Social Mobility and Economic Development[1]

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I

In addition to Japan, an Asian country which appears to have achieved a noticeable amount of economic development is Communist China. This observation is valid especially if one refers to the phrase "economic development" as a process by which a non-industrial economy is transformed to on industrial economy. While Japan has gone through the process of economic, i.e., industrial, development, Communist China is still largely involved in it.[2] Suffice it to say that though both Japan and Communist China have set as their ultimate goal the industrialization of their economy, it is quite apparent that the paths towards industrialization (and economic development) which the two countries took were drastically different. Consequently, the sociological end-products of their development are fundamentally different. Japan is a modern capitalist society analogous to industrial countries of the Western world. It is different from Communist China in the type of its social and economic organization. This difference is the difference in "kind" and not merely in "degree" of economic development. The fact that Japan and China have taken different routes toward economic development and subsequently have produced different forms of industrial societies is the phenomena of basic sociological importance. Indeed, these phenomena did not manifest themselves simply as chance occurrences, but there were crucial sociological principles underlying them.[3] Among

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2. The latest report in *Far Eastern Economic Review, 1966 Yearbook* (pp. 121-138) shows that Communist China has made considerable progress in light as well as heavy industries whose primary objective is to "aid agriculture."

3. The best analysis which presents a complete historico-sociological account of the difference in the ability of Japan and China to produce or develop modern capitalism is Norman Jacobs: *The Origin of Modern Capitalism and Eastern Asia,* Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1958.

the various features determining the difference in the conditions under which Japanese and Chinese economic development took place was the difference in the forms of social mobility in these respective countries.

Social mobility is found to be of prime importance in the process of economic development of underdeveloped or developing countries. It is known that while some forms of mobility serve to stimulate development, others prove to be detrimental to this process.[4] In the following paragraphs, we will discuss two basic forms or types of social mobility, i.e., individual mobility and group mobility. We will attempt to show their relationships with two types of economic development: (a) the type which leads to or accompanies modern capitalism; (b) the type which occurs along a non-capitalist line. As a demonstration, we will present, on the basis of Norman Jacobs' work, the role of individual mobility in Chinese development and that of group mobility in Japanese development. Finally, against this theoretical framework we will introduce the case of Thai social mobility as further evidence to support our explanation about social mobility and economic development.

II

The concept of social mobility is closely associated with the dynamics or change of society. Nevertheless, while it is acknowledged that no society is ever at a complete standstill, no sociologists would be satisfied with just this much of knowledge. A probe into the literature on social change would quickly reveal interests in such a variety of matters as types of change, rates of change, directions of change as well as sources or origins of change, and so on. In our attempt to understand the relationships between social mobility and economic development, it will therefore be wise to start out by making explicit meanings of our important concepts.

As mentioned above, we are concerned in this article with viewing economic development as it manifests two basically different types, i.e., one which leads to the emergence of or accompanies

4. Gino Germani: "The Strategy of Fostering Social Mobility" in *Social Aspects of Economic Development in Latin America I*, Egberts de Vries and José Medina Echavarria, eds., Paris, UNESCO, 1963, p. 211.

modern capitalism,[5] and one which does not. Broadly conceived, when either of these two types of economic development takes place, it brings about social change. However, like the phenomena of economic development with which it is associoted, social change which comes about either at the same time or following these two types of economic development seems also to fall into two different types. The first type may be termed "qualitative change" and the second type "quantitative change.' The former can be explained simply as a change in "kind" and the latter a change in "degree."

The qualitative change or the change in kind refers to a shift of the structure of a social system from one kind or type to another. By implication, a qualitative social change can be said to occur *only* when a social structure has disappeared and another has emerged to replace it. It will be shown in the case of Japanese economic development that this type of social change concomitantly occurred. That is, the structure of Japanese social stratification system transformed itself. Therefore, the industrial Japanese social stratification system is different from that of pre-industrial Japan.

By contrast to the qualitative change, the quantitative change denotes merely a change in degree which in effect means size or number. A quantitative social change occurs within each social system constantly. However, this type of social change does not result in the replacement of the existing social structure by a new one. For this reasion, a quantitative social change can be said to be a change which occurs *within* a social structure and not *of* a social structure itself. The changes within the respective systems of social stratification of China and Thailand, which will be shown below, are examples of this type of social change.

