freer to teach Chinese culture than formal Chinese schools.

Regarding the textbooks, a 55-year-old interviewee said that the following three textbooks were most widespread in Chinese language schools:



- Chinese
- General Knowledge
- Civics

Each textbook contained lessons from level 1 to level 8. The interviewee explained that “Chinese” textbook contained literary pieces, essays and so on, “General Knowledge” dealt with common sense, such as “the sun rises from East”, and “Civics” taught civil discipline, or how to be a good citizen. It gives the impression that this is more like a curriculum in elementary school than that of a “language school.”

#### The Government’s Control

What cannot be ignored about the situation of Chinese language schools before the 1990s is that most schools operated “illegally.” It means that the schools could not reveal their existences. Two interviewees remember that the textbooks, which were made in Hong Kong, were secretly sold in black markets of Yawarat, the biggest Chinese district in Bangkok.

Sometimes the police investigated “dubious” places so as to discover Chinese teaching activity. A 61-year-old man who went to a Chinese language school in Bangkok said,

I got a number of calls when I was in a Chinese language school. They were calls from village officers informing that policemen were coming to investigate. Then we escaped. Village officers were able to inform so because they paid money to the police. Policemen came to our village every month to get money.

This was a frightening situation. If the police discovered them, the schools would have been closed. However, as the comment above shows, policemen tended to turn a blind eye on them. Coughlin explained that the government ignored Chinese language schools because they were not so politically dangerous (1960: 50). It is true because Chinese language

schools were so small in size that they hardly seemed to have any political connections with the Chinese government.

### **3.1.3. Motivation to Attend Chinese Language Schools**

What were the students' motivations to attend Chinese language schools? Six interviewees answered that they went to Chinese language schools because their parents or relatives wanted them to go. Some were willing to follow their parents, saying that: "I thought it was my duty to inherit Chinese languages and preserve them because I am a Chinese." Others were rather reluctant to study: One interviewee said, "I studied the language because my father forced me. I was not interested in studying any languages."

As for those whose motivation for Chinese language study did not come from their parents, one said that she studied Standard Chinese just because all her friends did. She explained that her parents were more interested in having her study English: English was regarded as more international and useful. Since she could already speak several Chinese languages including Teochiu, Fukien and Standard Chinese<sup>3</sup>, her parents thought that was enough.

Another interviewee answered that she went to Chinese language school because she wanted to read Chinese song lyrics. She said, "I was a lover of Chinese songs." At present, five of the eight interviewees send either their children or grandchildren to Chinese language schools.

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<sup>3</sup> Some parents used Standard Chinese in their home, believing that it was more international and nobler than other Chinese languages. However, not all the Standard Chinese speakers could read and write Chinese. That is why ethnic Chinese had to go to Chinese language schools.

### 3.1.4. Benefits of Chinese Language Study

Regarding the question “what were the benefits of Chinese language study?” Five interviewees answered that they benefited from their ability in reading and writing Chinese. They felt happy when they were able to read Chinese song lyrics, Chinese books, Chinese newspapers, and Chinese signboards that were displayed near their houses. It was “fun” and they felt “sophisticated.”

The ability to write Chinese was useful when they wrote letters to their parents. An interviewee said, “My parents were so delighted when I was in the United States and sent letters to them in Chinese!”

However, in everyday life, spoken Standard Chinese was useful only for those who had been abroad. As most ethnic Chinese used a non-standard form of Chinese language for communication, it was not really necessary to speak another Chinese language.

In Thailand, the Thai language is used as a *lingua franca* much more commonly than others. If someone spoke Standard Chinese inside the country, it meant that they were just having fun. One interviewee explained that spoken Standard Chinese was a symbol of the “well-educated” and it was used in gatherings of young ethnic Chinese. She said,

It was cool to be able to speak Standard Chinese. Those who spoke Standard Chinese were regarded smarter than others and I enjoyed the privilege.

While five of the interviewees benefited from Chinese language study in a certain way, three interviewees, who learned Standard Chinese, had no chance to use the language at all. A 41-year-old man said Standard Chinese was “of no practical use” for him. It can be said that if one could

not find the cultural value of Standard Chinese, it was really useless because the language did not serve as a communication tool in Thai society at that time.

Finally, I asked whether there was a transformation about the interviewees' feeling of Chineseness after studying at Chinese language schools. The question was: "After studying at Chinese language schools, did you feel more Chinese than before?" Seven of eight interviewees answered "no." They said that they had thought themselves ethnic Chinese even before they went to Chinese language schools. A 55-year-old interviewee explained,

Studying a Chinese language at Chinese language school or not only determines whether you were literate or illiterate. Anyway, both people are ethnic Chinese.

Only a 39-year-old interviewee, who is the youngest, vaguely answered, "probably yes" to this question. It can be assumed that those who had a strong identity as ethnic Chinese did not recognize that the Chinese language study had much influence on their identity. Vice Versa, those who had no strong identity as ethnic Chinese might feel that the language study helped them develop their Chinese identity.

### **3.1.5. Summary**

Looking back at the outcome of these interviews, the most important point was that all the students in Chinese language schools were ethnic Chinese. Each Chinese language school operated on the premise that it was an "educational institutions for the ethnic Chinese." At least one of the parents of all the interviewees were China-born who were highly determined to pass Chinese languages and culture onto their children. Chinese language schools were primarily expected to "maintain" one's Chinese cultural identity.

The variety of Chinese language taught in most Chinese language schools was Standard Chinese. This might be partly because Standard Chinese was more international than other Chinese languages. However, the interview results revealed that there were few opportunities to use Standard Chinese inside Thailand. Another reason for teaching Standard Chinese was probably because Standard Chinese, which is the official language of Mainland China, was regarded more prestigious than other Chinese languages. One interviewee explained that Standard Chinese was a symbol of the “well-educated.”

Practical communication skills were not really expected from Chinese language schools before the 1990s. Spoken Standard Chinese was not a real necessity in Thai society at that time. The ability to read and write Chinese was useful in terms of meeting one’s cultural interest; It helped young ethnic Chinese understand Chinese culture better and gave them intellectual and emotional satisfaction. In short, the language one studied at Chinese language school served as a means to enhance one’s cultural grounding as an ethnic Chinese.

Regarding the transformation of interviewees’ feeling of Chineseness after attending Chinese language schools, seven of eight people did not feel that the Chinese language study had any influence on their ethnic identity. The reason is probably because they already had a strong identity as ethnic Chinese through the interaction with their China-born parents at home. This connotes that Chinese culture and languages were mostly inherited in one’s Chinese families in those days. Chinese language schools before the 1990s served an auxiliary function to help Chinese families train their children to be knowledgeable Chinese.

### 3.2. The Thai Government's New Policy toward Chinese Schools

Chinese schools, which had suffered from government control for almost six decades, saw a turning point in the late 1980s. In 1989, several Chinese associations submitted requests to the Ministry of Education to relax the ban on Chinese language study. Their reasons for promoting Chinese language study can be summarized in three points (Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 32):

- 1) Chinese languages (especially Standard Chinese) had become more and more important in Thailand as the country developed its international trade, inbound tourism, and joint ventures with Mainland China.
- 2) The promotion would encourage Chinese parents to have their children acquire the language (Standard Chinese) in Thailand; obtaining domestic education would help the Thai economy.<sup>4</sup>
- 3) Learning Standard Chinese as a foreign language did no harm to national security; rather it was an asset to national development.

Regarding the first reason, mainland China's rapid economic growth during the 1980s and 1990s is the key background. Launched in 1978, Mainland China's Open Door Policy, which encouraged foreign trade and investment, bore fruits by greatly improving the people's living standard. New advanced technology was introduced from the other countries and many new jobs were created (Victor [Online]: 17 Feb. 2003). With Mainland China's attractive low production costs and huge local market, foreign investment increased dramatically in the last decades (ibid.).

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<sup>4</sup> Since it was difficult to receive Chinese language education inside the country, wealthy parents often sent their children to Chinese schools overseas (ibid., 63).

The economic relationship between Thailand and Mainland China improved after the two countries established a joint Thai-Chinese Committee on Economic Cooperation in 1985 (Chinawanno [Online] 15 Oct. 2002). Table 5 shows the increasing volume of trade between Thailand and Mainland China from 1975 to 1997. Bilateral trade between Thailand and Mainland China increased dramatically from only 735 million baht in 1975 to about 13,440 million baht ten later in 1985. In 1990, the volume of trade shot up to 35,098 million baht and 124,962 million baht in 1997 subsequently (ibid.).

The end of the Cold War saw an improvement in Sino-Thai relations. Chaiwong argued that improved national image of Mainland China after the conclusion of the Cold War played an important role in formulating and implementing foreign policies of both countries (Chaiwong [Online] 17 Feb. 2003). It can be said that political change and economic growth in Mainland China dissipated the Thai government's caution toward Chinese language education.

In May 1989, a cabinet resolution agreed to the Ministry of Education's proposal to promote Chinese language study, and allowed the teaching of Standard Chinese from kindergarten to post-primary education (Chokkajitsumpun 1998: 67). Further reform was made in 1992. In this year, the cabinet resolution considered the status of Standard Chinese equivalent to English, German, French and Japanese, all of which are taught in the Thai school system (ibid., 68).

