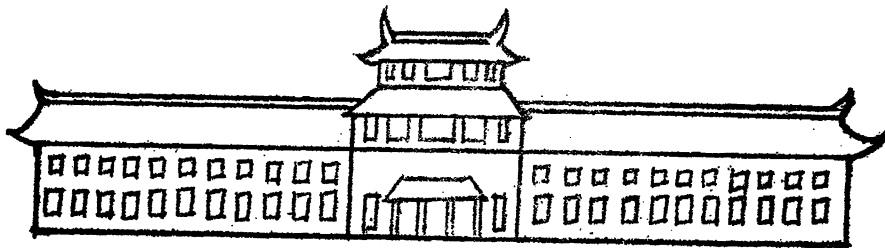


MEMORANDUM

JOINTLY SUBMITTED TO THE NANYANG UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES

IN RELATION TO

"THE REPORT OF NANYANG UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE"



BY

THE CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERARY SOCIETY
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
THE NANYANG UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SOCIETY
THE MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY
THE PHYSICS SOCIETY
THE CHEMISTRY SOCIETY
THE BIOLOGY SOCIETY
THE CHORUS SOCIETY
THE DRAMATIC SOCIETY

26.10.1965

OUR ATTITUDE AND STANDPOINT WITH REGARD TO THE
"REPORT OF NANYANG UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE"

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1. FOREWORD

"The Curriculum Review Committee Report of Nanyang University" which draws much attention from every quarter has at last been published. Just as in the case of both the Prescott Report and the Gwee Ah Leng Report, the present report has evoked hot discussions among the members of the general public who have the future of Nantah at heart.

As undergraduates of Nantah, the growth and decline as well as the existence of Nantah have a direct bearing upon us. Adopting the fundamental standpoint of having a love for Nantah, as well as safeguarding the national education, we held discussions and made a detailed and profound analysis of the Report. Further, we decided to have our opinions collected and summed up for public reference.

Admittedly, certain points of the Report are worthy of reference. However, we cannot agree to the spiritual essence of the Report. Not only does it seriously hamper the normal development of Nantah, and deliberately violate the founding objectives of Nantah, but it even goes to the extent of making a malicious attempt to destroy the Chinese education.

In the course of making a study of the Report, we have referred to and made comparison with both the Prescott Report and the Gwee Ah Leng Report. After repeated comparisons, we discovered that in the matter of violating the national education, they are tarred with the same brush, and each is worse than its predecessors. We resolutely oppose those remarks which are wilfully made to magnifying problems without having regard to principles. Likewise we disagree to utterances which are made while having in mind the superficial appearance of things, but not their real essence. We should not for one moment be deceived by certain superficial features of the Report which appear fine to us and thereby ignore its ugly nature hidden behind the smokescreen. Otherwise extremely unfavourable consequences will ensue as far as the national education and the future of Nantah are concerned.

On the issue of safeguarding the national education, and promoting the future of Nantah, the Nantah students have all along persisted in principles, and remained steadfast in their stand. We will never bow before difficulties, nor shall we be deceived and puzzled by the nonsensical as well as crafty language used in the Report. We hereby solemnly make it clear that we resolutely oppose the Curriculum Review Committee Report, which, though framed in beautiful phraseology is designed to change the fundamental quality of Nantah as well as to cripple and destroy the national education.

2. SEEING IN PERSPECTIVE THE BACKGROUND FOR PUTTING FORTH THE REPORT

(i) Nantah develops amidst difficulties

When making a study of the Report, in the first place, we should have a clear understanding of the background for putting forth such a report, only then can we give it comprehensive and thorough comments and criticisms and thereby discern its true features.

After reading and investigating the Report for a number of times, we simply cannot find out nor can we believe that it will in any way promote the development of Nantah. On the contrary, we are able to see clearly that it provides an excuse for the Government to have a complete control over Nantah, and subsequently to bring about its transformation.

The attempt on the part of the Government to interfere with

the administration of Nantah and to exercise a complete control over Nantah and subsequently transform it has been made ever since the establishment of Nantah.

Nantah was founded in a colonial era under the Rendel Constitution. The Chinese education then was subject to the most ruthless suppression and mutilation. Thenceforth, Nantah put on itself the heavy task of developing the Chinese education, and emerged as the highest institution of learning for the Chinese in South-East Asia. The colonial government was not in favour of the founding of Nantah, nor did it wish to see Nantah develop. However, under the strong pressure of the people, the Government reluctantly permitted Nantah to be established high up on the Jurong Hill, and at the same time it was forced to change its approach towards Nantah. In the first place, it adopted the tactics of delaying the passing of the Nanyang University Ordinance, and deliberately ignoring the existence of Nantah. This was followed by the publication of the so-called "Prescott Report" which made scores of slanderous statements about Nantah, totally negating the worthiness of its existence.

In June, 1959, Singapore achieved its status as a self-government. The new Government, on assuming office, at once made an announcement to the effect that the four streams of education would receive treatment in accordance with the principle of equality. Thus, the people thought that the Nantah issue which was for long left unsettled could once and for all be given a reasonable settlement. However, to our great disappointment, such evil measures as discrimination against the national education, suppression of the Chinese education and the hampering and restricting of the development of Nantah not only remained unrectified, but were put into force with more vigour. Take for example, under the guise of conducting a review of the Prescott Report, the Government speedily drew up a so-called "Gwee Ah Leng Report" putting forward "recommendations" calculated to change the medium of instruction of Nantah, and to seize control of the Nanyang University Council as well as to transform Nantah. However, in face of the resolute opposition of the student body, staff members, together with the general public who uphold the Chinese education, plots of this nature were eventually thwarted. Nevertheless, the Government still tried to realise the policy of gradually gaining control of Nantah, nor has it given up its malicious intention of laying hold on Nantah.