Qualitative and quantitative social changes are related to two basically different types of social mobility, i.e., group mobility and individual mobility. Group mobility, as we understand it, refers to the movement or change of position of social groups within a system

5. Modern Çapitalism, according to Max Weber, has these characteristics: (a) productive enterprise, under the ownership and operation of capitalists and their agents; (b) the productive enterprise in question is continuous, based on an impersonal future market; (c) the attainment of ratonal progt is the paramount motive for enterprise; (d) a distinctive technological organization, utilizing a *rational* bureaucratic system and based on the free labour of independent wage-earners; and (e) the ability to operate in and manipulate, a market relationship. (Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 3)

of social stratification *which results in complete* transformation of the structure of that social stratification system. On the contrary, individual mobility refers to the movement or change of position of individuals (or social groups, if this concept is used to refer to "individual" family or caste groups) within a system of social stratification *which does not bring about structural transformation to such a system.* When the social position (and its related status) of a social group or an individual person changes to a higher or lower rank in the status hierarchy, we say "vertical mobility" (of the sort of upward or downward mobility as the case may be) has occurred. On the other hand, when the social position (and its related status) of a social group or an individual person changes spatially, that is, it does not shift upwards or downwards on the status ladder, we say "horizontal mobility" has occurred. In our conception, both vertical and horizontal mobility can occur in terms of group mobility as well as individual mobility.

The concept of social groups, which we discuss in the light of group mobility, refers not merely to family groups which could move up and down on the status ladder of a society and not affect its structure. Social groups are far broader than individual families, however large in number the latter may be. For social groups must bear common consciousness of their members who are *rationally* bound together as groups. An example of common consciousness worth citing here is the consciousness of the *samurai* in Japan who emerged from among the peasants as a group to gain their corporate status during the struggle between the Taira and the Yoritomo warrior lords (Taira epoch, 1160-1192 A.D.). As a result of the shift in status and position of this group of people (from peasant class to *samurai* class) Japanese society witnessed a structural change. Similarly, at the end of the Tokuwaga epoch (1644-1911 A.D.) when the *daimyo* (estate overlords) and their *samurai* retainers, as groups with common consciousness and identities, amalgamated with the newly emerging merchants and bureaucrats to form modern merchant-industrialist and bureaucratic classes Japan underwent another period of structural transformation.

Individual mobility, however rapid and numerous, does not entail a change of the structure of a social system, though it may bring about change *within* the structure Thus individual mobility results in quantitative and not qualitative change. Because group mobility is accompanied by the change of a social structure, it is a qualitative change.

To emphasize the meaning of our concept of *group mobility,* it

need be pointed out once more that this type of mobility can be said to occur *only when and if* the shift in the position of a social group or groups affects the social structure to an extent that the entire structure is disrupted and transforms itself completely. Below the Japanese situation will be further treated.

In the light of our conceptualization, we therefore do not view such mobility as it exists within the caste system of India as group mobility. For in spite of the fact that caste groups transform their status collectively and move upwards or downwards on the scale of ritual differentiations[6] they merely operate to preserve the existing structure and are far from changing it. Our definition of group mobility in effect must differ from that introduced by Srinivas.[7]

III

Having thus defined the meanings of our concepts and our goal(s), we will now proceed to illustrate, along the line of Norman Jacobs' analysis, the nature of group mobility in Japan and that of individual mobility in China. We will then trace the relationships between these two types of social mobility and the two different kinds of economic development of China and Japan.

Jacob's analysis of Japanese and Chinese social differentiation is in the Weberian tradition. While he points out that, "social stratification must be discussed in terms of *class*," and goes on to say, "A class consists of social elements sharing an imputed identity of interests," he also recognizes the importance and necessity of distinguishing class from status—the latter he refers to as "corporate status." He defines corporate (status) groupings as those social groupings which "define for themselves, independently of any outside control, their rights, their freedom of action, their internal order or discipline, and their own membership; and outsiders recognize their right to do all these things, as legitimate privileges[8]."

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6. E. Ernest Bergel: *Social Stratification*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962, pp. 307-308.

