A Historical Survey of Chinese Newspaper in Singapore

(1881 - 1927)

The periodical, known as the Tung hsi yang k'ao (東西洋考), (Inquiry of the Eastern and Western Oceans), was first printed in Canton and then removed to Singapore. It marked the beginning of Chinese journalism in Singapore. But this missionary periodical was still a long way from a newspaper in the proper sense of the word.

The first Singapore Chinese newspaper, Lat Pau (叻报), did not appear till 1881. It was modelled on that of the leading Hong Kong and Shanghai newspapers. After that date the Chinese journalism made impressive progress up to 1927 in both form and content, possessing most of the characteristics of the modern newspaper. The details of this remarkable development are related to the social and economic expansion of a rapidly changing Singapore.

The purpose for writing this Academic Exercise is to make a systematic examination of the Chinese newspapers from 1881 to 1927, and to show the close inter-relationship between the development of newspaper and the society as a whole.

There are five chapters in this work. Chapter one describes Singapore's early journalistic stage which was represented by the Lat Pau and the Sing Pau, covering a period roughly from 1881 to 1898. Chapter two discusses the period from 1898 to 1900. This period saw the emergence of Thien Nan Shin Pao (天南新报), Jit Shin Pau (日新报), Thoe Lam Jit Poh, (周南日报), The Union Times (总汇新报), and
Chong Shing Yit Pao (中央日报). Chapter three deals mainly with the publication of Hsin Kuo Min Jit Pau (新国民日报) and Nanyang Siang Pau (南洋商报).

In the fourth chapter, the author will analyse the relations between the press and society with particular reference to the role of the press in the growth of some important social institutions and ideas in the Chinese community in Singapore. The last chapter discusses some factors which led to the failure of some early Chinese newspapers. Without Dr. Lee's painstaking help, this work would not have been satisfactorily written.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincerest thanks are due to Dr. Lee En-Han. His unfailing guidance to my work has given me much encouragement and confidence. I must also thank him as I have drawn heavily from his Chinese translation of the book, "The Overseas Chinese and the Civil Revolution". My ideas in the Chinese community in Singapore. The last chapter written to Dr. Teh Ching Hwang of the University of Adelaide, Australia. Without Dr. Lee's painstaking help, this work would not have been satisfactorily written.