In the aspects of administration, organisation, finance, the intake of students, and language, it carried out subversive activities either openly or secretly. Just as the policy of gradually gaining control of Nantah was being totally exposed, it further openly took barbarous measures, even violence against the Nanyang University Councillors, staff members as well as bare-handed students. The October 12 Incident of 1959, the February 2 Incident and the September 26 Incident of 1963 saw the intrusion of police and troops into the campus. Students were subject to arrest, assaults and humiliation. In the meantime, the Government unjustifiably imposed a ban upon the various varsity publications, including the University Tribune, the organ of Nanyang University Students' Union. After the General Election held in September, 1963, and before the formation of the Cabinet, the Government announced the deprivation of the citizenship of Mr. Tan Lark Sye, Chairman of the Nanyang University Council, compelling him to tender his resignation. Subsequently, it held talks with the Nanyang University Council apparently to assume for the purpose of solving the Nantah issue. However, it turned out to be a hoax. All this clearly indicates that the Government is bent on realising its aim of gaining control of Nantah, with a view to transforming it, and eventually eradicating the Chinese education.

On June 27, 1964, there occurred within the campus a dirty incident unprecedented in the history of our University. This was the mass arrest of students. It remained the most despicable and dirtiest incident that ever took place in the history of education of both the

Federation and Singapore. At 3 a.m. on that very morning, the Government sent out as many as 3000 odd troops, riot squad, police and special branch men together with innumerable riot squad trucks, military trucks and police cars. They rushed into the campus of Nantah in huge numbers. Hundreds of students staying in the hostels were being searched. By using axes and "parangs" the intruders broke open the students' sleeping rooms, Students' Union House, and offices of the various societies, and ransacked them, taking away documents, files and books. Over 50 innocent students were arrested. The aim of the Government in launching this fanatical arrest was to facilitate its move to gain control of Nantah and subsequently transform it. In the history of education in Singapore and the Federation this incident stood out as one of the most despicable sides of the Government in its attempt to cripple the national education.

(ii) The putting forth of the Report

Immediately after the June 26 Incident, Mr. Lau Geok Shwee, Chairman of the Nanyang University Council, as well as Dr. Chuang, the Vice-chancellor were compelled to send in their resignation. Hence the administration of Nantah fell into the hands of the Government. A so-called "University Administration Pro-tem Committee" was set up. Having brought the administration of Nantah under its control the Government was still not in a position to change the basic quality of Nantah. Therefore a second step was necessary for achieving such an aim through exercising the administration. Thus around 150 students and excellent as well as efficient staff members were expelled in the name of the "University Administration Protem Committee", while at the same time, nearing 200 faultless students were given warning. In March, 1965, through the same committee, the Government set up a "Curriculum Review Committee" headed by Prof. Wang Gung Wu. Under the cloak of "reviewing curriculum", the Committee took two months to conduct the "review" and subsequently put forth the so-called "Curriculum Review Committee Report". Judging from its content and the background for putting it forth, we hold that it is in practice meant for providing the P.A.P. Government with justifications for changing the fundamental quality of Nantah and for eradicating the Chinese education.

The "Curriculum Review Committee" was actually formed not in accordance with the normal procedure and therefore it was an illegal body. In fact, the "University Administration Protem Committee" formed after the resignation of the Vice-chancellor was to take up a duty confined only to maintaining the university administration during the transition period before assumption of office by the new Vice-chancellor. Under such conditions, it is by no means an organisation with power to exercise university authority, nor does it possess the power to set up such a committee as the "Curriculum Review Committee" for dabbling with the curriculum. Besides, the scope of review of the "Curriculum Review Committee" does not in any way extend beyond "to review the current organisation of courses of study and contents of individual courses in Nanyang University and to recommend to the University revised courses of study adapted to the needs of our society". However very unexpectedly, it deliberately acted beyond its terms of reference, rashly and unnecessarily meddling with such problems as the founding principles and the basic quality of Nantah, its medium of instruction, its value of existence, reorganisation, reshuffle of the teaching staff and its conditions of service. Judging from this angle, it is totally unacceptable to use the Report as a means to reorganise Nantah.

3. OUR BASIC VIEWS ON THE REPORT

(i) The Report is designed to effect a change in the medium of instruction

We have paid special attention to the attitude adopted by the Report towards the medium of instruction of Nantah. After making a detailed analysis of the Report, we discovered that the spiritual essence of the Report is in no way different from that of the Gwee

Ah Leng Report. The latter openly showed a special liking for English, and advocated the gradual transformation of Nantah by way of raising its standard of English. According to the Gwee Ah Leng Report, should any student fail in English in his entrance examination, he shall be admitted into a pre-university-class of one year's duration, to study only one subject -- English. When the standard of English has been raised, the question of language will cease to be a hindrance restricting the engagement of teaching staff, and a large number of staff members who can use English as a medium of instruction can be employed. If events are allowed to develop in such a direction, Nantah will lose its characteristic of being a national university. The present Report manifests itself as being more blatant in this respect than the Gwee Ah Leng Report. Practically it does not approach the question of the medium of instruction of Nantah in the light of the fact that Nantah possesses the characteristic of a national university. Apart from not rectifying the errors of the Gwee Ah Leng Report, it is all out to inflict a fatal blow upon Nantah. Chapter II of the Report under the sub-heading of "Recommendations on Language" reads, "It is not in the interest of the graduates themselves to be proficient only in Chinese nor is it in the interest of the country for the University to continue producing graduates of that kind". (Chapter II, Section 8)