7. M. N. Srinivas, *Caste in Modern India and other Essays*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1962, p. 58.

8. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19. For Max Weber's conception of class and status (i.e., interests and estates) see Reinhard Bendix "Max Weber's Sociology Today," *International Social Science Journal*, XVII, No. 1, 1965, p. 17, and Wolfgang Momsen, "Max Weber's Political Sociology and His Philosophy of World History," *Ibid.*, p. 30.

According to Jacobs,[9] the systems of social stratification of Japan and China were, and are, markedly different. In China, social evaluation and differentiation rested on *a priori* assumption that some social roles are *honorable* and others *dishonorable*. The honorable roles are assumed by people who are equipped, i.e., justified to lead. The dishonourable roles are assumed by those who are not equipped to lead and therefore must follow in order to ensure social harmony. Those who are equipped to lead are intellectual and virtuous people who are considered morally superior. On the other hand, those who are not equipped to lead are the people who lack intellect and virtue who are considered morally inferior and are expected to follow.

From the point of view of a corporate analysis of class, the Chinese social stratification system has always been characterized by two basically distinct corporate classes which have also been the basis of the Chinese power system and political apparatus. In classical China, these two corporate classes consisted chiefly of the traditional literati and the peasantry. The literati were the learned Confucians who knew the way of society; they monopolized the privileged fundamental occupation of leadership and legitimately occupied the apex of the social system. Below them in the status hierarchy were the ordinary or common people who were engaged in the unprivileged but fundamental occupation of agriculture. These two fundamental occupational interests formed the bases of two distinct corporate classes to which were equated interest categories such as landlords and craftsmen, etc. The landlords were equated in status with the members of the literati, who in rural areas were local officials (gentry). Likewise, the craftsmen and merchants were equated in status with the peasants. As a corporate class, the literati and their equated or related occupational interests (their "erstwhile allies" in Jacobs' language) are termed "corporate elite" greatly distinct from the corporate class of the peasantry. Most lucidly, Jacobs explains the two-class system of social stratification of traditional China: "The system operates at optimum efficiency when the privileged corporate class role is carried on by the same individuals (e.g. when a local official is also a landlord, money-lender, local constable, entrepreneus, etc.) and when the unprivileged roles are based on agriculture (or, in the case of non-fundamental occupation, if the individuals involved desire to return to the land). But the system does operate just as effectively by means of equating "interests" with either of the two traditional corporate categories-privilege and pro-

9. Cf. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-148.

tection at the apex of tolerance at the base—in an existing hierarchy of status."[10]

At the turn of the present century when the Nationalist (Kuomintang) Party took over, many traditional institutions including the examination system (established in the T'ang Dynasty) by which traditional scholars were recruited into government offices were abolished. At first glance this situation may appear to indicate that the system of social stratification was also overturned. But in actuality the two class system remained. China under the Nationalist Party still was, and is, characterized by the distinction between two basic corporate classes, except now the corporate elite was no longer made up of the learned Confucians. The elite membership was replaced by the Kuomintang Party members who were functionally equivalent to their predecessors, the deposed literati and their allies. Later, when the Communist Party gained dominance the corporate elite once more changed in its composition. Despite propaganda to the contrary, present-day Communist China's social stratification system is still the same two class system stratified by the privileged corporate elite at the apex and the unprivileged corporate labor (the functional equivalence of the peasantry) at the bottom. The Communist Party's propagation about the status importance of people's workers, the backbones of society, and about the equality among all occupational interests is easily verified against. If one would merely raise a question: where the Chinese workers derive their status from, the Communist slogan emphasizing their important role and status or their real identity as working people who are necessarily differentiated from their comrades in the Communist Party, one would understand clearly that the traditional Chinese two class system of social stratification remains intact. Indeed, industrial workers in Communist China today have formed a new occupational interest, but they are certainly equated in status with their counterpart in the fundamental occupation of agriculture. This corporate distinction between the Communist Party members and the rank and file workers of the People's Republic of China now is reminiscent of the situation in classical China in which soldiers, despite their horizontal mobility, derived their corporate status from their original identity as agriculturists rather than as members of the Imperial Service.