As a result, schools teaching Standard Chinese could hire Chinese teachers from Mainland China who did not know Thai. In addition, the government allowed the establishment of private tutorial Chinese language schools. Since then, the number of Chinese language schools and students has increased every year (Table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Private Tutorial Chinese Language Schools<sup>5</sup>**  
**in Thailand, for the Non-Formal School System**

Year	Number of schools	Number of students
1989	12	1,447
1992	12	1,259
1994	21	1,534
1995	21	1,804
1996	26	3,032
1997	29	3,570
1998	29	4,820
1999	34	5,719
2000	48	8,025
2001	59	10,218

Source: Ministry of Education, Thailand. Statistics of Private Education. Bangkok: GPO, 1989-2001.

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<sup>5</sup> Documents of Ministry of Education calls it “Private Vocational Language Schools.”



**Table 5**  
**Thailand's Bilateral Trade with Mainland China**  
 Unit: million baht

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Import</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1975	735	391	344	+47
1976	2,728	1,266	1,462	-196
1977	3,453	2,082	1,371	+711
1978	3,202	1,496	1,704	-206
1979	6,512	1,572	4,940	-3,368
1980	11,066	2,531	8,535	-6,004
1981	11,047	4,064	6,983	-2,919
1982	12,427	7,053	5,394	+1,679
1983	8,567	2,468	6,099	-3,631
1984	11,744	4,215	7,499	-3,154
1985	13,440	7,367	6,073	+1,294
1986	14,170	7,253	6,917	+336
1987	22,943	9,975	12,968	-2,993
1988	29,199	12,008	17,191	-5,183
1989	33,074	13,899	19,175	-5,276
1990	35,098	6,815	28,293	-21,446
1991	37,882	8,555	29,327	-20,722
1992	40,780	9,800	30,980	-21,178
1993	41,245	13,636	27,609	-13,973
1994	58,233	23,336	34,897	-11,561
1995	93,054	40,867	52,187	-11,320
1996	96,868	47,369	49,499	-2,130
1997	124,962	55,495	69,467	-13,972
1998	147,650	72,844	74,806	-1,962
1999	165,162	70,569	94,593	-24,024
2000	248,983	113,281	135,702	-22,421

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

(Chinwanno [Online] 15 Oct. 2002),

(Motoda [Online] 28 Jan. 2003).

### 3.3. Study Method

So, what is the role of the Chinese language school today? Is it still functioning to assist ethnic Chinese maintain their ethnic identity? How does the present situation of Chinese language school differ from the situation before the 1990s? To examine the present role of Chinese language school, a questionnaire survey was done in three Chinese language schools located in Bangkok; namely, Oriental Cultural Academy, Inter-Continental Institute, and the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University.<sup>6</sup> The relevant questions covered in the questionnaire are related to the following points:

- 1) Background of the interviewees; age, sex, occupation, ethnic origin, and backgrounds of Chinese language study.
- 2) Motivation to attend Chinese language schools; reasons for choosing to study Standard Chinese, motivation for studying Standard Chinese, Images about Mainland China.
- 3) Situation within Chinese language schools; size of a class, tuition, language skills and contents of instruction, nationality of teachers,
- 4) Benefits of studying at Chinese language schools.
- 5) Future opportunities; opinions about the present government's present policy toward Chinese language study, and aspiration for encouraging descendants to study Standard Chinese.

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<sup>6</sup> There is an evening Chinese course offered by the Chinese Section, Department of Eastern Languages, Faculty of Arts in Chulalongkorn University. The course is opened to the general public and uses a non-formal educational system. From its function, this can also be regarded as a “Chinese language school.”

Interviewees were randomly selected among the students taking “adult courses<sup>7</sup>” in the three Chinese language schools. The thesis will focus more on significant features than statistics. There are many open-ended questions in the questionnaire. They were designed so as to help induce more individual responses from the interviewees.

The questionnaires are written in Thai. The limitation is that the Thai term “*phasaa Chin*” embraces both Standard Chinese and non-standard form of Chinese, which may make it difficult to distinguish definition of language in question. In the thesis, terms “Standard Chinese,” and “a Chinese language” will be used according to the context.



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<sup>7</sup> Two of the three Chinese language schools have both courses for adults and for children.

## Chapter 4

### Chinese Language Schools After the 1990s

#### -Research Results-

From the questionnaire survey in the three Chinese language schools, 400 responses were collected. This chapter displays the research results together with my analyses. The content of the chapter includes the following points: 1) interviewees' backgrounds, 2) motivation to attend Chinese language schools, 3) situation within Chinese language schools, 4) benefits of studying Standard Chinese, and 5) future opportunities. Research results will solely reflect what interviewees declared, based on their own judgment.

#### 4.1. Backgrounds of the Interviewees

##### 4.1.1. Age, Sex and Occupation

The interviewees include both men and women. The ratio of men to women was 129: 263 (Table 6).<sup>1</sup> Their ages were divided into six groups; less than 18, 18-22, 23-30, 31-40, 41-50 and over 50. The age group with the most respondents was 23 to 30. More than 60% of the interviewees were between 18 and 30. Others were either less than 18 or more 30 years old. Table 7 displays the interviewees' occupational background. Of the total interviewees, 34.5% were high school and university students. Most of the others were working people whose occupations were: businessmen, the largest population; merchants, the second largest population; people doing family business; office workers and employees. The percentage of

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<sup>1</sup> 8 people did not indicate their sex.

government officers was only 2.75%. “Others” in Table 7 includes housewives, people who are engaged in government enterprises and religious vocations.

**Table 6**  
**Age Range and Proportion of Men and Women**

Age	Total	%	Male	Female	No answer
Less than 18	38	9.5	<u>11</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>0</u>
18-22	104	26	<u>30</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>2</u>
23-30	139	34.75	<u>48</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>4</u>
31-40	60	15	<u>20</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>2</u>
41-50	45	11.25	<u>15</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>
Over 50	12	3	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
No answer	2	0.5	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	400	100	<u>133</u>	<u>259</u>	<u>8</u>

**Table 7**  
**Occupation**

Occupation	Number	%
Students	138	34.5
Businessmen	62	15.5
Merchants	43	10.75
Family business	43	10.75
Office workers	41	10.25
Employees	37	9.25
Government officers	11	2.75
Without occupation	9	2.25
Others	11	2.75
No answer	5	1.25
Total	400	100

The situation is much different now from before the 1990s, when most students in Chinese language schools were teenage school children. The findings suggest that a need emerged for working people, or those “working people-to-be,” to study a Chinese language. From the fact that there are much more students who were working in the private business sector than in government agencies, it can be assumed that ability to speak a Chinese language is specially needed in the business world.

#### 4.1.2. Ethnic Origin and Language Spoken at Home

Before the 1990s, all the people studying in Chinese language schools were offspring of Chinese immigrants whose parents desired to preserve their Chinese identity. For the Thai, there was no reason to study a Chinese language, which was regarded of no practical use. How has this situation changed? According to Table 8, approximately 97% of the total had Chinese ancestors, while 3% did not have Chinese blood at all. It can be called a “new trend” that non-Chinese Thai started to study at Chinese language schools. The traditional Chinese language schools’ function of “maintaining one’s Chinese identity” cannot be applied for these people.

**Table 8**  
**Number of the Interviewees Who Have Chinese Ancestors**

“Do you have Chinese ancestors?”	Number	%
Yes	387	96.75
No	12	3
No answer	1	0.25
Total	400	100

Regarding the majority who had Chinese ancestors, it is found that most of them had family members who speak a Chinese language (Table 9).

“Family members” include grandparents, parents, siblings and intimate relatives. What is remarkable is that the younger the interviewees were, the more likely it was that they had a grandparent that spoke a Chinese language. Among the people over 40 years old, 21% of them had Chinese-speaking grandparents. The percentage increases to 38 % for the people aged 31-40, 59% for the people aged 23-30, 64% for the people aged 18-22, and 82% for the people under 18.

This implies that most parents of young ethnic Chinese are not China-born parents. They are probably Thailand-born parents and they can speak Thai fluently. That is why not many interviewees use a Chinese language at home. According to Table 10, we see that 64-74% of the ethnic Chinese throughout all the age groups rarely use, or only occasionally use a Chinese language at home.

**Table 9**  
**Number of the Interviewees Whose**  
**Family Members Speak Any of Chinese Languages**

“Do you have family members who speak any of Chinese languages?”	Number	%
Yes	359	89.75
No	40	10
No answer	1	0.25
Total	400	100

**Table 10**  
**Frequency of Using a Chinese Language at Home**  
**According to the Age Group**  
**(For those whose family members speak any of Chinese languages)**

	Less than 18 %	18-22 %	23-30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	Over 50 %
Use very often	18	8	9	6	17	10
Use occasionally	40	31	30	29	39	40
Rarely use	34	42	43	44	32	31
Not use at all	8	19	18	21	12	20
	----	----	----	----	----	----
	100	100	100	100	100	100

The number of respondents=359

A curious point is that people under 18 use a Chinese language more frequently than people in other age groups. This result contradicts the common generalization that “the younger the generation, the less Chinese is spoken.” This finding indicates that some ethnic Chinese are still trying to preserve Chinese languages in their families. It can be assumed that minors are encouraged to study a Chinese language by those traditional Chinese families, while adults may study the language for other reasons.