The implications of this statement are obvious. Grand, eloquent phraseology is merely used to express the thought and content of the Gwee Ah Leng Report. However, its ultimate objective is none other than changing the fundamental quality of Nantah. The Gwee Ah Leng Report states: "If the students are not proficient in English, then it is not able for the University Authorities to engage professors from foreign universities and it is also unable for the students to study English text books which are the only available sources of such supply" (translated from Chinese version), while the Curriculum Review Committee says that if the graduates do not attain fluency in the national language (?) as well as English, they are going against the interest of the country. What at bottom are they talking about? If achieving proficiency in Chinese which constitutes one of the four streams of education does not conform to the interest of the country, then does it not mean that the propagation of the Chinese compatriots in our country likewise does not conform to the interest of the country? If this were true, then those who are responsible for drafting the Report should have quit the country by now, to say nothing of their being qualified to "review the curriculum". Further, Chinese is one of the four major languages as well as an official language of our country. It is also one of the official languages in the United Nations. Since attaining proficiency in Chinese is being regarded as not conforming to the interest of the country, then is it not equally true that attaining proficiency in English by the graduates of the University of Singapore and the University of Malaya is not conforming to the interest of the country? Or shall we say: the expression "not conforming to the interest of the country" is only applicable to those who attain proficiency in Chinese but not to those who attain proficiency in English? In reality, the tone pervading the Report is entirely the same as that of the colonialists.

We may point out with pride that under the auspices of Chairman Tan Lark Sye and Dr. Chuang, our Vice-chancellor, Nantah has all along taken upon itself the task of bringing about the interflow of national cultures, and has encouraged the students to study the languages of other communities. Among all the institutions of higher learning in Singapore, only Nantah students are able to publish periodicals in three languages. All this goes to show that the Nantah Authorities and students have at no time adopted the policy of seclusion. In fact, every recommendation aimed at promoting the development of Nantah towards perfection is met with cautious and serious consideration. In actual fact, the Nantah students apart from being proficient in Chinese, are equally well-versed in Malay or English. (Some of them are even trilingual). Therefore, it is unfair to label Nantah and its students as "not conforming to the national interests."

Admittedly, Nantah needs to undergo reform. Actually, ever since its foundation, Nantah has constantly undergone reform and has made progress. However, just as has been solemnly pointed out by the Nanyang University Students' Union that "Nantah is genuinely a national university. It constitutes the highest link of the Chinese education system. Any reform of a comprehensive and thorough nature should not damage in the least the basic quality of Nantah. With a view to preventing any change in the nature of Nantah as being a Chinese University, therefore, it is necessary to preserve the principal medium of instruction of Nantah." This is the expression of the common feelings of all those who have a love for national education. It is also our clear-cut attitude and firm stand of an unalterable nature.

The Report says that after the reorganisation of Nantah, there "may still be expected to provide courses taught in the Chinese medium" (Chapter II, Section 8). This is exceedingly unreasonable. Can it be said that a Chinese university which was founded as a result of the immense contributions in the form of money and energy made by tens of thousands of the people of both territories should only turn out to be a university which "may still be expected to provide courses taught in the Chinese medium"? It is not difficult to imagine that when Nantah has degenerated into the state that "may still be expected to provide courses taught in the Chinese medium" Nantah will by then be defunct though its name still remains. The cause which was crystallised out of the sweat and blood of the people will come to nought. We want to ask those who are responsible for drafting the Report: do you realise that the few light strokes of yours have seriously hurt the national pride of tens of thousands of the Chinese?

In the move to effect a gradual change in the medium of instruction of Nantah, one point is worthy of notice. That is, the drafters of the report have adopted more skilful, flexible tactics. In it, we find no such praises of English as had been so openly showered by Gwee Ah Leng and the like. The drafters of the Report seem to deliberately mislead the public into the conclusion that after the reorganisation, Nantah will turn into a university in which equal emphasis will be laid on Chinese, Malay as well as English. In reality, Malay is being utilised as a camouflage while English will "ascend the throne". It is not without justification that we say so. Now let us read the following paragraph:

".....The present Chinese, Malay and Indian schools are racial in nature, therefore they isolate themselves from one another, without caring for the other. At present, only in the English schools that the children of three nationalities are able to study in the same classroom, playing in the same field and eventually accept the same value of life." (Quoted from "The Spring of Youth" -- P.A.P. education policy, translated from Chinese version)

Schools of the three major nationalities are hereby being smeared as racial schools, while the English schools are being praised to the sky. Proceeding from such an educational policy, how do we expect the Government to show respect for Chinese, Malay and Tamil? May we ask: during the period of its rule, how many Malay primary schools, secondary schools and colleges have been established? Viewing Chapter I of the Report in this light, it is not difficult to find out the substance of the Report.

After having a general survey of the Report we find that the method suggested for the resuffle of the curriculum of Nantah seems to be imbued with the spirit of reorganising Nantah virtually into an English university. (Editorial of Sin Chew Jit Poh, September 17). Public opinion is worthy of praise, for though subject to the pressure from various directions, it is still able to lay bare the spiritual essence of the Report by way of resorting to euphemism.