It is apparent that within the Chinese system of social stratification consisting of two basically distinct corporate classes social

10. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

mobility must be individual mobility. Regardless of its rates and quantity Chinese social mobility can occur only within the boundaries of the existing two corporate classes. Due to this type of social mobility, the changes which have occured to the status order of China, in the face of large scale technological change, have been quantitative rather than qualitative changes. In China, both under the Nationalist and Communist Party, no social elements have emerged and exerted themselves as legitimate, independent, and recognized corporate classes apart from the two already in existence. This phenomenon, witnessed in historical perspective, surely testifies that the Chinese social system functions in such a way that group mobility and qualitative change has not occured. Therefore, if we accept the thesis that economic development along the path of modern capitalism can happen only in the presence of a corporate commercial-industrialist class (which necessarily can come into being only in the process of structural transformation or qualitative change), we can understand why China did not achieve industrial and economic development along the modern capitalist line. Our argument is that China, because it did not allow group mobility, could not and has not developed in that direction.

In contrast to China, Japan's social stratification was characterized by great instability in the status hierachy. There was no *a priori* assumption that any particular occupational interests were to be privileged with special and fixed corporate status. Consequently, in Japan there was constant shifting and reshifting of status and roles, and in the process new occupational interests emerged and gained for themselves independent corporate status which was recognized as legitimate by all concerned. Unlike in China, in Japan all occupational roles were considered honorable, though not all were equally privileged. No occupation was considered *a priori* as fundamental or vital to the existence of society and that all other interests must be submitted to them. The presence of occupational roles in a specific division of labor and their prestige was related to a specific structure of power. The functional interplay between the power structure and the prestige of occupational interests was the prime factor underlying the differential evaluation of classes, which marked the social stratification system at any period of time. At all time, the Japanese system of differentiated social ranking was characterized by continuous attempt of all interests to secure prestige and equate their occupational roles with prestige and status. There was no ideal system of social stratification which outlived any specific hierachy. Continually, the privileged classes sought to maintain the status quo by means of harsh treatment of the unprivileged classes, and greatly

differentiating themselves in styles of living and consumption. The unprivileged classes, on the other hand, flagrantly and unceasingly violated the rigid class distinctions in an attempt to better their position on the status ladder.

Due to this type of social evaluation and differentiation, the Japanese social stratification system witnessed great instability within its status hierarchy. The shifting and reshifting of roles and status is traceable to as early as the Taikwa-Taiho epoch (645—866 A.D.) when an attempt was made by the Imperial court to establish a rigid class system on the model of Chinese society. In this epoch, the Imperial Authority sought to introduce a fixed status hierachy with the Imperial court-nobility at its apex as the privileged class. Next were to rank unprivileged tax-paying landowner-farmers subject to conscription and corvée labor and slaves in that order. This ideal hierachy, however, did not survive It soon began to crumble as a result of the rise to power of landlords who gradually challenged the Imperial Authority by refusing to pay tax and proclaiming independence from the Imperial court over their land. The most important phenomenon was the development of hereditary lineage among the warriors who aided Emperor Kobun in his campaigns of 671—672 A.D. These warriors soon emerged as a distinct corporate class in defiance of the hierarchy designed by the Taikwa-Taiho code. Simultaneously, many slaves freed themselves from the harsh treatment of their Imperial master by joining the rising independent landlords. The Taikwa-Taiho epoch came to an end when the Emperor finally lost his control over the landlords, who by now had established themselves as warrior lords with distinct corporate status. The failure of the Taikwa-Taiho code to install a fixed hierachy of status after the Chinese pattern was most complete when this structure totally collapsed and a new structure emerged to take its place. That is, at this time the structure of Japanese social stratification system was composed of these elements: Imperial court—nobility, rural estate lords and the lesser lords under them (*junin* or resident lords and *jishu* or administrator-protectors) and farmer-warriors. Unlike the Taikwa-Taiho hierarchy which it replaced, this new structure saw the Imperial court-nobility ranked merely equal to, and not higher than the rural estate lords. These estate lords, among whom were the Fujiwara, had gained for themselves recognized and independent status distinct from and equal to the Imperial corporate class. Below these two privileged classes stood the farmers who were also warriors.