#### **4.1.3. Background of Chinese Language Study and Ability in Standard Chinese**

Table 11 is a list of the interviewee’s length of enrollment in a Chinese language school. The datum shows that more than a half of the interviewees were “new students” who had enrolled in the school for no more than a year. The number of students decreases as time passes. This reflects the growing boom of Chinese language study in recent years.



**Table 11**  
**Length of Enrollment**

Length of enrollment	Number	%
Less than one year	221	55.25
One year to two years	67	16.75
Two years to three years	38	9.5
Three years to four years	21	5.25
Four years to five years	21	5.25
More than five years	8	2
No answer	24	6
Total	400	100

The interviewees' ability in Standard Chinese is listed in Table 12. The datum is based on their own judgment of their ability in Standard Chinese. Most of them answered they were either "fair in reading and writing" or "not good in speaking, reading and writing." Only 2.25% could "read and write very well."<sup>2</sup>

**Table 12**  
**The Interviewees' Ability in Standard Chinese**

Ability in Standard Chinese	Number	%
Able to speak only	12	3
Fair in reading and writing	258	64.5
Very good in reading and writing	9	2.25
Not good in speaking, reading and writing	117	29.25
No answer	4	1
Total	400	100

<sup>2</sup> Generally, those who can read Chinese are able to speak a Chinese language.

Regarding the question “if an interviewee has ever studied a Chinese language,” nearly a half of the respondents answered “yes” (Table 13). Most of those who answered “yes” studied a Chinese language before the 1990s. The main places they studied Chinese languages were formal Chinese schools, language schools or universities. Some studied with private tutors and others studied abroad. The most popular reason for studying Chinese languages at that time was “demand of parents.” Few people studied the languages for use in business.

The reasons people stopped studying Chinese languages were house moving, completion of a course and so on. Some gave up the study because they did not see the necessity of the languages they studied. Others were forced to stop because of the closing of their school. The government’s removal of a ban on Chinese language study has recalled those who had stopped studying Chinese languages before.

**Table 13**  
**Number of the Interviewees Who**  
**Have Ever Studied Chinese Languages**

“Have you ever studied a Chinese language?”	Number	%
Yes	184	46
No	202	50.5
No answer	14	3.5
Total	400	100

## 4.2. Motivation to Attend Chinese Language Schools

### 4.2.1. Language of Instruction

What are the students’ motivations to go to study Chinese in a language school? Before discussing this issue, let us clarify the Chinese language

taught in Chinese language schools: The variety of Chinese languages taught in all the three Chinese language schools is Standard Chinese.

It is clearly described that the reason why the Thai government began to support Chinese language study was to promote the country's economic development (Ministry of Education c.1992). To build up economic relationships with Chinese-speaking countries such as Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, it is vital for the Thai to study Standard Chinese, which is used in those countries (ibid.). This means that the government tends to support only Standard Chinese, which is most suitable for business.

What do the students think about this? Do they feel the same way as the Thai government? To examine the students' conceptions of Standard Chinese, I asked why the students chose to study Standard Chinese from among several Chinese languages. The word "choose" is not really appropriate because there is no choice except Standard Chinese in either school. However, interesting answers were collected. According to the result, the most popular reason for choosing Standard Chinese was "because Standard Chinese is more international." Many students said:

If you know Standard Chinese, you can communicate with the Chinese not only in Mainland China, but also in Taiwan, Hong Kong and other regions, too.

It can be said that people today have more chances to interact with the Chinese overseas, both in business and in private matters, which increases one's needs or interests to acquire international communication skills. The next most popular reason was "to make use of business." This view is exactly the same as the Thai government's aim to support the study of Standard Chinese. I will call these practical aspects of Standard Chinese the "instrumental value" compared to "symbolic value."

While the majority of the students respected the “instrumental value,” some students were still interested in the “symbolic value,” or non-communicational aspects of Standard Chinese. Some of those people were attracted by its beautiful sound; others wanted to know another Chinese language besides Teochiu, which they could already speak. It sounds that the latter people regard the status of Standard Chinese equally as other Chinese languages rather than viewing its uniqueness as an international language.

Attitudes of these people do not differ from those who studied at Chinese language schools before the 1990s. These people obviously considered Standard Chinese in the view of the ethnic Chinese. Besides those who regarded Standard Chinese either instrumentally or symbolically, there were also some people who did not understand the meaning of the question. They could not tell the difference between Standard Chinese and other Chinese languages.

**Table 14**  
**Reasons for choosing Standard Chinese (Open-ended question)**

“Why did you choose Standard Chinese?”	Number	%
It is more international	222	55.5
To make use of business	53	13.25
It is the official language of Mainland China	29	7.25
I can speak Teochiu already	11	2.75
The sounds are beautiful	9	2.25
There was no choice	7	1.75
Others	34	8.5
No answer	35	8.75
Total	400	100

#### 4.2.2. Reasons for Studying Standard Chinese

One's conception of Standard Chinese reflects one's motivations to study Standard Chinese. Looking at Table 15 and 16, which show the "number one reason" and the "top five reasons" for studying Standard Chinese respectively, the number of the respondents who study Standard Chinese for "making use of business" was strikingly high. Table 16 reveals that more than 70% of the interviewees intended to utilize Standard Chinese for business purposes.

**Table 15**  
**1-10 Ranking of Number One Reason for Studying Standard Chinese**  
**(Closed-ended question, a respondent should choose only one answer)**

<b>"What is your number one reason for studying Standard Chinese?"</b>	<b>Number</b>
1. To make use of business	162
2. To identify myself as ethnic Chinese	37
3. Demand of parents	25
4. To speak with family members or relatives	20
5. To travel to Mainland China	13
6. To read Chinese newspapers	12
7. To speak with Chinese friends	10
8. To understand Chinese culture	8
8. Be interested in Chinese characters	8
8. To live in Mainland China in the future	8
8. To develop myself	8
9. To sing Chinese songs	6
10. Be impressed with the sounds of the language	5

The number of respondents=354<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 46 people did not mark their number one reason in the question.

**Table 16**  
**1-10 Ranking of Top Five Reasons for Studying Standard Chinese**  
**(Closed-ended question, a respondent may choose one to five answers)**

“What are your top five reasons for studying Standard Chinese?”	Number
1. To make use of business	287
2. To travel to Mainland China	149
3. To identify myself as ethnic Chinese	144
4. To understand Chinese culture	131
5. To speak with Chinese friends	114
6. Be interested in Chinese characters	103
7. To live in Mainland China in the future	86
8. Demand of parents	83
9. To speak with family members or relatives	81
10. To read Chinese newspapers	69

The number of respondents=400

The number connotes the growth of business relationships between the countries. It can be said that today’s Chinese language schools are expected to meet the demands of acquiring international communication skills in business fields. Interest in the practical aspect of Standard Chinese is a totally new phenomenon. The significance of Standard Chinese is obviously shifting from the “symbolic value” to “instrumental value.”

However, it cannot be overlooked that the students’ interest in business does not come only from interest in financial gain. As the majority of the students in Chinese language schools are ethnic Chinese, ethnic oriented sentiment is also related to this phenomenon. Let us look at Table 17,

which displays “desirable relationship between Thailand and Mainland China.” 259 people answered that “Thailand and Mainland China should reinforce an economic relationship.” Among the respondents, some remarked, “If Thailand and Mainland China cooperate with each other, we no longer have to rely on Western countries or the United States.”

This remark is interesting in terms that it shows nationalistic sentiment of the Thai. They lament the increasing rate of westernization in Thailand and no longer want to depend on the Western economy. On the other hand, Mainland China is their “close friend” or “sibling” (for those ethnic Chinese) and Thais are happy to cooperate with her to oppose the Western power. It may be a natural feeling that ethnic Chinese in Thailand prefer working with the Chinese, who have the same lineage, than joining hands with unfamiliar foreigners.

**Table 17**  
**Top Five Answers of Desirable Relationship**  
**Between Thailand and Mainland China**  
**(Open-ended question, a respondent may write more than one answer)**

“Regarding the relationship between Thailand and Mainland China, which aspect do you think is needed to be reinforced?”	Number
1. Economy (including trade and investment)	259
2. Cultural exchange	82
3. Education (including the promotion of Chinese language study and increasing exchanged students)	56
4. Tourism	17
5. Technology	13

The number of Respondents=344

Besides the intention to use Standard Chinese in business, the hope to travel to Mainland China is also one of the most popular reasons encouraging people to study the language. Looking at table 16, it is ranked second. It probably has something to do with the growing tourist industry in Mainland China.

According to a report, Mainland China started to promote tourism after 1990, which made the country one of the top six tourist destinations in 1996 (Applied Research Institute [Online] 17 Feb. 2003). In 1997, the number of inbound travelers in Mainland China was 12.64% over 1997. This number reached as high as 16.49% between 1999 and 2000 (Takungpao [Online] 2002). China National Tourism Administration reported that the number of Thai people visiting Mainland China amounted to 292,310 in the year 2000 (Chinese National Tourism Administration [Online] 17 Feb. 2003). It was the tenth largest number among the world.

Table 18 shows that nearly half of the interviewees have visited Mainland China. Their main reasons for visiting the country were sightseeing, to see relatives, on business etc. (Table 19). Besides Mainland China's promotion of tourism, geographic conditions, such as being closely located, and kinship relations between the two countries might be the reasons to encourage Thais to travel to Mainland China.