(ii) Nantah will, through the Report, degenerate into a subordinate English university

The Report, in its Introduction, states, "....the University....has so far catered only for students from the Chinese-medium schools in the country. We feel that the function is too narrow and a great deal can be done to re-orientate the University towards serving our society as a whole". (Chapter I, Section 3) The words "a great deal can be done" is merely a technical term for "complete transformation". The setting up of a language centre for popularising the English education, and the adoption of English as the important medium of instruction form one of the component parts of the main content of "a great deal can be done". The change in the entrance qualification in languages so that "students from all streams of education in the country are eligible for admission" (Chapter II, Section 9) constitutes another component part of the main content of "a great deal can be done". As regard the first point we have earlier enunciated our views. As to the second part, that is, opening the door of Nantah "for serving the society as a whole", we feel that there is necessity of making further analysis. In the first place, opening the door of Nantah "for serving our society as a whole" by itself is not a bad thing. The University authorities have never discriminated against any student coming from other streams of education. However, opening the door of Nantah should at no time be taken to mean that Nantah must lower the standard of its own language in order to accommodate students from the English stream or other streams of education. The fault that very few students from other streams of education pursue studies in Nantah does not lie with the University. If the origin of this defect were to be traced, in the first place, a study should be made of the attitude towards Chinese adopted by those coming from the non-Chinese stream, and secondly, a study should also be made of the discrimination to which Nantah has all along been subject to. We should in all seriousness point out the fact that the Government discriminates against the national education, and against Nantah, while paying no heed to the standard of Chinese in other streams of education accounts mainly for the scarcity of students from non-Chinese streams in Nantah. The Curriculum Review Committee should not have slighted these matters. Therefore, in order to qualify students from all streams of education in the country for admission into Nantah, the question lies not in the change of the provisions in languages regarding admission to Nantah as has been suggested by the Report. On the contrary, the Report should have put forward such recommendations to the Government as to effectively raising the standard of Chinese of the students from other streams of education; showing respect for Nantah; giving it financial aid and recognising the Nanyang University degree.

In the second place, the Report is not without ulterior motives in adopting such a method of research and investigation as paying excessive attention to particulars while totally ignoring the essence of things. The implementation of the Report would necessarily mean the lowering of the standard of Chinese for accommodating students from the various streams of education; then the Chinese language would no longer be the necessary condition for admission. This would enable them (mainly the English school students) to flood into Nantah without much ado, thereby providing the material conditions for transforming of Nantah in the long run. Thus, admitting English school students into Nantah in large number is not so much to achieve the purpose of "serving the society as a whole" as to enable the authorities concerned to make use of them as a force for the purpose of bringing about complete destruction of Nantah -- the magnificent, strong bulwark of the national education. To-day should Nantah be allowed to have its standard of Chinese lowered to facilitate admission of English school students, then to-morrow the knowledge of Chinese can practically be discarded as means for admission. If that is the case, invariably more and more English school students would be admitted into Nantah in huge numbers. A sacred national university will then inevitably turn into the "Paradise" of those students who have been asked to quit the University of

Singapore. It seems that Nantah came into existence not at the propitious moment. Should it be unfortunately turned into an English university, it could only qualify itself for becoming a subordinate English university. (Editorial of Sir Chew Jit Poh, Sept. 16) Can it be said that the government's aim of reorganising Nantah and raising its academic standard amounts to turning Nantah into an appendage to the University of Singapore? Under such circumstance, how can we talk of academic standard? Obviously, the Government has the evil intention of lowering the academic standard of Nantah as well as marring the prestige of Nantah. What a sinister motive it has!

In brief, the Report views Nantah solely from the standpoint of upholding "English above all". Basically its attitude can be summarised as: "Everything that belongs to me is mine, and everything that belongs to you is also mine. You should do as you are told; if you do not obey meekly, you are acting contradictory to the national interests. If you obey me meekly, you will have boundless prospects." We, Nantah students, are at all times prepared to present facts for substantiating arguments and to reason things out. The fundamental viewpoint stated in the "NUSU" statement on the Reorganisation of Nantah" issued on March 5, 1960, University Tribune No.7, still has realistic significance to-day. The statement, in part, runs: ^{its}

".....We don't deny the importance of English for academic research in the university. Nevertheless, Nanyang is mainly a Chinese University, and to think that its academic standards could only be raised by promoting the position of English to the high level of main medium of instruction, not only is such a measure unnecessary, but also runs counter to the founding principles of Nantah, as well as violate the principle of the normal development of national education. We resolutely oppose such a move."

(iii) The new degree structure disrupts entirely the existing degree structure of Nantah

Chapter IV of the Report, "Recommendations on a New Degree Structure", and Chapter IX "The Implementation of the New Degree Structure" are designed to disrupt entire system of Nantah, creating confusion with a view to facilitating the move to change the medium of instruction of Nantah. There are shortcomings as well as merits in the existing system of Nantah. The shortcomings are that they do not permit the talented students to have their full play, and that there is a lack of specific system of teaching with students of limited ability in mind as well as giving more instructions to those talented students. The merits are found in the popularisation of higher education, the balanced development in all aspects and the practice of mutual assistance and thrashing out problems collectively. Under such conditions, most students are able to complete their 4-year university education. The Report, however, merely pinpoints the shortcomings while obliterating the merits of the existing system. We can never agree to such a move which is aimed at materialising an evil motive under the pretext of rectifying errors.

The new degree structure provides both pass degree and honours degree. It is chiefly characterised by a change from the existing 4-year general degree course into a 3-year course. We do not oppose the introduction of honours degree. However, we cannot concede to any attempt at employing it as a means for mutilating the existing system of Nantah, for compelling a large number of students to quit on the ground of "being below standard", and for bringing up a minority of "privileged students". The new system of this nature is in fact nothing new, for it has already been implemented in both the University of Singapore and the University of Malaya. The recommendation for establishing the new system further exposes the sinister motives on the part of the Report to have a Chinese university cast in the mould of an English university. Why is a new system necessary? The drafters of the Report concocted two reasons:

"1) The importance of producing graduates best suited to the needs of our society; and

2) The desirability of instituting a system which will bring out the best in the undergraduates and provide the most benefits to the graduates." (Chapter IV, Section 27)

In the first place, we would like to ask: What justifications do they have for claiming that the new system will be "producing graduates best suited to the needs of our society"? Since the new system provides pass degree as well as honours degree, it is obvious that by saying "graduates best suited to the needs of our society" they refer to honours-degree holders. What at bottom is the percentage of honours-degree graduates in terms of the total number of students? The Report keeps silent on this matter.

