TOK PISIN
I GO WE?

Proceedings of a Conference held at the University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby, P.N.G.
18-21 September, 1973

edited by K.A. McElhanon
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Published by the
Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea

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I

PREFACE, FOREWORD
AND
CONFERENCE
PROPOSALS
PREFACE

Tok Pisin has been a controversial subject in this country since it was first established here by workers returning from the sugar cane plantations in Queensland, where the language is said to have first developed. The German administration in New Guinea, contrary to popular myth, felt it would be a source of disgrace for the world standing of the German language if Tok Pisin were not rooted out, though in practice the language was used as an instrument of government. In Papua, though established before the first world war, Tok Pisin practically disappeared through competition from the Papuan lingua franca, Hiri Motu, and the hostility of the Australian administrator, Sir Hubert Murray, who referred to the language as "vile gibberish". Much later, in 1953, the abolition of Pidgin was called for by a United Nations Trusteeship Council Mission to New Guinea on the grounds that it was a corruption of English, its use was colonialistic, and it might do great harm to the psychology of Papua New Guineans who spoke it. Pidgin speakers themselves have often been defensive about its use, have felt themselves to be disadvantaged and have accepted that the use of English would eventually make Pidgin redundant, if not for themselves then for their children.

It is only recently that Tok Pisin has acquired status in the community. It is now the language most often used in House of Assembly debates. It is increasingly used by government departments and by the media; and as the most widely spoken language in Papua New Guinea, it is an obvious candidate for a national language. Nevertheless, controversy continues, expanding recently to include its name and technical status as a 'pidgin' as it becomes the mother tongue of increasing numbers of urban dwellers, and as moves towards the standardisation of the language begin to have some effect. Hostility towards the language continues in the Papuan Districts, and the equality of Hiri Motu as a contender for national status is consistently reaffirmed by Papuans, though more of them are becoming Tok Pisin speakers. Heated discussion continues on the suitability of Tok Pisin as an educational medium, though many people now accept that it may have an important role to play at least in primary education.

There is then an obvious need for objective assessment of the present position of the language and consideration of its future role in Papua New Guinea's development, in the culture, the education system, and the administrative structure. However, the impetus for this conference came not from inside the University but with the anonymous donation of $2000 given with the intention of involving the University of Papua New Guinea in Tok Pisin Studies, and in making the University a forum for 'Pidgineering'.

An organising committee was set up which was broadly representative of the administration, church groups, educators, and academics representing a number of disciplines, and including both staff and students of the University of Papua New Guinea, the students being unquestionably the better Tok Pisin speakers. The support and enthusiasm at those early meetings of Mr Ebia Olewale, then Minister for Education, was particularly appreciated and should be recorded here.

It was determined that a conference should be held at the University of Papua New Guinea from September 18th to the 21st 1973, with two
purposes: (1) to provide a forum for the discussion of matters relating to Tok Pisin, and (2) to arrive at concrete proposals to present to the government with regard to language planning. It was agreed that contributions should be invited internationally and from throughout Papua New Guinea, and that as many interests as possible should be represented. That this aim was at least partially realised is demonstrated by the papers collected in this volume; however, the intention to include in the conference the views of Tok Pisin speakers other than those with a professional or academic interest in the language was something of a failure, and perhaps inevitably the conference presents the views of the 'salesmen' rather than the 'consumers'; nor was there any hint of a devil's advocate.

As a result of the conference a committee has been established to promote the use and the standardisation of Tok Pisin as a medium of mass communication, but there has been no official response to the proposals on language planning that the conference addressed to the government. The language issue remains politically sensitive, but there has been a continuing movement towards the use of vernacular languages and the lingue franche in education, and an ever increasing use of Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu in such documents as information booklets published by the Departments of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries, and Information Services. Increasing interest is also being shown in Tok Pisin Literacy programmes, particularly amongst teacher-trainees, and steps are being taken to produce suitable literacy materials for Hiri Motu.

The National Language question is in abeyance; no one language is acceptable, and the alternative of three languages, English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu is far from being practical at present. Nevertheless, more of the nations' leaders are becoming tri-lingual. An increasing number of meetings in Port Moresby are conducted in three languages, and at district and sub-district level, meetings are often held in a lingua franca (necessarily so in a country with over 700 languages) and where this is not the case, the minutes are often recorded in the lingua franca of that area.