**Table 18**  
**Number of the Interviewees Who Have Been to the Mainland China**

"Have you ever been to Mainland China?"	Number	%
Yes	191	47.75
No	203	50.75
No answer	6	1.5
Total	400	100



**Table 19**  
**Purposes of the Travel**

(Closed-ended question, a respondent may choose more than one answer)

(For those who have been to Mainland China, "What were your purposes of the visit?"	Number
Sightseeing	153
Followed parents or elders	40
To visit relatives	39
On business	37
To study	2
To do research	9

The number of respondents=191

While the interest in traveling to Mainland China is ranked second in Table 16, intention to “identify myself as ethnic Chinese” is ranked the same place in Table 15 and third place in Table 16. 144 people marked this choice as one of the top five reasons for studying Standard Chinese. The answer might imply two meanings: 1) “I want to maintain my Chinese identity,” and 2) “I want to develop my Chinese identity.” Whether a person belongs to 1) or 2) depends on the degree of assimilation.

Other popular factors motivating people to study Standard Chinese were: “demand of parents,” “desire to speak with Chinese relatives or Chinese friends,” “interest in Chinese culture” and “interest in Chinese characters” etc. These answers were observed before the 1990s as well. These “old values” exist side by side with new values. Although more and more people have come to study Standard Chinese for business purpose, some ethnic Chinese still identify themselves as the “offspring of Chinese” and they do not easily change their attitudes towards Chinese language study.

Besides the reasons listed in Tables 15 and 16, there were also some minor reasons for studying Standard Chinese such as: “to use in the food market,” “following the current trend,” “to read sutras or the bible in Chinese,” or “to speak with a boyfriend or girlfriend who is Chinese.” People are tackling Standard Chinese from various standpoints.

#### **4.2.3. Image of Mainland China**

Not only the perceptual reasons presented this far, but also subconscious factors are related to one’s motivation to study the language. Table 20 displays the interviewees’ image of Mainland China; China in the past, at present and in the future. It was an open-ended question and the respondent was permitted to write more than one answer. In the table, answers are classified into “positive images” (+) and “negative images” (-).

Regarding the images of China in the past, I discovered that people admire Chinese “high civilization” or “great tradition” from the earliest times. However, many people had negative images as well such as “undeveloped,” “closed” and “being overly restricted.” 84 people plainly answered that China in the past was frightening because it was “controlled by the Communists.”

What is remarkable is that these negative images almost disappear when it comes to the images of the present China. Many interviewees admitted that Mainland China has “developed rapidly,” “more internationalized,” and has become “attractive as a travel destination.” Some feel that Chinese people on TV are “trendy and fashionable.”

In regarding to the future prospect, much more people have positive opinions. An overwhelming majority answered that “Mainland China will be more developed and internationalized,” believing that “China will

achieve the status of a world power.” Mainland China’s admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) is one of the leading reasons convincing people of the country’s further growth.

**Table 20**  
**Images of Mainland China**

**(Open-ended question, a respondent may write more than one answer)**

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A. Ancient China

(+) High civilization with great tradition 77,  
morally and spiritually cultivated 6, etc.

(-) Undeveloped 151, controlled by Communists 84, closed 77,  
overly restricted 23, too much conventional 8,  
not attractive for travel destination 3, etc.

B. Present China

(+) Developed rapidly 274, more internationalized 80,  
attractive for travel destination 22, trendy and fashionable 6, etc.

(-) Great disparity between big cities and remote areas 9,  
morally decadent 5, too much influenced by Western culture 5, etc.

C. China in the future

(+) Much more developed 354, much more internationalized 6, etc.

(-) Great disparity between big cities and remote areas 3,  
Chinese people will become materialistic 3,  
too much influenced by Western culture 2, etc.

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In the 1990s some Chinese experts were concerned that economic growth in China might slow down someday. For example, Lester R. Brown worried about the country’s food shortage (1995: 23-32). Gordon G. Chang warned that Mainland China would collapse in a few years (2002: xvi-xxix). However, most interviewees in the research have optimistic ideas toward China’s further development. It can be said that the improved image of Mainland China and the optimistic prospect of further

development of the country have influenced many people to study Standard Chinese.

### 4.3. Situation within Chinese Language Schools

#### 4.3.1. Size of a Class and Tuition

After Chinese language schools were legalized, they became larger and larger in size; some schools now have as many as 3,000 students. For more efficient learning, a school often provides many small classes. This enables students to study according at their level of ability. Table 21 shows the size of a class. In most cases, the number of students in a class is between 11 and 20. This is almost the same as the number of students in one school before the 1990s.

**Table 21**  
**Number of Students in a Class**

Number of students in a class	Number	%
Less than 10	26	6.5
From 11 to 20	267	66.75
From 21 to 30	84	21
More than 31	10	2.5
No answer	13	3.25

The number of respondents=395

Tuition fees varied according to schools and classes. Usually, the longer the courses are, the cheaper the tuition becomes. According to Table 22, the average monthly tuition paid by each student was around 1,000 baht. This is about one tenth of the average monthly expenditure of Thai

people.<sup>4</sup> Some students pay more than 2,000 baht per month. Not a little amount of money is invested in Chinese language study.

**Table 22**  
**Monthly Tuition**

Monthly Tuition (baht)	Number	%
Less than 1000	54	13.5
1000-Less than 2000	317	79.25
2000-Less than 3000	12	3
No answer	17	4.25
Total	400	100

#### 4.3.2. Language Skills and Contents of Instruction

Language skills the students are supposed to acquire in Chinese language schools include listening, speaking, reading and writing (Ministry of Education c.1992). The following two questions were covered in the questionnaire: 1) “Which language skill is most emphasized in your class?” and 2) “Which language skill do you prefer to study best?” However, the answers were totally scattered and it was hardly possible to analyze the results. The data show that listening and speaking skills, which were not emphasized before the 1990s, are regarded as equally important to reading and writing skills today.

Regarding the contents of instruction, most students study daily conversation, cultural topics and articles for amusement. In advanced classes, students also study historical tales, technical terms, and economic and political topics. Some students are studying the Chinese classics as

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<sup>4</sup> The average monthly income of Thai people in 2000 was 12,150 bath and average expenditure in the same year was 9,848 bath (Tomotoda. Homepage 2003).

well. Although the Thai government intends to promote economic development through language study, it is inconvenient to study only about business terms. As long as one is learning a language, being exposed to cultural topics is inevitable. Through studying these Chinese classics, students would understand Chinese way of thinking better, which may help ethnic Chinese acquire Chineseness.

#### 4.3.3. Nationality of Teachers

Table 23 shows the nationality of teachers that the interviewees are studying with. According to the table, 80% of the interviewees were studying with at least one teacher from Mainland China. This is also a new phenomenon. Before the Thai government agreed to support Chinese language study, all the teachers of formal Chinese schools had to be fluent in Thai. This qualification excluded Mainland Chinese teachers from teaching a Chinese language in Thailand. The situation was supposed to be the same in Chinese language schools as well. That is why some students discerned that their teachers had strong accents and could not pronounce the sounds of Standard Chinese correctly.<sup>5</sup> Owing to the increasing number of Mainland Chinese teachers today, the pronunciation problem can be dissolved.

**Table 23**  
**Nationality of Teachers**

Nationality of Teachers	Number	%
Thai	73	18.25
Chinese	184	46
Both Thai and Chinese	136	34
Cannot tell	2	0.5
No answer	5	1.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>5</sup> See page 24.

The students' feelings towards the teachers are listed in Table 24. 219 students said that they were satisfied with Chinese teachers in terms of pronunciation. This follows that the pronunciation problem is resolved owing to the increasing number of Chinese teachers. As for Thai teachers, 91 students thought their explanations were understandable. On the other hand, the same number of students admitted that Chinese teachers have more extensive knowledge about the language and culture. This is why most classes instruct a subject using a combination of Chinese and Thai teachers.

Besides bestowing these communication skills, another important role of teachers is to be a "role model." Guskin explained that traditionally, an important function of Chinese school teachers was to be a "model of behavior" (1968: 62). He suggested that the lack of Chinese role models in Thai schools promoted assimilation of Chinese youth into Thai culture (ibid.).

Does the situation today support ethnic Chinese students in acquiring Chinese behavior and ways of thinking? Some interviewees said, "Chinese teachers are earnest." Others commented, "Chinese teachers have teachers' spirits (*winyaan khru*)." This means that these students are concerned with the teachers' personalities and also have favorable opinions of them. It follows that there is a possibility for the students to learn "Chinese ways" through their Chinese teachers.

**Table 24**  
**Differences Between Thai Teachers and Chinese Teachers**  
**(Open-ended question, a responder may write more than one answer)**

<u>Differences between Thai teachers and Chinese teachers</u>	<u>Number</u>
Chinese teachers' pronunciation is better than Thais'	219
Chinese teachers have better knowledge about the language and culture	91
Thai teachers' explanation is more understandable	91
There is no difference between the nationality of teachers	38
Others	28
No answer	13

The number of respondents=369

#### **4.4. Benefits of Studying Standard Chinese**

The previous research results identified “which students attend Chinese language schools,” “why they study there,” and “what Chinese language schools provide the students.” The next question is: “What do the students gain from the language study?” The question was asked in an “open-ended” form so that the students could express individual opinions.