However, the succeeding paragraph seems to enlighten us:

"For admission to the honours classes, first priority should be given to current graduates under the new degree structure. Other graduates are eligible to compete for places in the honours classes, but some priority should be given to those who were among the top 20% of these graduating classes." (Chapter IX, Section 114)

That is tantamount to saying that:

"We feel that the significance of the new degree structure rests primarily on the quality of the honours degrees that the University will award. It is imperative therefore that the greatest care be made in the selection of graduates for admission to the honours classes." (Chapter IX, Section 112)

In other words, out of all the past-degree graduates not more than 20% will have the opportunity of being allowed admission to the honours degree classes. "No supplementary examinations are allowed and no student may repeat the honour degree examinations." (Chapter IV, Section 37) Under such conditions, the honours degree graduates will be very limited in number. Can it be said that these limited few are to be the so-called "graduates best suited to the needs of our society", in whom the committee takes a pride?

In the second place, the claim that the new system will enable the merits of the students to have their full play, and will provide the graduates with a system favourable to them is an exaggeration and one-sided statement. In the history of education, all along there exists two methods of education which are entirely different in nature. In one of them, a variety of titles are employed to induce the students to enter into competition which is characterised by selfishness, thus producing a minority of "privileged students". According to the other method, students are inspired by the interests of the masses to thrash out problems collectively and to make progress together, not individually.

There are many ways of enabling the merits of students to have their full play. Selfish competition is after all only one of the means and a poor method. The new system is claimed to be favourable to the graduates, in actual fact it is only favourable to a very limited number of honours degree holders. To the overwhelming majority of Nantah students, the new system would only mean that they are being deprived of the opportunity for furthering their studies for another year. As far as Nantah itself is concerned, the new degree structure serves to disrupt entirely the existing system consisting of 4-year course, thereby lowering the academic standard of Nantah.

While airing our opinions on the new system, we take note of the reasonable recommendation put forward by the Nanyang University Senate in a meeting in 1964 in relation to the University's degree structure. It recommended the introduction of honours degree for the purpose of remedying the defects of the existing degree structure. The recommendation made by the Senate differs in principle from that put forward by the Report. The former proceeds from the concrete conditions prevailing

in Nantah, and therefore it is a practical recommendation which keeps in line with the founding objectives of Nantah. On the other hand, the latter proceeds from the viewpoint of an English university. It is an unpractical recommendation calculated to anglicise Nantah. The suggestion put forward by Nantah itself upholds the principle of preserving the 4-year course. Students with brilliant academic achievements however will be selected from among the third-year students. Through the necessary arrangement of the faculties and departments concerned, specialised subjects are to be introduced to replace the general elective subjects, and the students so chosen shall take the honours degree examination in the fourth year. Those students who achieve a comparatively unsatisfactory results will also have to complete the four-year course consisting of both compulsory subjects and the general elective subjects before sitting for the general degree examination. Such a principle of "teaching with the ability of students in mind while giving special instructions to talented students" and the "new system" which uses percentage of passes for inducing students to enter into rivalry represent two different educational points of view. According to the former, emphasis is laid on bringing up in general trained personnels for the state while at the same time attention is taken to enabling the merits of the students to have their full play. In accordance with the latter, stress is only laid on cultivating a minority of "privileged students" while the majority of the students are to quit on the ground of not reaching the required standard.

The principal objective of the new degree structure is aimed at disrupting the existing system of Nantah and incorporating Nantah into the entire system of the University of Singapore. However, the University of Singapore is an English university, while at the least Nantah is, at the present stage, still a Chinese university. This situation by itself is liable to incur dissatisfaction of those scholars who, besides showing hatred for the national education, have an excessively high regard for the English education. The traditional prejudice manifests itself in the lack of sincerity on the part of the Report to implement the much vaunted honours degree system.

The Report reads: "We are concerned that future graduates should be able to attain a standard suitable for further studies at the honours level. It is, therefore, important for External Examiners to be selected from among scholars familiar with the nature of honours degrees. Such External Examiners can then be expected to advise the University about the best means of introducing honours classes in a few years' time. Only when everyone concerned is satisfied that staff and students, equipment and facilities of the required quality are available should the University establish the first honours programmes. It is not suggested that every Department should start offering honours courses at the same time. The decision to have honours classes must depend on the conditions in the individual Department." (Chapter IX, Section 111) In other words, the so-called honours degree course is merely a humbug. First of all, the honours degree course will only be introduced in a few more years. It is by no means a certainty that it will be introduced. That will depend on whether or not "everyone concerned" is satisfied that "staff and students, equipment and facilities of the required quality are available." That is to say when the time comes if "everyone concerned" feels that the staff and students, equipment and facilities of the required quality are not available, the introduction of the first honours degree will remain at the stagnant stage of recommendation.

On the other hand, the Report states: "We recommend that as many of the pass degree courses in the new curriculum as possible be implemented with the staff available. This could begin with the new academic year in 1966/67, and, if possible, all remaining courses for the pass degree be introduced in 1967/68." If that is the case, Nantah has to pay in advance an extremely high price while the honours degree course has as yet to be introduced. In other words, the 4-year pass degree course will be replaced by a 3-year course by then.