Tok Pisin has in the past been denigrated and championed with equal vigour and conviction by speakers and non-speakers alike. Its many dialects survive, resisting to a large extent any movement towards standardisation, and a new dialect is emerging which is heavily influenced by English vocabulary, syntax and even phonology. This dialect is spoken by the urban elite who have been educated in English, and it is largely unintelligible to speakers of rural dialects of Tok Pisin. Though it is claimed that the language has half a million speakers, little or no data exist on levels of fluency or aspects of usage. Perhaps only one thing is certain, that the language, whatever its name and whatever its status, will play an important role in the future development of Papua New Guinea.

R.K. Johnson,
co-chairman,
organising committee
December, 1974
FOREWORD

This volume reflects two paramount concerns of the conferees at the U.P.N.G. Pidgin Conference. Firstly, they felt a need to understand and delineate the present social status of Tok Pisin, and secondly, they were interested in what future role the language would play in the country's educational programme.

In Part II the first concern is voiced by many participants in asking for a standardisation of Tok Pisin and for a Tok Pisin Language Committee.

Because there are widely divergent varieties of Tok Pisin, many participants emphasised the need to promulgate a standardised Tok Pisin. G. Sankoff recommended that the norm chosen be that of the creole speakers, i.e., those who speak Tok Pisin as their mother tongue. Others, e.g., D.C. Laycock, F. Mihalic, A.R. Pence, S. Piniau and S.A. Wurm, note that since a standard orthography already exists, a language committee should be established to encourage and coordinate the standardisation of Tok Pisin. M. Mead feels that such standardisation is needed in the matter of publications but does not want people to be expected to write personal communications in a standard form. P. Freyberg cautions that a Tok Pisin language engineering programme contains pitfalls and that by applying any standard too rapidly unnatural changes will be forced upon Tok Pisin.

L.R. Healey states some of the causes for the very rapid changes which have occurred in Tok Pisin in the last few decades, primarily since World War II. With the influx of large numbers of expatriate administrative personnel and missionaries, and with a greater movement of people from rural areas to plantations, towns and other expatriate centres, a number of varieties of Tok Pisin are now evident. These varieties, as described by P. Mühlhäusler, range from Tok Masta (an Anglicised variety spoken primarily by expatriates) to Urban Pidgin (spoken primarily by the educated elite) to Rural Pidgin (spoken in the villages) to Bush Pidgin (spoken in the more recently contacted areas). D. Bickerton considers two possibilities for Tok Pisin in the future: that of Tok Pisin remaining distinct from English or that of a continuum including Tok Pisin at one end and English at the other.

Both J. Noel and S. Piniau emphasise the vitality of Tok Pisin on the basis of its being spoken by increasing numbers of people and its being used in an ever-widening variety of contexts. Moreover, both claim that the language is fully adequate to express anything one desires.

Part III reflects the concern of the participants in the future role Tok Pisin might take in the country's development. The total educational programme from the primary schools through the universities is being reconsidered primarily in the light of the present day values and needs of Papua New Guineans. Moreover, adult education is also receiving attention.

K.J. Franklin draws to the readers' attention the need for prior education in the vernaculars, since it is through their vernacular tongue that people bridge the gap to a national language such as Tok Pisin. Basic literacy, reading materials and adult education are focussed upon by R. Adler and D. Tamosan. L.E. and A.F. Cates, together with
P. Staalsen and D. Strange, report on Tok Pisin writers' and translators' courses offered recently to aid Papua New Guineans in producing their own literature.

R. Litteral proposes four levels of schools in a national education scheme: (1) vernacular schools for parents and children, (2) primary schools for children conducted initially in the vernacular and one of the lingue franche, but gradually yielding to full instruction in English, and (3 and 4) high schools and universities conducted only in English. D. Bickerton draws upon his own university experience in Africa to support a claim that university classes can be conducted in Tok Pisin.