It can be seen that the new structure was drastically different from its predecessor. Although the Imperial class still took the top

position in the hierachy, it was no longer the only dominant class as it had to share this privileged position with the landlords who became warrior lords. Underneath these two classes was the class of farmer-warriors. Many of these farmer-warriors were freed slaves who emancipated themselves, as a corporate class, from the Imperial mastery. In time, the farmer and the warrior became separate from one another, each forming a distinct corporate class. The members of the new warrior class discarded their agricultural occupation and applied their military force to subject their farmer counterparts to the rank of peasants who finally became serfs on the estates of landed over-lords (daimyo). This was the period when feudalism became entrenched as the form of medieval Japanese society.[11] The estate over-lords as a corporate class rose in status to the rank equal to the Imperial court. Almost constantly, there was a strong over-lord who emerged triumphant over the Imperial court and ran the affairs of the court on the Emperor's behalf. This particular over-lord, later known as the shogun, became the central nominal ruling figure in relation to whom the rest of the over-lords stood in varying distances. The shogun and the rest of the estate over-lords, shared the privileged position at the apex of the status ladder with the Imperial court. Equated with these privileged classes were the Buddhist priests who also owned land and wore arms. Beneath all these secular and sacred estate over-lords ranked the warrior-retainers who, as a corporate class, were privileged not to work on the land and produce for their own consumption. They were provided with rice stipend by the over-lords whom they served. At the bottom of the status ladder was the unprivileged class of peasants or serfs who were forced to cultivate the land which belonged to the overlords.

During the Tokugawa epoch (1603—1868 A.D.) the class system was fixed as *shi-no-ko-sho*: warrior, farmer, artisan and merchant. There were, however, other *de facto* elements which were left out of this scheme, viz., the clergy (which was equated with the class warriors), the court nobility and the outcasts (*eta*). According to this ideal hierachy which the *shogunate* introduced in its attempt to maintain the status quo, the artisan and the merchant (combined under the *cho* class) were to be the unprivileged class. However, these two occupational interests were distinct corporate classes. Gradually, the merchants increased their economic power and put the warriors into indebtedness. As the warriors, a corporate class, lost their status the feudal structure eventually disappeared. During the last years of

11. Generally speaking, the medieval period covers the time from the Taikwa-Taiho epoch to the end of the Tokugawa epoch in 1868 A.D.

feudalism many estate over-lords combined themselves with the merchants and mutually created a new corporate class of merchant-industrialists. When modern bureaucracy and military were built, many feudal warriors became absorbed into them, thus forming new interest categories in the modern industrial division of labor. In contrast to the amalgamation of these privileged classes, the farmers who were supposed to be free under the Tokugawa scheme of stratification once more found themselves subject to harsh treatment of the new privileged status groupings. In the modernization period, they became impoverished peasants toiling on the land which did not belong to them. To the merchants who—through their fiscal means—had acquired ownership of land, they were the source of stable rent. To the government bureaucracy, they were an easy channel of revenue. The peasants thus took the unprivileged position at the bottom of the status ladder. Until quite recently in the industrial era the outcasts (*eta*), the residual remnants of feudalism, survived as a corporate status grouping. Occasionally, they held meetings of their corporate association with an aim to improve their position in the modern Japanese hierarchy of status.

The emergence of modern industrialism or modern capitalism in Japan was not due to chance. Japanese society had many structural features which were conducive to change in this direction. Among the most crucial ones which served to provide favorable grounds for modern capitalism to arise was the nature or type of Japanese social mobility. We have analysed the transformation of social class structure over several important historical periods. The phenomena we have dealt with show us that social group mobility constantly occured in Japan. This type of mobility has concomitantly brought about structural (qualitative) changes, which finally resulted in the emergence of modern capitalism.

Modern capitalism, a form of social and economic organizations favorable for a particular line of economic development, emerged in Japan not as a consequence of planned action within a governmental or public context. It was the function of a particular type of social structure which allowed group mobility and the shift of the structure itself. When social mobility finally gave rise to a sufficiently strong corporate class of merchants and industrialists the society as a whole changed its structure and developed modern capitalism (and economic development along that line).