The so-called honours degree obviously turns out to be a catalyst for accelerating the Anglicisation of Nantah. Under the rule of a Government which advocates "English above all" it is only natural that only when Nantah has undergone Anglicisation, will then ~~the~~ "everyone concerned" feel satisfied with the staff and students, equipment and facilities of Nantah.

We are of the opinion that the recommendation for the implementation of a new degree structure is unpractical. The honours degree suggested will only be introduced after the Anglicisation of Nantah, while these degrees by their nature undoubtedly constitute a means for cultivating a handful of "privileged students" at the expense of a majority of students. This is practically in contravention with the founding principles of Nantah. It is necessary for us to solemnly affirm that we oppose any vicious measure purported to mutilate the existing system of Nantah.

(iv) Provisions relating to the qualifications for admission

In Chapter IV, "Recommendations on a New Degree Structure", section 30, the Report lays down the qualifications for admission which are to be adopted after the reorganisation of Nantah. It states:

"We noted the introduction of the Higher School Certificate (Chinese) Examination in 1963 in Singapore and are satisfied that this has brought about a higher standard of admission. We recommend that the normal entrance requirement be the Higher School Certificate or its equivalent."

Superficially, it seems to give an impression that the standard for admission to Nantah has been raised. After making a profound analysis, we discovered that it turned out to be an attempt at changing the identity of Nantah. Its vicious motives are as follows:-

(A) One of the founding objectives of Nantah is to provide an opportunity for graduates from the Chinese Senior Middle Schools to further their studies in the country. That is why the Regulations of Nantah expressedly states: "Any applicant who has completed three-year senior middle three course, or has passed in the Government Senior Middle Three Examination or has passed the Cambridge School Certificate Examination with credit and after being accepted through the entrance examination, is eligible to study in the first year course of the University." (translated from Chinese version)

It is in our firm belief that any reorganisation should not contravene to the provisions of these qualifications for admission. In the Wang Gung Wu Report, the recommendation relating to the qualifications for admission deliberately contravenes these provisions, negating the founding principles of Nantah.

(B) At present, only in Singapore is the Chinese Higher School Certificate Examination conducted. In the Federation, there are only secondary schools consisting of either five-year course (National type) or six-year course (Independent schools). Students in the 5-year-course secondary schools are only eligible for taking the Cambridge School Certificate Examination, while those in the 6-year-course secondary schools are eligible for no examination similar to the Higher School Certificate Examination. Therefore, if the provisions regarding the qualifications for admission as suggested by the Report are put into practice, it will be tantamount to depriving the students graduating from Chinese secondary schools in the Federation of the opportunity for furthering their studies in Nantah.

(C) The "equivalent" of the "Higher School Certificate" shall be the normal qualifications of admission. This statement is vague. Does it refer to the Cambridge H.S.C. (Higher School Certificate)? Is the school certificate issued by a 6-year-course secondary school to be re-

garded as an equivalent to the H.S.C.? There should be no ambiguity about this point, for should the answer to the question posed be in the negative, students graduating from senior middle schools will invariably be barred from gaining admission to Nantah. This threatens to be an extremely serious problem.

(D) At the present moment, the Chinese school students possessing Higher School Certificates are very limited in number. If such provisions were put into practice, it would mean that the chances for the Chinese school students of Singapore to gain admission into Nantah will be cut down considerably.

(E) To-day, the Higher School Certificate Examination has as yet not been conducted in Malay or Tamil whether in the Federation or in Singapore. There are no Malay or Indian secondary schools reaching a standard equivalent to the H.S.C. In such a case, how could students from both the Malay and the Indian streams of education be accepted for entry into Nantah? This shows more clearly that the Report is telling lies. Such statements as "to ensure that students from all streams of education in the country may benefit from the University's existence" (Chapter I, Section 4), and ".....students from all streams of education in the country are eligible for admission" (Chapter II, Section 9) prove to be false as well as fraudulent. Putting up the signboard of "four streams of education" here is also meant for the transformation of Nantah and the eradication of the Chinese education.

(F) Since the Chinese, Malay as well as Indian school students in the Federation are not qualified, while few Chinese school students in Singapore are eligible for admission into Nantah, those who have a grudge against the Chinese education and who advocate persistently such an erroneous principle as "English above all" will be greatly delighted. Before long, English school students possessing an equivalent to the H.S.C. as well as students quitting the University of Singapore will flood into Nantah. The aim of changing the fundamental quality of Nantah will then be materialised with ease, and that will be the wretched moment at which Nantah ceases to exist!

Thus it can be seen that the provisions of the Report regarding the qualifications for admission are in harmony with the general spirit of changing the basic quality of Nantah.

(v) Regarding the closing down of the Departments of Modern Languages and Literature, Education and Chemical Engineering

We hold that the recommendations relating to the closing down of Modern Languages and Literature Department, Education Department and Chemical Engineering Department are rash as well as crude, and lack of a sense of responsibility. It is only a period of ten years since the inception of Nantah. Compared with the great cause of education, which is one of extremely long duration, Nantah is no more than a 10-year-old kid. We dare not claim that Nantah has achieved perfection in all aspects. In fact it possesses merits as well as defects. In reforming Nantah, its merits should be taken note of, so should its defects be viewed with seriousness and reasonableness. If its merits are seen along its defects overlooked, Nantah may remain stagnant at its present stage without making any progress. On the other hand, if its weaknesses are being noticed alone while its merits ignored, it would mean an attitude divorced from reality. Both of the above attitudes are one-sided as well as incorrect. We deeply regret that the Report was drafted without having the merits of Nantah in mind while taking only its defects into consideration. Further, owing to the fact that the Curriculum Review Committee takes no account of the background for the foundation of Nantah and the obstacles which it encountered in the course of its strife for existence and development, they are naturally unable to gain a true understanding of the internal course of defects of Nantah, and put forward constructive recommendations in accordance with the principle of seeking truth from facts.