Part IV provides a number of specialised papers describing various linguistic aspects of Tok Pisin. R.A. Hall re-examines the concepts of relexification and regrammaticalisation in pidgin languages. Features which are common to pidgins, such as changes in their grammatical systems as well as in vocabulary, are noted. K.A. McElhanon and S. Barok examine the transfer of idioms between Tok Pisin and a vernacular language and assert that Tok Pisin is deficient in expressing the finer nuances of one's emotions. P. Mühlhäusler describes iteration in Tok Pisin and considers three possible theories concerning its origin: (1) the substratum theory that the pattern is derived from Kuanua, (2) the relexification theory that Tok Pisin represents a relexification of Pidgin Portuguese, and (3) that the pattern represents a universal of language. A. Pawley considers written Tok Pisin and the insertion of a vowel within consonant clusters. He favours the interpretation that the insertion of a vowel is a non-significant transitional feature conditioned partly by the rate of utterance. R.S. Roosman's survey of the Malay element in Tok Pisin involves not only direct loans from Malay but also loans from languages related to Malay. Finally, G. Sankoff traces Tok Pisin ia from hia (English 'here') and asserts that it has assumed a grammatical function which has parallels in the Austronesian languages.

Each article has a précis prepared in Tok Pisin if the article was written in English and vice versa. These précis were prepared by the editor and S. Barok, and the individual contributors bear no responsibility for errors or shortcomings therein.

Due to some difficulties, two papers included in this volume—those of M. Mead and A.R. Pence—were not presented at the conference.

The conference on Tok Pisin at the U.P.N.G. marked the first time that Papua New Guinean leaders, academics and expatriates came together to exchange freely and openly their ideas and opinions about the status and utility of Tok Pisin. We wish to thank each participant and contributor and look forward to further discussions along these lines.

K.A. McElhanon,
Ukarumpa, E.H.D.,
Papua New Guinea
April, 1975
WANPELA KONPERENS BILONG TOK PISIN
I KAMAP LONG UPNG, SEPT. 18-21, 1973
SAMPEDA TINGTING KONPERENS I GIVIM LONG GAVMAN BILONG
PAPUA NIUGINI

Tok I Go Pas
Long dispela konperens mipela i tok orait long yusim kain kain rot bilong toktok i go i kam namel long ol pipel, na namel long ol pipel wantaim gavman na ol arapela wok na ol skull samting. Na sampela tingting mipela i putim hia mipela i bilip dispela bai inap helpim na kamap long mak mipela i sut long en.

Wok Bilong Gavman
Nambawan step mipela i yesa long en i olsem: wanpela Ministar bilong Gavman bai stiaim ol toktok na askim i kamap long wanem tok ples bai yumi yusim long kantri bilong yumi. Dispela ministar bai i tok long wanem tok ples bai yumi yusim long ol redio, niuspepa, ol skull, na ol arapela wok.

Lo Bilong Gavman
I gat tripela bikipela tok ples i stap: Inglis, na Pisin, na Hiri Motu. Na mipela i laik Gavman i mekim wanpela lo na tok klia long wanem tok ples bai yumi yusim long olgeta toktok na wok samting.

Komiti Bilong ol Tok Ples
Wanpela gutpela rot bilong stretim na kamapim wanpela tok ples em i olsem: wanpela komiti bilong tok ples bai i kamap, olsem ol i bin mekim long Malaysia, Indonesia, na Tanzania.

Orait nau mipela i toktok tasol long komiti bilong Tok Pisin.

Komiti Bilong ol Distrik
Pisin ol i toktok long olgeta hap bilong Papua Niugini i no wankain. Sapos sentaral komiti tasol, bai ol i no inap save long ol dispela kain kain tang na nek i kamap long olgeta hap. Olsem na mipela i ting long makim ol komiti bilong olgeta distrik wanwan. Na ol dispela komiti bai i helpim sentaral komiti.

Dispela ol distrik komiti bai i raitim ripot bilong ol na salim long sentaral komiti. Wanwan taim tasol bai siaman bilong ol distrik komiti i kamap long toktok wantaim sentaral komiti.

Memb Bilong ol Komiti
Poin i stap daumbilo i nambawan tru bilong kamapim ol komiti bilong
Proposals

tok ples.

(a) Olgeta memba i mas save gut long Tok Pisin na ol i mas save tu long Pisin ol i yusim long ol ples.

(b) Ol saveman bilong laimim ol tok na arapela saveman tu long kain wok olsem ol i mas i stap helpim man bilong wok wantaim komiti.

