Abstract:

The post-war situation in Singapore poses two problems in education, namely: (1) that of rehabilitation and (2) that of building a new education system in preparation of self-governance for the British Colony. The British Colonial Government, in its assessment of the situation, sought to solve these problems through the adoption of policies which proved detrimental to the continual growth and development of the established Vernacular education systems, in particular, the Chinese education system. Faced with discriminatory policies by the Government, the Chinese Education Community has nevertheless been able to propose a different way of looking at and solving the post-war education problems. Through the analysis of government policies as well as views put forward by the Chinese Schools’ Conference in regard to these, this paper hopes to shed light on how the Chinese Education Community interprets and purports to resolve the situation in the first decade after the war (1945-55). This essay argues that by 1949, the Chinese Education Community was not only fully capable of, but equally willing to assist the Government in solving its education problems. Political considerations, however, prevented the Government from giving the Chinese Education Community the reasonable cooperation and support which was much needed. This has not only brought the Chinese Education Community in face of grave adversities, it has also greatly limited the extent of their contribution to the solving of the education problems, which the Government may well have found useful.