(A) In the matter of closing down the Modern Languages and Literature Department, the Report has this to say:

- 1) the national language is not given enough emphasis;
- 2)a degree course is not of a sufficiently high standard to merit continuation; and,
- 3)not an efficient way to serve the language needs the University as a whole. (Chapter II, Section 12)

In other words, in the first^{place,} the existence of the Modern Languages and Literature Department hampers the development of the national language in Nantah. However it is not so. The Report does not give a fair account of the factual situation relating to the study of the national language in Nantah. Nor does it make public the progress and development which the national language achieves in Nantah. Neither does it make a comparison or an analysis of the enthusiasm which the students of Nantah show in the study of the national language. Under such circumstance, the conclusion which the Report jumps to can hardly be worthy of trusting.

Secondly the Reports states that the Modern Languages and Literature Department ".....is not of a sufficiently high standard to merit continuation". We would like to ask: what is the criterion adopted by the Curriculum Review Committee in passing such a comment? The NUSU (Nanyang University Students' Union) has earlier in an article entitled "Our Views on the Prescott Report and the future of Nanyang University" (University Tribune No.5, 1959) correctly pointed out:

"The right standard for assessing the standard of all universities should not be the so-called 'international standard', but should be the genuine 'national standard'. The assessment should be in accordance with general cultural and educational level and social conditions. Education is related to time, nation and local characteristics. The fundamental principle of determining the university education should be based on the concrete conditions of time, nation and locality and not on some subjective and abstract standards. What is more important, when talking about the standard of the Modern Languages and Literature Department of Nantah, it must be borne in mind that Nantah is a Chinese university. Just as has been pointed out in the memorandum submitted to the University Authorities by the students of the Department: 'Nantah is a Chinese university. Its students are those graduating from the Chinese secondary schools. Therefore, it is only natural that their standard of English literature should be relatively low as compared with that of the student studying in the English Department of an English university. The same is true of a Chinese Department in English university, for instance, in the university of Singapore, the University of Malaya, the Harvard University or the London University. The standard of Chinese of its students is relatively low, as compared with that of the students in the Chinese Department of a Chinese University. No one has cast any blame upon it, to say nothing of closing it down.' The main purpose of opening the Modern Languages and Literature Department in Nantah is to afford Chinese school students well-versed in English an opportunity for coming into contact with as well as for studying the English language and literature, thereby cultivating more specialists in English for the society. At the same time, Modern Languages and Literature Department also helps to popularise Malay and other languages of various countries. Thus, judging from the aim of the establishment and the contributions it has made, there is no reason whatever for passing such a cruel sentence upon it. Granted that the Department has some defects, there is equally no reason for having it "sentenced to death". The Committee should have brought forth concrete recommendations facilitating the Department to achieve perfection by a gradual and steady process.

Thirdly, the Report asserts that the Department fails to meet the language needs of the University as a whole. We disagree to such an assertion, for in actual fact, Nantah requires no special demand for language. (we shall deal with this point later). On top of that the Report has already suggested the opening of the Department of Malay Studies. (Nantah

should strive for such a development.) In view of the above reasons, we disagree to the recommendation for closing down the Modern Languages and Literature Department.

(B) In relation to the closing down of Education Department, Chapter VI of the Report entitled "Recommendations relating to the Arts Faculty" states: "We strongly feel that the field of education should be that of professional training for teaching purposes and post-graduate research on the educational problems of the country. Where professional training is concerned, graduates of the University should spend one or two years on a professional institution. For research purposes, a post-graduate school of education may well be established. The present Department of Education does not meet either of these two needs."

On the basis of this paradoxical argument, the Report recommends that the Education Department should be closed down, and that the degree course of the same department should also be scrapped off. We cannot agree to such an assertion. Is the task shouldered by the Education Department as simple as "we feel"? As things are, in what respect does the Education Department fail to "meet either of these two needs"? Does it mean that only the "professional institution" providing one or two-year course or the so-called "post-graduate school of education" as recommended by the Curriculum Review Committee is in a position to "meet either of these two needs"? Or is it because no Education Department exists in the University of Singapore and the University of Malaya that the Education Department in Nantah should also be closed down? To this series of questions no clear-cut answers have been given. In actual fact, a conclusion with regard to the value of the existence of the Education Department has long been drawn after many discussions. Dr. Yen, the Head of the Education Department, who obtained his Doctorate in Education from the London University, opposed the closing down of the Education Department as far back as in the year 1955. Dr. Yen pointed out then "to have a degree course in Education is by no means the defect of Nantah for it will constitute one of the characteristics of Nantah."

The outstanding educational worker of Malaya, former Chairman of the United Chinese Teachers' Union of Malaya, Mr. Lim Lian Geok did once say, "Malaya is in bad need of learned men who possess the basic knowledge on education for the purpose of developing the education of our country. Therefore, the Education Department of Nantah should be preserved as an organisation for cultivating professional personnels in the field of education." However, those who are wont to approach the problem with a foreign view or in the viewpoing of other streams of education will invariably take a prejudiced view on the Education Department of Nantah. The infamous Prescott Report has already shown a similar partiality as that expressed by the present Report: "In view of our past experience, we must express our views that we advocate a system which enable a student to get a supplementary educational certificate in a short period, after completing a course in a specific subject. We therefore suggest from 1959 onwards, the Education Department should transform into Education Section to provide the training necessary for the attaining of such certificates." (translated from the Chinese version)

After making a comparison of the opinions expressed by the two reports, we cannot help asking: "Is it possible that the Curriculum Review Committee has been inspired by the Prescott Report in seeing fit to close down the Education Department?"