I gutpela long ol man olsem i stap long komiti.

(a) Ol Memba bilong Haus Asembli na ol memba bilong kaunsil.

(b) Ol wokman bilong Sios.

(c) Ol memba bilong kain kain wok olsem Kristen Pres na S.I.L.

(d) Ol tisa long praimeri skul.

(e) Ol polisman.

(f) Ol saveman i stap long bikpela skul.

Komiti Bilong Stiaim na Stretim Speling

Sampela man long bikpela komiti bai ol i wok long stiaim na stretim speling bilong olgeta buk na pepa Gavman i raitim.

Ol Rul Bilong Komiti

Sampela rul mipela yesa long ol komiti bilong tok ples i wok long en i olsem:

(a) I gat wok bilong stretim gut Tok Pisin na olgeta pipel long dispela kantri inap save. Bai tingting pastaim long Pisin ol i yusim long ples. Tasol Pisin ol i yusim long ol taun yumi mas tingting long en tu. Long wanem, taun Pisin tu i kamap bikpela. Stretim tu Pisin ol i yusim long raitim buk.

(b) Yumi no ken kisim planti tok long Tok Inglis. Tingting na pasin bilong toktok tu i no ken bihainim Inglis.

(c) Ol pipel long ples i laikim骷 long ol tok ples bilong ol, na Pisin na Hiri Motu na Inglis. Dispela komiti i mas helpim ol pipel long dispela rot. Ol studen bai i helpim long painim na save long wanem samting ol pipel i laikim. Na ol studen bai helpim tu long lainim ol pipel. Olgeta bikpela skul i mas i gat rum bilong mekim kain wok olsem.

I gutpela sapos wanpela rot i stap bilong kirapim bel bilong ol man long rit. Ol buk bilong kisim save na arapela bilong ritim nating i mas kamap. Olsem na ol man i gat save long rit na rait ol inap kisim na ritim. Mipela i ting ol studen bilong ol bikpela skul inap ol i raitim ol buk long Tok Pisin na arapela tok ples.

Sampela rot bilong kirapim ol man long rit i olsem:

(a) Yumi mas strongim ol buk na pepa i kamap long Pisin nau.

(b) I gutpela sapos wanpela nesenol niuspepa long Tok Pisin i kamap.
Proposals

(c) I gutpela sapos sampela lip bilong Post Courier i kamap long Tok Pisin. Na dispela i bai planti liklik na inap long salim long ol pipel long ples nabaut.

(d) Gavman i ken raitim 4-pela lip buk long Pisin bilong lainim ol bikpela manmeri long wampela wanpela wik.

(e) Ol kain kain buk na pepa bilong rit i mas kamap. Ol kain buk olsem: buk bilong pilai, stori, skul, na olsem olsem. Dispela ol buk i no ken dia tumas.

(f) Rait bilong dispela ol buk na pepa i mas kla inap long ol man i rit.

(g) I gutpela sapos olgeta buk na pepa i gat piksa. Na dispela ol piksa i mas bihainim laik bilong ol pipel bilong Papua Niugini. Olgeta piksa i bihainim stori long buk na pepa. Na long skin bilong olgeta buk na pepa i mas i gat naispela piksa samting.

Sapos rot bilong prinim buk i stre, bai planti man inap long rait. Skul bilong raitim ol buk tu bai kamap na resis bilong raitim buk tu bai kamap. Ol man i raitim buk bai ol i rait long laik bilong ol yet. Tasol i no ken skelum tumas wok bilong ol.

Ol studen bilong bikpela skul i mas kisim skul long raitim ol buk, na salim buk, na lainim naraapela man, na tanim tok.

Olgeta man i save wok long tanim tok olsem long D.I.E.S., A.B.C., Haus Asembl, Edukesen Dipatmen, ol Sios, na ol printeri, ol i mas kisim skul bilong tanim tok. Ol i no ken wok nating.

Wok bilong prinim buk i no hat tumas. Tasol wok bilong salim buk i hat na yumi mas wok long painim rot bilong stretim dispela wok. 

Rot Bilong Stadim ol Tok Ples

Planti man bai ol i wok long stadim ol tok ples. Tasol mipela i ting i gutpela sapos i gat wanpela ples tasol bai i stap bilong bungim olgeta ripot samting. Na mipela i ting U.P.N.G. i gutpela ples bilong kain wok olsem.