IV

With the theoretical foundation laid down in the previous sections, substantiated by the Chinese and Japanese evidence, we will now direct our attention to another Asian country, Thailand. Our examination of Thai historical phenomena reveals that Thai society has been characterized by individual rather than group mobility. To understand the nature of Thai individual mobility, an analysis of corporate class relations must be attempted in the light of the functional interdependence between the status order and the power structure as well as the division of labor over historical periods. Beginning from the earliest years of the Sukhothai epoch (1238—1350 A.D.), when Thailand became unified under a paternal ruler (*ph muang*) by the name of Phrá Rûang, the ruler together with his family and court officials occupied the top position in the status hierarchy. These categories of people constituted a privileged corporate class which was destined to remain intact in the Thai social stratification system for centuries to come. Below this privileged class were common people of various occupational interests, the most fundamental of which was agriculture. To the fundamental occupation of agriculture were equated other occupational categories such as merchants and artisans. The artisans, traditionally close to the soil, were easily equated with the farmers. The merchants, though greatly encouraged by Rama Kumhaeng, one of the rulers in this epoch, were also doubtlessly equated with the farming occupation. In the early period of Thai history, farmers were free. They were not subject to corvée labor or conscription. There were also no slaves. All of these occupational interests took the unprivileged position at the apex of the status ladder.

Aside from these two basic corporate classes of privileged and unprivileged interests, from the very beginning there were Buddhist priests who formed a separate status group. By comparison with the Japanese Buddhist clergy, the Thai Buddhist priesthood did not assume the role of a landowning interest or that of a warrior equated with the secular warrior class. The latter was absent in Thailand. Although the Buddhist priesthood enjoyed privileged status which was on the par with that of the secular privileged class, it was however different in one important respect. The criteria of evaluation of the priests were basically different from the criteria of evaluation of the secular elements. Therefore, in the Thai system of social stratification the Buddhist priesthood, though a privileged status group, was not equated with the secular privileged class but stood outside of the secular status hierarchy. This phenomenon, which we term

"status separation," of the secular and sacred elements in Thai social stratification remained observable throughout the entire history of Thailand.

Toward the close of the Sukhovthi epoch, there began to be several changes in Thai society. As a result of recurrent warfare against neighbouring states, especially Camodia, Thailand captured many prisoners-of-war who were brought back to the country as slaves. Later, when debt or bond slavery appeared the slaves became an important element which took the bottom position on the status ladder. Despite their common fate and identity, however, the slaves in Thailand never became a distinct corporate class. They were equated in status with the existing unprivileged class of agricultural and other interests who by now were greatly distinct from the privileged class. The farmers and their allies were now subject to corvée labor as well as conscription by the decree of the Royal authority. The king, also as a result of war contacts with the Cambodians, made himself a divine king instead of paternal ruler, his original title. A writer described him in this fashion, "The King had the attributes of a Brahmanic deity. Surrounded and protected by impregnable defenses of Brahmanic doctrine, magical regalia, sacred ritual, and sycophantic officials, he occupied a sacred and remote position—commoners could not approach him, those who spoke to him had to use a special language of deference; art portrayed him only under supernatural aspects."[12] The court officials, who by now became noblemen and bureaucrats—the eye-and-ear of His Majesty, as well as the members of the Royalty also differentiated themselves by a great social distance from the common people at the bottom of the status ladder.

From the point of view of a corporate analysis of class, the changes which took place in this period which affected various categories of people did not, in fact, affect the existing hierarchy of status at all. The basic distinction between the privileged corporate class and the unprivileged corporate class—the latter incorporated the slaves—remained unchanged. The change in the social distance between the two classes and the addition of the slaves into the unprivileged class was merely indicative of quantitative and not qualitative change. It was the change *within* and not *of* the structure of the social stratification system.

When the king of Thailand became a constitutional king in 1932,

12. Wendell Banchard, ed., *Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture,* Country Survey Series, New Haven: HRAF Press, 1955, p. 28.

the power apparatus changed in its components. Several political factions sprang up to assume the role of top leadership. Among them were western educated civilian and military officers who cooperated to overthrow the absolute monarchy. These emerging elements, no doubt, formulated new interest categories. Nevertheless, these new privileged categories were not in the least differentiated in status from the elements which they replaced, i.e., the king, the members of the Royalty and the traditional nobility. In fact, the king—who remains at the apex of the status ladder—the aforementioned traditoinal categories and the emerging elements became happily equated and shared common status privilege as a corporate class.

