Abstract

The Chinese United Library, commonly known as Tongde Reading Club (同德书报社), was formed in 1911 by revolutionaries Teo Eng Hock, Tan Chor Nam and Lim Yee Shun. The aim of this Academic Exercise is to find out the relationship between Tongde Reading Club and the Chinese community in Singapore. Though Tongde Reading Club was set up as a propaganda to get support from the Chinese, it did not lose its functions after the overthrow of the Qing government. It became heavily involved in the affairs of the Chinese community in Singapore. During the Japanese Occupation, its members were mainly the leaders of the anti-Japanese groups such as patriotic hero Lim Bo Seng. Even after Singapore attained its independence in 1965, Tongde Reading Club continued to provide recreational activities for the Chinese community.

Today, Tongde is the only reading club that has survived since 1911. Other clubs that were set up during the same period were closed down. Thus, it is believed that the development of Tongde Reading Club will give us a new insight into Singapore history and the Chinese community. Hence, it is chosen as a case study in this thesis.

The findings of the thesis show that Tongde Reading Club has indeed played an important role in the Chinese community. It even continues to be engaged in activities involving the Chinese today. This explains why Tongde is able to exist till today as it is able to change to suit the varying needs of our ever-changing society. The result of the research can be used
to study similar development of other organizations or associations in connection with the history of Singapore and its Chinese community.