Sapos wanpela man i raitim ol askim bilong mekim wok, orait pastaim em i mas salim ol dispela askim pepa i go long dispela ol man i save bungim ol ripot samting.

Ol man i save bungim ol ripot i mas painim na save long wanem tok ples ol pipel i yusim.

Sampela saveman bai ol i stadi long Tok Pisin. Na ol i mas tingting gut long ol kain kain Pisin ol man i save toktok. Na ol i mas painim na save long wanem ol tok olgeta man i save na yusim.

Traim painim na save long hamas pipel i save gut long Tok Pisin.

Mekim lista bilong olgeta buk na pepa long Tok Pisin na prinim. Na bai putim ol dispela buk long laibieri.

Tupela samting mipela yesa long en:

(a) Nambawan tru: ol saveman i mas painim na save gut long kain kain Tok Pisin ol pipel i yusim long olgeta distrik wanwan.
(b) Bilong helpim dispela stadi, ol i mas yusim teprikoda na kisim kain kain nek bilong ol man. Ol studen na ol tisa na wokman bilong sios na ol arapela man i ken wok long olgeta wanwan distrik.

Dipatmen Bilong Tok Ples Long U.P.N.G.

Mipela i laikim tru tingting bilong U.P.N.G. i statim Dipatmen bilong ol Tok Ples. Na mipela i yesa long dispela dipatmen bai wok wantaim Komiti bilong ol Tok Ples na bai stadim ol tok ples bilong Papua Niugini.

Dispela dipatmen bai wok long Tok Pisin na Hiri Motu pastaim. Ol arapela bikpela tok ples bai ol i wok long en tu bihain liklik sapos i orait.

Wok Dispela Dipatmen Bilong Tok Ples Bai Mekim

Dispela dipatmen i givim skolasip long ol man bilong Papua Niugini i stadim tok ples. Na dispela ol man i mas go long ples bilong ol man na stadi.

Mani

PROPOSALS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA ARISING OUT OF THE PIDGIN CONFERENCE HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SEPTEMBER 18-21, 1973

Introduction

The conference supports the use of all available means to increase communication between people, and between the people and government and other agencies and institutions. The following proposals are put forward in the belief that they will help to achieve that end.

Government Responsibility

It was agreed that the first essential step should be the delegation to one particular Minister of the Government of clearly defined responsibility for all language questions.

Definition of Policy

It was agreed that a definite Ministerial/Government statement or Act of Parliament on the subject of languages for general intercommunication would be desirable in promoting the use of the lingue franche.

Language Committee

It was agreed that the best way of organising the standardisation and development of lingue franche would be through the establishment of a Language Committee along the lines of those in such countries as Malaysia, Indonesia and Tanzania.

Regional Sub-Committees

(In the following, 'Pidgin' is used to illustrate the model for all language planning.) It was recognised that because of (a) the diversity of Pidgin variants in different areas of Papua New Guinea, (b) communication problems, and (c) the divergencies amongst the varieties of Pidgin, it would be necessary for the main work of the Language Committee to be carried out through a system of Regional, District or Area Sub-Committees. Reports from sub-committees would in general be submitted in writing, though consultation with sub-committee Chairmen might be necessary from time to time.

Membership of Committees

The following points were felt to be vital in the establishment of the Language Committee and its regional sub-committees: (a) all members must be first class speakers of Pidgin; (b) there must be real and productive links to village-level speakers of Pidgin; (c) qualified linguists, communication's personnel and other relevant experts should be asked to serve as consultants to the committee.
Proposals

Possible sources for membership of the proposed committee might include (a) M.H.A's and members of bodies such as Local Government Councils, who are linguistically more comfortable in using Pidgin than they are in using English, (b) The Churches, (c) Organisations and institutions such as the Kristen Press and the S.I.L., (d) Papua New Guinean teachers, (e) Policemen, and (f) Academics.

Sub-Committee Orthography

It was accepted that there should be a sub-committee of the main Language Committee which would concern itself with the supervision and standardisation of the Pidgin used in written form in all Government publications.