Starting from the reign of King Mongkut (1851—1868 A.D.) corvée labor was gradually abolished and during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868—1910 A.D.) the slaves were emancipated. These two actions of the nineteenth century monarchy entailed great freedom among the peasants. At present, Thai cultivators are free tax-paying citizens, though like all able-bodied Thai males they are subject to a modern conscription law. According to our corporate class scheme of analysis, however, the basic hierarchy composed of the privileged and unprivileged corporate classes remains in existence. The status differentiation between these two basic corporate groupings in present-day Thailand is most vividly observed by Michael Moerman. In a report of his study of a Northern Thai farm community, he writes:

> An official dressed in his western-style khaki uniform goes to address the wide-trousered, home-spun clad residents of a village. He speaks in Central Thai which many understand only with difficulty and all speak with diffidence. The address over, he is fed a meal of boiled rice which he eats with a fork and spoon. The villagers eat their steamed glutinous rice with fingers. These seemingly superficial distinctions are emblems of real differences in identification.[13]

One other interest category which must be seriously examined in a study of Thai social stratification is the merchants. Historically, the occupational role of the merchant has been an unprivileged one. It has therefore been equated with the unprivileged corporate class. In contemporary Thailand there have emerged many new occupational

13. Michael H. Moerman, *A Memorandum, A Northern Thai Village,* a mimeograph, USIS Southeast Asia Research Report, USIS, Bangkok, May, 1961, p. 6.

interests which are associated with the emerging economic structure. In addition to the businessmen of all sizes and importance, there are white collar workers and laborers. To understand the status groupings of these occupational categories, two important factors must be considered: first, the Chinese membership in the modern categories of commerce and labor, second, the status affiliation of the Thai membership in these categories. Inasmuch as the first factor is concerned, we see the Chinese interest categories as forming a *separate* status group outside of the Thai status system in a manner similar to the Buddhist priesthood in comparison to the secular status evaluation discussed above. The difference between the Buddhist priesthood and the Chinese interest categories, as a separate status group, in their relation to the Thai corporate class structure is simply that the criteria of evaluation of the former are religious while the criteria of evaluation of the latter are ethnic. As far as the second factor is involved, we see Thai commercial and labor elements as being conveniently equated with either of the two existing corporate classes which comprise Thai (secular) status hierarchy. Available evidence certainly does not convince us that Thai working class people have exerted themselves as a distinct status group. They are, in fact, equated with the unprivileged corporate class at the bottom of the status ladder. Thai white collar and other business categories, however, are equated with the privileged corporate class. They apparently share consumption values and styles of living.

Thus concludes our corporate analysis of Thai social classes. It has become apparent that the Thai social stratification system, like its Chinese counterpart, is of the type which allows only individual mobility and not group mobility to occur. Individual mobility, as we have demonstrated, has allowed individual persons and/or their families to change their position constantly. The ideal example of this type of mobility is the entrance into the Buddhist priesthood of individual males which changes their status individually. Nevertheless, social mobility can take place only within the existing hierarchy of status. It does not bring about a change of the structure of the social system itself.

Due to the individual nature of Thai social mobility, the Thai social system has not produced a corporate class of commercial interests and a transformed social structure. Whereas structural transformation or qualitative change does not and cannot occur in the Thai system of social stratification, we contend that if economic development, especially through industrialization, is to take place it must

take place within the context of existing class structure. For development to happen in this framework of stratification, however, the existing corporate classes, particularly the privileged one must be oriented in their attitude and permit it to happen. In Communist China, economic development is taking place within a hierarchy of status and power which has existed throughout the history. If economic development in this country can be evaluated as successful, it is indeed the result of the orientation (coerced or voluntary) of the privileged corporate classes, and not the consequence of a structural shift. Similar to Communist China, economic development in Nationalist China also seems to be gaining momentum. Like its mainland counterpart, it appears that development is taking place through the orientation of the privileged corporate class within the existing status hierarchy rather than as a product of a newly emerged structure.