The answers are listed in Table 25. The meaning of some answers overlap with each other. For example, “I have more chances in business” can be integrated into “communication skills,” or “I understand Chinese TV, movies and songs” into “Chinese culture.” However, I left the answers as they are because each has a different nuance.

Looking at Table 25, it is found that the answers reflect the students' motivations to study Standard Chinese. Both in Table 15 and Table 16, the most popular reason for studying Standard Chinese was “to make use



of business.” Similarly, the most popular answer in Table 25 was “I can communicate with people who speak Standard Chinese.”

**Table 25**  
**Benefits of Studying Standard Chinese**  
**(Open-ended question, a respondent may write more than one answers)**

Benefits of studying Standard Chinese	Number
I can communicate with people who speak Standard Chinese	234
I have more chances in business	124
I know Chinese history, culture and Chinese way of thinking	117
I can read and write Chinese	111
I understand Chinese TV, movies and songs	38
I made friends	37
I feel more sophisticated	14
I understand the movement in the Mainland China	10
I feel more Chinese than before	9

The number of respondents=373

The second most popular answer was “I have more chances in business.” Some interviewees said that knowledge of Standard Chinese was useful when they needed to communicate with Chinese speaking customers. It was also advantageous to know Standard Chinese when they apply for a job. This substantial value satisfies most present Chinese language students.

As already explained, students expect not only to acquire communication skills, but also cultural things as well. Correspondingly, 117 people answered that they acquired some “knowledge about Chinese history, culture and the Chinese way of thinking.” Some students say that they

became “more patient, spiritually strengthened by writing Chinese characters or by studying Chinese classical literature.”

Other answers include: “I understand Chinese TV, movies and songs,” “I made friends,” “I feel more sophisticated,” “I knew the movement in Mainland China,” and “I feel myself more Chinese than before.” As regards the last answer, it can be assumed that the content of the lessons, which are based on cultural topics, and the existence of Chinese role models probably helped to stimulate the identity of ethnic Chinese students.

It is remarkable that those who answered, “I feel myself more Chinese than before” in table 25 were concentrated between the ages of 18 and 30, and rarely speak a Chinese language at home, if at all. Today, as fewer students have first generation Chinese immigrant parents, Chinese languages and culture are less a part of their family. Although “desocialization”<sup>6</sup> no longer exists, lack of Chinese role models inside the house makes it difficult for people to acquire a sense of “being Chinese.” Through learning Standard Chinese outside, those who have a vague identity as “ethnic Chinese” become more interested in Chinese culture, which promoted a “development of their Chinese identity.”

## **4.5. Future Opportunities**

### **4.5.1. Opinions About the Present Government’s Policy Toward Chinese Language Study**

Before forecasting the future of Chinese language study in Thailand, let us examine the interviewees’ opinions about the present government’s policy

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<sup>6</sup> See page 19.

towards Chinese language study. This question is not limited to the policy towards Chinese language schools, but it also includes the overall situation of Chinese language study in the country. Answers are listed in Table 26.

According to the table, 36.25% of the interviewees thought that the present government gives adequate support to Chinese language study. Most of them referred to the increasing number of Chinese language schools and increasing Chinese language curriculum available in private schools and universities as the reasons for applauding the government's policy. 9.25% of the interviewees thought that the present government gives "a little" support to Chinese language study. They admitted that today's policy is better than those in the past, yet they were still not satisfied with it.

**Table 26**  
**Opinions About the Present Government's**  
**Policy Toward Chinese Language Study**

"Do you think the Thai government today gives enough support to Chinese study ?"	Number	%
Yes	145	36.25
A little	37	9.25
No	168	42
No idea	17	4.25
No answer	33	8.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

42% thought that the government does not give enough support to Chinese language study. Their main arguments were: 1) Chinese language curriculum is not widespread enough in public schools, 2) Chinese language school tuition is expensive, 3) The government should give more

scholarships to students who wish to study in Mainland China, and 4) Standard Chinese should be the second foreign language of the country.

The last component was the most leading opinion from the interviewees. They want to upgrade the status of Standard Chinese to at least as the same level as English. Although the Thai government is more supportive of Chinese language study than before, it is not yet enough in the view of many Chinese language students. People's desire to spread Standard Chinese is unchangeable. This pressure will push the government to support Chinese language study much more in the future.

#### 4.5.2. Aspiration for Continuing to Study Standard Chinese

Table 27 displays the interviewees' aspiration for continuing their study of Standard Chinese. 133 people answered that they would continue studying Standard Chinese as long as possible while 96 people said they would continue the language study until they master it. The datum suggests that most students were strongly determined to continue studying Standard Chinese.

**Table 27**  
**Aspiration for Continuing to Study Standard Chinese**

"How long will you study Standard Chinese?"	Number	%
As long as possible	133	33.25
Until I will be able to speak, read and write	96	24
Until the course will finish	41	10.25
For a few years	37	9.25
Less than a year	20	5
Not sure	36	9
Others	7	1.75
No answer	30	7.5
Total	400	100

Table 28 shows the possible reasons for terminating their studies of Standard Chinese. The most popular reason was “no time.” This means that the students of Chinese language schools are not there because they have spare time, rather they are trying to find time to study the language.

**Table 28**  
**Possible Reasons for Stopping Studying Standard Chinese**  
**(Closed-ended question, a respondent may mark more than one answers)**

“If you would stop studying Standard Chinese, what do you think the reasons will be?”	Number
No time	245
Too difficult	42
I have studied Enough	40
Bored	37
No chance to use Standard Chinese	31
Tuition is too expensive	23
Others	22

The number of respondents=394

Let us look at Table 29, which displays one’s feeling of necessity for studying Standard Chinese. 83% of the students feel, “It really is (necessary to study Standard Chinese)” or “it is.” This means that the utility of Standard Chinese is very high in Thai society today. People spare time for the language study because it is a “language of necessity.”

Besides those people who have potentially “no time,” others cited “too difficult,” “I have studied enough,” “bored,” “no chance to use Standard Chinese” etc. as the possible reasons to stop studying the language. 23 people answered that the tuition was too expensive for them. The reduction of tuition fees would give those less affluent students more opportunities to study the language.

**Table 29**  
**Feeling of Necessity for Studying Standard Chinese**

“Is it necessary for you to study Standard Chinese?”	Number	%
It really is	120	30
It is	215	53.75
Not really	37	9.25
Not at all	23	5.75
No answer	5	1.25
Total	400	100

#### 4.5.3. Aspiration for Encouraging Descendants to Study Standard Chinese

Finally, let us examine the interviewees’ ambition to preserve Chinese language. Before the 1990s, most people attended Chinese language schools because their parents encouraged it. The intention of their Chinese parents was to pass the language and culture of their ancestors to their offspring. Has this situation changed today? Looking at table 30, the majority of the interviewees answered that they would encourage their children to study Standard Chinese. However, their motivations to encourage Standard Chinese were not exactly the same as before.

**Table 30**  
**Aspiration for Encouraging Descendants to Study a Chinese Language**

"Will you encourage your descendants to study a Chinese language?"	Population	%
Yes	342	85.5
Not sure	14	3.5
No answer	44	11.0
Total	400	100.0

The top three reasons why they would encourage their children to study Standard Chinese were: “Standard Chinese will be important in the future,” “To know another language is good,” “There will be a chance to use Chinese in business.” These answers have nothing to do with sentimental feelings to preserve the language and culture of their ancestors.

While the majority intended to promote Standard Chinese for its “instrumental value,” 37 interviewees answered that they would encourage their children to study Standard Chinese because “this is the language of their ancestors.” Although speaking pattern of Standard Chinese is different from languages used by Chinese immigrants, most respondents regarded Standard Chinese as “the language of ancestors” in the context that this is a part of “things Chinese.” On the other hand, some respondents seem to mix up the varieties of Chinese languages and believe that the language they are studying is totally the same language as their ancestors.<sup>7</sup>

No matter how they understand Standard Chinese, their motivation to encourage their children to study the language comes from pride in Chinese culture. An interviewee answered, “Ethnic Chinese should learn Standard Chinese because even foreigners can speak a Chinese language now.” The global popularity of Standard Chinese is also serving to inspire ethnic consciousness.

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<sup>7</sup> They could not tell the difference from Standard Chinese and other Chinese languages in the question “Why did you choose to study Standard Chinese?” (See page 44).

**Table 31**  
**1-5 Ranking of the Respondents' Reasons for Encouraging**  
**the Descendants to Study a Chinese Language**  
**(Open-ended question: A respondent may write more than one answers)**

(For those who answered "yes" in above question)

"Why?"	Number
1. Standard Chinese will be important in the future	152
2. To know another language is good	46
3. There will be a chance to use in business	41
4. A Chinese language is a language of ancestors	37
5. The Mainland China has a large population	11

The number of respondents=322

#### **4.6. Summary**

From the research results, I discovered that the interviewees include men and women whose age background widely scattered. The most highly populated age group was 23 to 30. Of the total interviewees, 34.5% were high school or university student

ts and approximately 60% were working people. Among the various occupations, the portion of people engaged in the business sector was the highest.

