ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to examine the varied and explicit public responses as reflected on four vital dailies towards the establishment of the Nanyang University. It studies both the editorials and the general public's extremist points of view, focusing on the period between 1953, when the idea of setting up the Chinese university was mooted till 1959, when its value was denied by an official evaluating commission.

The Nanyang Siang Pau and Sin Chew Jit Poh were chosen as they reflected views of the Chinese majority who were highly supportive of such a move throughout. The Chung Shing Jit Pao, being a Nationalist daily, was included on the other hand, as it reflected the views of some minority which intertwined with political thoughts. The Straits Times was chosen to reflect the opposing views towards the establishment of the Chinese university, revealing stands of some colonial officials, people of other races and the English-educated, who related the educational move with racial and political intentions.

Through studying the public responses to the establishment of Nanyang University, we were brought to the awareness of the complexities in a pluralistic colonial society, and how they in turn resulted in pressures from public which could and had heightened the complications and difficulties of establishing the university.

This study also looks into the history of the Nanyang University. It attempts to define and examine the birth and composites of the "Nantah Spirit" ("南大精神"). The mention of it was first made in the 1950s, and has since taken a definite shape and become a strong and inevitable part of the Singapore Chinese culture, as a result of the tough challenges the university faced ever since the earliest stage of its establishment.