Principles

A number of principles were agreed on as constituting a basis for the operations of the Language Committees. These are:

(a) The need for a standardised written form of Pidgin which will be intelligible in all parts of the country. This would probably begin by drawing heavily on RURAL Pidgin. At the same time it would be necessary to take into account the developing URBAN Pidgin and the probability that it will become increasingly important.

(b) The need to avoid English as the sole source of innovations into Pidgin and more especially the need to guard against the anglicisation of the STRUCTURE of Pidgin.

(c) The need was stressed for the Language Committee to be involved in the present movement towards the use of vernacular languages and lingue franche in community education. The importance of this movement was recognised. It was also agreed that community education should respond to the specific needs of particular communities and that students were an important resource both for identifying such demands and as participants in developmental and communication programmes. Such participation should be an integral part of the course structure of all educational institutions.

The importance was stressed of establishing a climate in which people are motivated to read. Reading material must be made available to everyone who is literate, and these materials should be varied providing pleasure as well as information. It was noted that tertiary level students could be an important source of written materials in Pidgin and vernacular languages which have orthographies.

Specific suggestions for creating such a climate were the following:

(a) Existing publications in Pidgin should be assisted and encouraged.

(b) A national Pidgin Newspaper could be established.

(c) The *Post Courier* could publish a Pidgin 'insert' with additional copies of the insert for distribution in rural areas.
(d) The government could publish a four-page weekly adult education publication in Pidgin.

(e) The need was stressed for a wide variety of inexpensive reading materials: humour, biography, fables, language games etc., as well as instructional subjects. These should be published in a variety of forms, such as leaflets, bulletins for wall newspapers, comic books and periodicals as well as books.

(f) Typography should facilitate reading.

(g) Illustrations are desirable, should match the text, and be in a style acceptable to Papua New Guineans. An attractive cover is important.

Papua New Guinean authors will emerge rapidly when access to publication is facilitated. This would be assisted by the furthering of creative writing workshops and writing competitions. Authors should be encouraged to produce such materials by a policy of relative non-criticism.

It was also recommended that students at institutions be trained in the production of such materials, village distribution, literacy teaching, and translation.

Translators in all sections producing Pidgin and vernacular materials—e.g., D.I.E.S., A.B.C., House of Assembly, Dept. of Education, Churches and presses—should also be trained in the principles of translation. The job should not just be left to bilinguals.

It was agreed that the off-set process had solved many of the technical problems of printing for small groups of readers, but that problems of distribution remained to be overcome.

Research Priorities in Relation to Language Policy

A means must be established for co-ordinating research and obtaining feedback. The University of Papua New Guinea would be a logical place for the establishment of such a co-ordinating body.

Researchers using questionnaires should be encouraged to submit these in advance to the co-ordinating body.

An important result of the activities of the co-ordinating body should be a language use survey.

Specifically in relation to Pidgin, recommendations were made for the following studies:

(a) Varieties of Pidgin: differences between the Pidgins of various areas, particularly in relation to establishing a vocabulary common to all areas.

(b) Investigations should be carried out into methods of establishing language proficiency in various regions.

A bibliography should be compiled and published of all Pidgin publications, with a view to establishing Pidgin libraries, or Pidgin sections within existing libraries.

Two specific methodological proposals were accepted:
Proposals

(a) Prime importance in research should be given to the analysis and documentation of regional variations in the vocabulary, syntax and structure of Pidgin.

(b) Extensive use of tape recordings as a way of amassing large resources of specimen utterances. These could be collected by, e.g., students, teachers and mission workers and others.

Department of Language at U.P.N.G.

The Conference fully supports the University's decision to create a Department of Language, and agrees that the Department will act as an important complement to the proposed Language Committee and will be an essential factor in promoting the study of Papua New Guinean languages.

This Department should initially concentrate on Pidgin and Hiri Motu. As soon as might be feasible it ought then to extend its concern to the more widely-spoken vernaculars.

Research by Department of Language

It was felt to be essential for the proposed Department to concentrate a considerable proportion of its resources on the provision of scholarships for Papua New Guineans to carry out practical and intensive research into the various languages in the field.

Finance

It was recognised that the proposals set out above would require considerable financial resources. Suggested possible sources of finance were Government sources such as the Institute of Cultural Affairs, UNESCO, World Council of Churches, Rockefeller Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, Ford Foundation, and various German and Japanese sources.
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