Of all the interviewees, 97% had Chinese ancestors and 3% were non-Chinese Thai. It is a “new trend” that non-Chinese Thai are becoming interested in Chinese language study. Among the interviewees who had Chinese ancestors, most had Chinese-speaking relatives, but not many used a Chinese language at home very often. The situation can be attributed to the decrease of China-born parents.

Among varieties of Chinese languages, the language taught in all three Chinese language schools surveyed was Standard Chinese. What is



important is that the Thai government now allows Chinese language study to promote business between the countries, not to promote Chinese cultural identity. People also come to respect the “instrumental” value of Standard Chinese, rather than its “symbolic” function.

The most popular reason for studying Standard Chinese was “to make use of it in business.” It can be said that today’s Chinese language schools are expected to meet the demands of acquiring international communication skills in business fields. However, it does not mean that the former role of “maintaining Chinese identity” is totally lost. According to table 15, 37% of the interviewees intend to maintain or develop their ethnic identity by studying Standard Chinese.

The improving image of Mainland China is probably encouraging this attraction to “things Chinese.” Bao argued that being identified as ethnic Chinese at school was a “shameful thing” before (1994: 147). Now people would feel no shame in studying the language because the majority has positive images of both present China and China in the future.

Not only the people’s viewpoints towards Chinese language study, but also the situation of Chinese language schools has widely changed. For example, the number of students in language school has greatly increased, listening and speaking skills that were not emphasized before the 1990s has become important, and more and more teachers from Mainland China are employed. The present situation serves to develop practical skills in Standard Chinese. It also helps students understand Chinese culture better.

What benefits do the students of Chinese language schools gain from this situation? The most popular answer for the question was “I can communicate with people who speak Standard Chinese.” The second most

popular answer was “I have more opportunities in business.” The rest thought it was good to have a better understanding of Mainland China, such as Chinese culture, history, and movement within the country. The placing of these answers reflects the students’ motivations to study Standard Chinese.

What is remarkable is that 9 young people felt themselves “more Chinese than before” after studying Standard Chinese. Contents of instruction based on cultural topics and the existence of Chinese role models (teachers from Mainland China) probably helped stimulate their sense of being ethnic Chinese.

In chapter 3, seven interviewees who attended Chinese language schools answered that Chinese language study itself did not change the identity of ethnic Chinese very much because they had a strong feeling of being ethnic Chinese even before they attended Chinese language schools. However, as the generations advanced, young ethnic Chinese today have less sense of being Chinese. Chinese language schools today probably have more influence on the identity of young ethnic Chinese than ever.

Then, are the students of Chinese language schools satisfied with the present government’s policy towards Chinese language study? The research revealed that many people admitted that the Thai government is more supportive of Chinese language study than before. On the other hand, more than half of the interviewees thought it was not enough. It can be said that people’s desire to learn Standard Chinese is stronger than the government’s desire to teach it. There is a possibility that Chinese language schools will undergo further transformation in the future.

Regarding the students' aspirations to continue studying Standard Chinese, the majority was strongly determined to continue studying the language. Most of them felt it was “necessary” to study Standard Chinese, which encourages them to spare time and money for it. Similarly, they were also determined to encourage their descendants to study Standard Chinese. Most of the respondents saw the importance of Standard Chinese as an international language, while 37 people wanted to preserve the language because “this is the language of their ancestors”



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## Chapter 5

### Conclusions

From the 1930s to 1980s, Chinese language schools had been suppressed by the Thai government because of its nationalistic and Anti-Communist policies. The regulatory control on Chinese language education was considered to promote the assimilation of ethnic Chinese into Thai culture (Skinner 1964: 89, Chirakraisiri 1988: 10, Guskin 1968: 61, Maxwell 1972: 22, etc.). However, Chinese language schools survived due to the Chinese parents' enthusiasm for preserving Chinese languages and culture. This study revealed that the external pressure did not serve to eradicate people's attachment to "things Chinese."

What was the role of Chinese language schools before the 1990s? According to the responses of eight interviewees who attended Chinese language schools during the 1940s to 1980s, practical communication skills were not really expected from Chinese language schools. They studied, or were encouraged to study, Chinese languages to enhance cultural grounding of ethnic Chinese. In a word, the main role of Chinese language schools before the 1990s was to maintain cultural identity of ethnic Chinese.

The situation surrounding Chinese language education has changed dramatically with the Thai government's removal, in 1992, of a ban on establishing Chinese language schools. Various factors were involved in this change, such as the conclusion of the Cold War. What is most important may be Mainland China's economic growth during the 1980s. The Thai government started to promote Standard Chinese so as to build

up economic relations with Mainland China and other Chinese speaking countries.

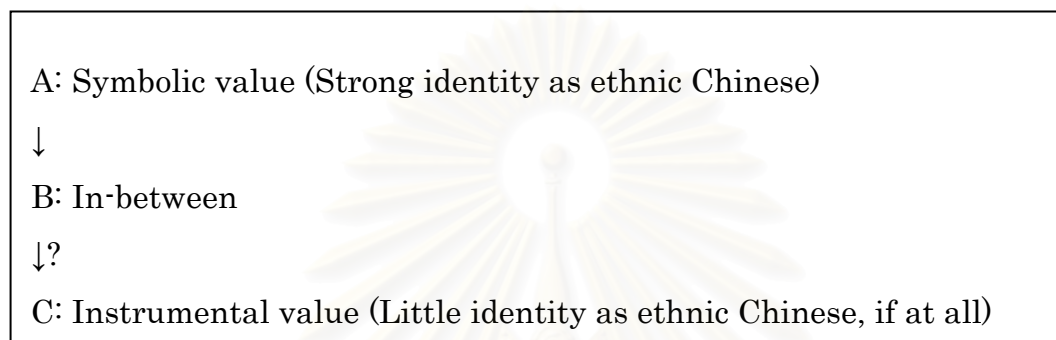
So, how have the people's attitudes towards Chinese language study changed since the 1990s? The research results of a questionnaire survey show that the majority of students in Chinese language schools today regard Standard Chinese as an "international language" and intended to utilize the language for "business purposes." This newly realized utilization of Standard Chinese has proved to be attractive for both ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese Thai.

In the late 1980s, Chirakraisiri predicted that ethnic Chinese youth would eventually lose their ability to speak a Chinese language because of the advance of cultural assimilation (1988: 110). He failed to consider that Mainland China's economic advancement would motivate young ethnic Chinese to study Standard Chinese outside their homes. In the near future fewer people will be able to speak non-standard forms of Chinese languages, but more people will learn Standard Chinese.

The question is whether it is inevitable that the next generations of ethnic Chinese will totally lose their Chinese identity and study Standard Chinese only for its instrumental value. Let us look at the diagram below illustrating three types of people attending Chinese language schools today.

Type A represents those who cling to the "symbolic value" based on their attachment to "things Chinese." This type may be represented by Thai-born-children who have a strong identity as ethnic Chinese. Type C represents those students who appreciate the "instrumental value" of the language without considering ethnic sentiment. This type may be

represented by non-Chinese Thai, or Thai-born-grand children or more advanced generation Chinese who have little Chinese identity, if at all. Type B is in-between type A and type C. This type includes any generation of ethnic Chinese who have at least a vague sense of being Chinese.



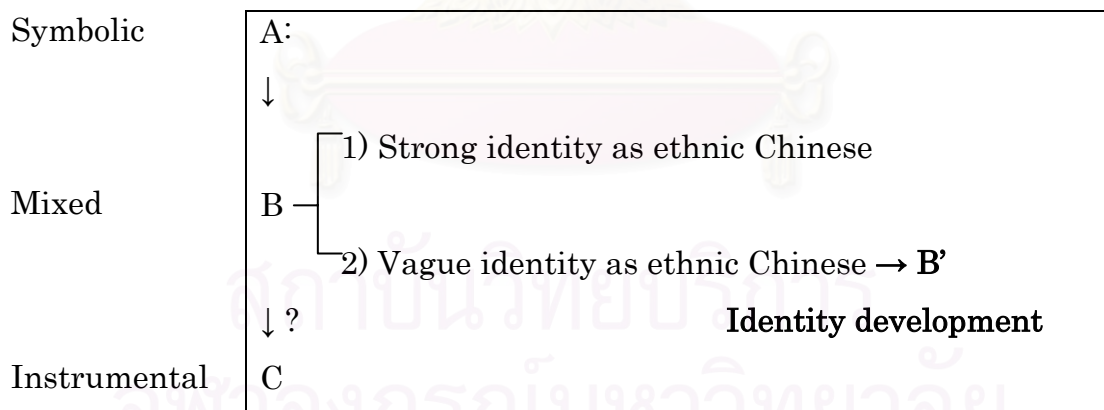
So far, the trend has been to shift from type A to type B. Advancing generations of ethnic Chinese, progressing assimilation rates, and increasing interest in the practical utility of Standard Chinese are the primary factors behind this shift. To examine further movement from type B to type C, let us focus on type B people. This type can be classified into two categories: 1) those who have strong identity as ethnic Chinese and are also interested in the instrumental value of the Chinese language, and 2) those who have vague identity as ethnic Chinese and are interested in instrumental value.

The people in the latter category are likely to be Thai-born-grand children or more advanced generation Chinese. Compared to Thai-born-children, they have little opportunity to interact with China-born people and thus inherit little Chinese culture and language ability at home. Due to their fluid “Chineseness,” B 2) type people possibly develop their Chinese identity through exposure to Chinese culture and role models in Chinese language schools. Therefore, some people in type B 2) can be transformed

into another type (B'). This serves to prevent the mobility from type B to type C.

It can be predicted that there will be more type B' people in the future. The decrease of China-born people, who can be Chinese role models at home, will make it difficult for new generation ethnic Chinese to have strong sense of "Chineseness." Yet it is still too early to tell whether all the ethnic Chinese will totally lose their Chinese identity. Since more ethnic Chinese will have a vague sense of being Chinese in the future, there is a potential that more people will develop Chinese identity by attending Chinese language schools.

Skinner predicted that the ethnic Chinese in Thailand would be totally assimilated in to Thai culture by the fifth-generation due to the adoption of Thai-educational system (1964: 89). His theory might be overthrown with the growing boom of Chinese language schools.



Let us summarize the two main objectives of Chinese language schools after the 1990s. One is to instruct international communication skills especially within business fields. The other is to develop and reform the identity of new generation ethnic Chinese. The first objective is how Chinese language schools today are programmed to function. The second

objective is brought about inadvertently in the process of pursuing the first role. Regarding the second role, it can be said that Chinese language schools will become one of the main places to form one's Chinese identity. Chinese families today may not be able to teach their children Chinese languages. However, they will encourage and supervise their children to enroll in Chinese language schools.

Finally, I will say a few words about the influence of Chinese language schools on the identity of the next generation of ethnic Chinese. Although Chinese language schools serve to develop one's ethnic identity, "Chineseness" that type B' people acquire will be different from type A and type B 1). While type A and type B 1) have learned "Chineseness" through a non-standard form of Chinese language by interacting with first generation Chinese at home, type B' people will learn it through Standard Chinese, which some of them study as the first Chinese language.

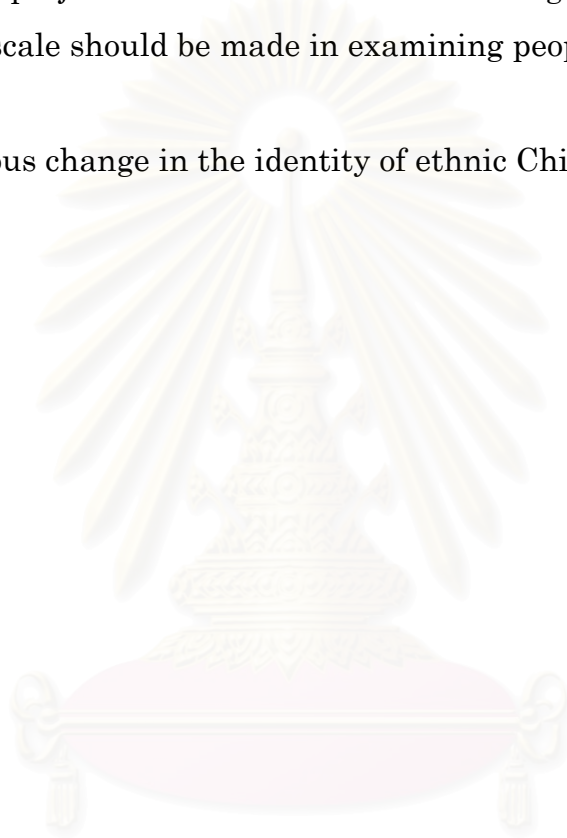
Sapir has argued that a common speech serves as a symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language (1960: 16-17). This means that type A and type B 1) have established social solidarity centering on a non-standard form of Chinese language, according to the origin of their ancestors. On the other hand, social solidarity that type B' establish will be centered on Standard Chinese. In the future, non-standard forms of Chinese would decline and cultural distinction between each Chinese language groups such as Teochiu, Hakka, Cantonese, Fukien and Hainanese may be diminished. Instead, the uniting power of Standard Chinese would have ethnic Chinese feel that they belong to one "Chinese" group. Ethnic Chinese in Thailand will be integrated into one Chinese culture based on the sphere of Standard Chinese.



## Recommendations

On the basis of my study, I would make following suggestions for future research:

- (1) Participant observation should be made to study how people use Chinese languages in their everyday life.
- (2) A research project should be conducted with larger sample groups.
- (3) A certain scale should be made in examining people's ability in Chinese.
- (4) A continuous change in the identity of ethnic Chinese should be observed.



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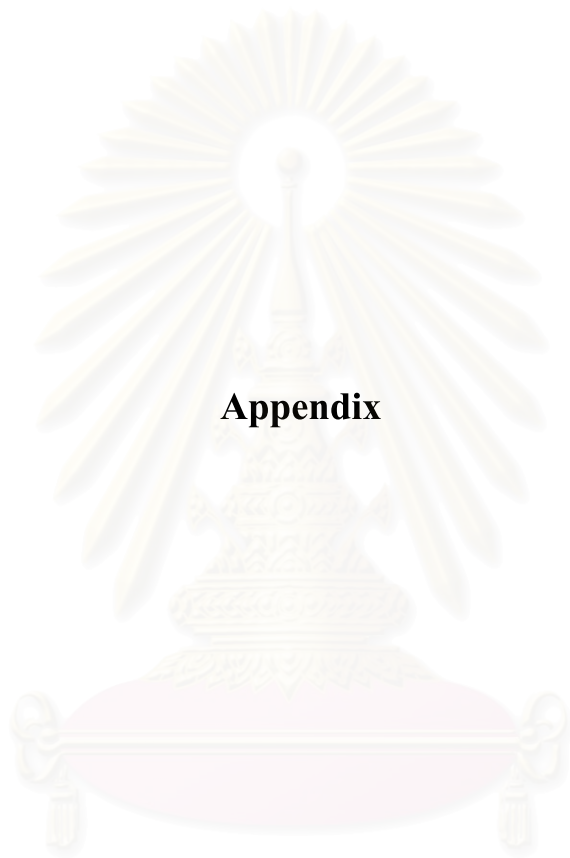
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**Appendix**

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## Questionnaire Form (Thai)

### แบบสอบถามเรื่อง การเรียนภาษาจีนในไทย

1. อาชีพ

- ( ) ค้าขาย                      ( ) ธุรกิจ                      ( ) ราชการ  
( ) อาชีพส่วนตัว              ( ) นิสิต/นักศึกษา              ( ) อื่นๆ(ระบุ).....

2. ( ) ชาย / ( ) หญิง

3. อายุ

- ( ) ไม่ถึง 18                      ( ) 18-22                      ( ) 23-30  
( ) 31-40                      ( ) 41-50                      ( ) 50ขึ้นไป

4. ท่านเรียนภาษาจีนที่สถาบันนี้มานานเท่าไร.....

5. ท่านเลือกเรียนภาษาจีนอะไร

- ( ) จีนกลาง                      ( ) แต่จิ๋ว                      ( ) อื่นๆ.....

→ จากคำถามข้อที่ 5 ท่านมีเหตุผลอะไรจึงเลือกเรียนสำเนียงนั้นๆ

6. ท่านใช้ภาษาจีนได้มากแค่ไหน

- ( ) พูดได้อย่างเดียว                      ( ) พออ่านออกเขียนได้  
( ) อ่านออกเขียนได้ดีมาก                      ( ) พูดอ่านและเขียนไม่ค่อยได้

7. เหตุผลที่เรียนภาษาจีน (กรุณาเรียงลำดับ 1.2.3.4.5)

- ( ) เพื่ออ่านนิยายจีน                      ( ) เพื่อดูหนังจีน  
( ) เพื่อร้องเพลงจีน                      ( ) เพื่อเข้าใจในวัฒนธรรมจีนมากขึ้น  
( ) เพื่ออ่านหนังสือพิมพ์จีน                      ( ) เพื่อเรียนรู้การเปลี่ยนแปลงภายในประเทศจีน  
( ) เพื่ออ่านคัมภีร์ภาษาจีน                      ( ) เพื่อพูดกับเพื่อนคนจีน  
( ) เพื่อพูดกับครอบครัวหรือญาติ                      ( ) เพื่อใช้พูดคุยกับคนในตลาด  
( ) เพื่อเอาไปใช้ในธุรกิจ/การทำงาน                      ( ) เพื่อไปเที่ยวประเทศจีน  
( ) เพื่อใช้ชีวิตที่ประเทศจีนในอนาคต                      ( ) เพราะมีคนรักหรือเพื่อนเป็นคนจีน  
( ) ชอบตัวอักษรจีน                      ( ) ประทับใจในการออกเสียงที่ไพเราะ  
( ) เพื่อสำนึกตนว่าเป็นลูกหลานคนจีน                      ( ) พ่อแม่ต้องการให้เรียน  
( ) เรียนตามกระแสนิยม                      ( ) อื่นๆ.....



8. ท่านเคยเรียนภาษาจีนมาก่อนหน้านี้หรือไม่

( ) เคย ( ) ไม่เคย

→ ถ้าเคย เริ่มตั้งแต่เมื่อไร.....ถึงเมื่อไร.....

สถาบันชื่อ.....

เหตุผลที่เรียน.....

สาเหตุที่หยุดเรียนเพราะ.....

9. สำหรับท่านการเรียนภาษาจีนจำเป็นมากแค่ไหน

( ) จำเป็นมาก ( ) จำเป็นปานกลาง

( ) จำเป็นน้อย ( ) ไม่จำเป็นเลย

10. ท่านมีเชื้อสายจีนหรือไม่

( ) มี ( ) ไม่มี

11. ในครอบครัวของท่านมีคนพูดภาษาจีนหรือไม่

( ) มี ( ) ไม่มี

→ ถ้ามี ผู้ที่พูดภาษาจีนคือ (เลือกได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

( ) ปู่ย่าตายาย ( ) พ่อแม่ ( ) พี่น้อง

( ) ญาติมิตร ( ) คู่รักหรือคู่ชีวิต ( ) ทั้งหมด

( ) อื่นๆ .....

พูดภาษาจีนอะไร (เลือกได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

( ) จีนกลาง ( ) เต๋อจิว ( ) กวางตุ้ง ( ) ฮกเกี้ยน

( ) ไหหล่า ( ) แคะ ( ) อื่นๆ .....

ท่านมีโอกาสใช้ภาษาจีนในครอบครัวของท่านหรือไม่

( ) มีมาก ( ) มีปานกลาง

( ) มีน้อย ( ) ไม่มีเลย

12. ท่านเรียนภาษาจีนกับครูคนไทยหรือคนจีน

( ) ครูคนไทย ( ) ครูคนจีน

( ) ทั้งไทยและจีน ( ) อื่นๆ .....

13. ท่านคิดว่าครูคนจีนกับครูคนไทยหรือครูชาติอื่นๆ มีความแตกต่างในการสอนภาษาจีนอย่างไร

.....  
.....  
.....

14. ในการเรียนของท่านเน้นอะไรเป็นพิเศษ (เรียงตามลำดับ)

- ( ) สนทนา ( ) การอ่าน  
( ) การเขียน ( ) อื่นๆ.....

→ จากคำถามข้อที่ 14 ท่านชอบเรียนด้านไหนมากที่สุด.....

15. ระยะเวลาต่อหนึ่งหลักสูตร ชั้นเรียนประมาณ.....เดือน

16. ในชั้นเรียนที่ท่านเรียนมีนักเรียนจำนวน.....คน

17. ค่าใช้จ่ายในชั้นเรียนของท่านตกเดือนละประมาณ.....บาท

18. ชั้นเรียนของท่านเน้นเนื้อหาอะไรเป็นพิเศษ (เรียงตามลำดับ)

- ( ) ใช้สนทนาในชีวิตประจำวัน ( ) การเมือง  
( ) เศรษฐกิจ ( ) ภาษาและวัฒนธรรม  
( ) ประวัติศาสตร์ ( ) วิชาการ เช่นวิทยาศาสตร์ สังคมศาสตร์  
( ) บันเทิงคดี เช่นนิทาน เรื่องตลก ภาพยนตร์ ละคร ฯลฯ  
( ) อื่นๆ.....

19. ท่านเคยไปประเทศจีนหรือไม่

- ( ) เคย ( ) ไม่เคย

→ ถ้าเคย เคยไปประมาณ.....ครั้ง

ระยะเวลาที่อยู่ในประเทศจีนยาวที่สุดประมาณ.....วัน

ระยะเวลาที่อยู่ในประเทศจีนสั้นที่สุดประมาณ.....วัน

เหตุผลที่ไปคือ (เลือกได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

- ( ) ท่องเที่ยว ( ) ไปดูงาน ( ) ไปปฏิบัติราชการ  
( ) ไปทำธุรกิจ ( ) ไปเยี่ยมญาติ ( ) ไปเรียน  
( ) ไปศึกษาวิจัย ( ) ติดตามพ่อแม่ญาติผู้ใหญ่หรือเพื่อนไป  
( ) อื่นๆ.....

20. ท่านอยากจะเรียนภาษาจีนไปอีกนานเท่าไร.....

21. หากท่านต้องหยุดเรียนภาษาจีน ท่านคิดว่าเหตุผลที่ทำให้ต้องหยุดคืออะไร

- ( ) ไม่มีทุนเรียน ( ) ไม่มีเวลา ( ) เบื่อ  
( ) เรียนได้พอแล้ว ( ) เรียนแล้วไม่มีโอกาสใช้ ( ) ยากเกินไป  
( ) อื่นๆ.....

22. ท่านได้ประโยชน์อะไรจากการเรียนภาษาจีน

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....

23. ท่านมีทัศนะอย่างไรต่อประเทศจีน

ก.ประเทศจีนในอดีต.....  
.....  
.....

ข.ประเทศจีนในปัจจุบัน.....  
.....  
.....

24. ท่านคิดว่าประเทศจีนในอีก 10 ปีข้างหน้าจะเป็นอย่างไร

.....  
.....  
.....

25. ท่านจะส่งเสริมหรือสนับสนุนให้บุตรหลานของท่านได้เรียนภาษาจีนหรือไม่  
เพราะเหตุใด

.....  
.....  
.....

26. ท่านคิดว่าปัจจุบันนี้ประเทศไทยหรือนโยบายรัฐบาลไทยสนับสนุนการเรียนการสอน  
ภาษาจีนหรือไม่ อย่างไร

.....  
.....  
.....

27. ในอนาคตท่านอยากให้ประเทศไทยกับจีนมีความสัมพันธ์กันโดยเน้นไปในทางด้านไหน เพราะอะไรจึงเน้นทางด้านนั้น และจะมีวิธีอย่างไรให้ความสัมพันธ์ทางด้านนั้นประสบความสำเร็จ

.....

.....

.....

.....

ขอบคุณเป็นอย่างยิ่งสำหรับความร่วมมือของท่านค่ะ



สถาบันวิทยบริการ  
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

## Questionnaire Form (English)

### 1. Occupation

- Merchant                       Businessman                       Government officer  
 Family business               Student                               Others (specify).....

### 2. Male / Female

### 3. Age

- Less than 18                       18-22                               23-30  
 31-40                               41-50                               More than 50

### 4. How long have you been studying a Chinese language in this school?.....

### 5. Which Chinese language did you choose to study?

- Standard Chinese               Teochiu                               Others.....

→ From the question number 5

What is the reason for choosing the language?

.....  
.....  
.....

### 6. How is your ability in the Chinese language?

- Able to speak only  
 Fair in reading and writing  
 Very good in reading and writing  
 Not good in speaking, reading and writing

### 7. What are your reasons for studying the Chinese language?

(Please rank 1.2.3.4.5.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To read Chinese novels                  | <input type="checkbox"/> To see Chinese movies                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To sing Chinese songs                   | <input type="checkbox"/> To understand Chinese culture                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To read Chinese newspapers              | <input type="checkbox"/> To know movements in Mainland China                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To read sutras or the Bible in Chinese  | <input type="checkbox"/> To speak with Chinese friends                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To speak with parents or relatives      | <input type="checkbox"/> To use in a food market                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To make use of business                 | <input type="checkbox"/> To travel to Mainland China                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To live in Mainland China in the future | <input type="checkbox"/> To speak with Chinese girlfriend / boy friend / spouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be interested in Chinese characters     | <input type="checkbox"/> Be impressed with the sounds of the language           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To identify myself as ethnic Chinese    | <input type="checkbox"/> Demand of parents                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Following the current trend             | <input type="checkbox"/> Others.....  |

8. Have you ever studied a Chinese language?

- Yes  No

→ If yes

Studied when..... until .....

Name of the school you attended :.....

Reason for studying: .....

Reason for giving up studying:.....

9. Is it necessary for you to study the Chinese language?

- It really is  It is  
 Not really  Not at all

10. Do you have Chinese ancestors?

- Yes  No

11. Do you have family members who speak any of Chinese languages?

- Yes  No

→If yes, who is the one who speak the language? (You can fill more than one choice.)

- Grand parents  Parents  Siblings  
 Close relatives  Spouse  All  
 Others.....

Which Chinese language do they speak? (You can fill more than one choice.)

- Standard Chinese  Teochiu  Cantonese  Fukien  
 Hainanese  Hakka  Others.....

How often do you use the Chinese language at home?

- Use very often  Use occasionally  
 Rarely use  Not use at all

12. What is the nationality of your teachers?

- Thai  Chinese  
 Both Thai and Chinese  Others .....

13. What do you think is the difference between Thai, Chinese or teachers of other nationality?

.....  
.....  
.....



22. What are the benefits of studying the Chinese language? Why?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

23. What are your images of Mainland China?

A. China in the past

- .....
- .....
- .....

B. Present China

- .....
- .....
- .....

24. What do you think Mainland China will be in ten years?

- .....
- .....
- .....

25. Will you encourage your descendants to study the Chinese language? Why?

- .....
- .....
- .....

26. Do you think the Thai government today gives enough support to Chinese study?

- .....
- .....
- .....

27. Regarding the relationship between Thailand and Mainland China, which aspect do you think is needed to be reinforced?

- .....
- .....
- .....

Thank you very much.



## **Biography**

Marisa Kotani was born in Bangkok, Thailand. She began her schooling in 1983 in Kyoto, Japan. In 2000 she received a Bachelor of Art degree in sociology from Keio University, Japan. In the same year she began her studies in the Thailand Studies Program at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.



สถาบันวิทยบริการ  
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