(C) In relation to the closing down of the Chemical Engineering Department, in Section 80 of the "Recommendations relating to the Faculty of Science", the Curriculum Review Committee holds, "The present courses of study in the Department of Chemical Engineering are not satisfactory at all. There are no proper mechanical workshop facilities in support of chemical engineering. Moreover, at the present moment the demand for chemical engineers is very limited in this country. We strongly feel that the field be best left to the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Malaya where courses in other engineering practices have already been established. We therefore recommend that the Department of Chemical Engineering be abolished....."

An argument of this nature is unjustifiable. It shows that they are shortsighted. It is true that the chemical engineering course conducted in Nantah does not meet our satisfaction. There is no proper facilities. It is equally true that the demand for chemical engineering personnel is limited. However, the situation may change. The Department of Chemical Engineering was established in Nantah only about a year ago. For certain the Curriculum Review Committee cannot be ignorant of this. Is it fair for the Committee to impose such a high demand upon a department so recently established? The fact that the Chemical Engineering Course is not run properly enough and that no well-equipped mechanical workshop is available cannot be an excuse for closing down the Department. Given sufficient time it will develop towards perfection with each passing day.

For the past ten years, Nantah has received not even a cent by way of grant from the Government. In spite of this, Nantah has made its appearance, and from a state of backwardness it forges ahead and changes for the better. It seems to work miracles which we find in mythology. Does this fact speak convincingly for itself? At present, Malaya and Singapore are in no great demand for chemical engineering personnel. Can this be an excuse for closing down the Department? No. The chemical industry is in the course of development. The Curriculum Review Committee should have more foresight, and be able to foresee the position of the chemical industry in the economic construction of our country in five, ten or twenty years' time. Nantah is an educational institution and not a training centre for speculators. An educational institution must be imbued with the spirit of farsightedness. Unlike the philistines, it should not be too particular about temporary gain and loss. The Department of Chemical Engineering was established by reason of the increasing importance of the chemical industry and the growing demand for specialist in this field. If an approach based on the law of development is not adopted, how is one going to talk education? Obviously, the questions of the course of study, facilities and national needs cannot be an excuse for closing down the Department of Chemical Engineering. What prompts the drafters of the Report to put forward such a proposal then? Regarding this, the Report itself has made a confession: ".....the field be best left to the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Malaya." Such a recommendation is a deliberate attempt at preventing Nantah from cultivating students coming from Chinese stream of education into chemical engineering personnel. It is diametrically opposed to one of the founding principles of Nantah, namely, to cultivate trained personnels for society.

In a nutshell, we have, after making an objective study with a composed mind of the recommendations relating to the closing down of departments, discovered that three categories of department are to be closed down on the flimsiest excuse. The first category consists of those departments which can be found in Nantah but the academic standards of which are not high. The Modern Languages and Literature Department comes under this category. Under the second category are those departments which can be found in Nantah but not in other universities (in both territories). A good example is the Education Department. In the third category, we have those departments which can be found in both Nantah and other universities, like the Department of Chemical Engineering. These proposals are the creative "contributions" made by the Report towards Nantah.

We wish to point out that it is indeed much easier to destroy than to construct, and it is also much more convenient. However, this is not an attitude to be adopted by a serious educationist imbued with a sense of responsibility.

(vi) The question of changing the name of the Chinese Language and Literature Department

The Report recommends that the Chinese Language and Literature Department be renamed as the Department of Chinese Studies. The justification given is weak and feeble: "The Department of Chinese Language and Literature will be expected to produce graduates with very high standards in

the Chinese language. It should, however, perform the task with the needs of our society clearly in mind. We recommend that the Department places greater emphasis on courses pertinent to the culture, literature and linguistic background of the Malaysian Chinese. The students should be prepared to adapt themselves to the language conditions of the country, and be equipped to study subjects like the nature, distribution and use of local Chinese dialects, Chinese society in Malaysia and the relationship between Chinese and Malay. It is hoped that graduates of the Department will play their part in contributing towards the maintenance of inter-communal harmony in the country. In this context, the University may consider changing the name of the Department to the Department of Chinese Studies." (VI, 9)

It is common knowledge that the Department of Chinese Studies is normally set up by a non-Chinese university for the purpose of studying the language, custom and culture of the Chinese people. Its object of study involves problems touching upon all aspects of the Chinese. Nantah is a Chinese university. To have a Department of Chinese Studies in a Chinese university is a thing that has never been heard of. We hold that the setting up of the Chinese Language and Literature Department is in no way contrary to the social needs. On the contrary, it fits in well with them. At the same time, it constitutes one of the characteristics of a national university with Chinese as its medium of instruction. The Chinese language and literature possess a long history and a brilliant tradition. It forms one of the most important branches of the world languages and literature.

Such a branch of knowledge is worthy of being delved deep into. We do not oppose any move to integrate the study of the background of the language, literature and culture of the local Chinese into the course of Chinese language and literature. However, we are strongly opposed to any attempt at inducing, under the cover of changing the name of the Chinese Language and Literature Department, students to study about such miscellaneous things as the nature, distribution and use of local dialects, thereby leading eventually to the eradication of the research work on the Chinese language and literature. The Committee has practically adopted a prejudiced approach to the Chinese Language and Literature Department. They do not wish to see such a Department exist in Nantah. Nonetheless, they can find no way of having it closed down. Under such circumstances, the fundamental reason for suggesting the setting up of the Department of Chinese Studies is to effect a change in the basic quality of the Department by way of altering its name, thus keeping in line with the transformation of Nantah. We hold that such a practice on the part of the Report constitutes an extremely grave insult to the Chinese Language and Literature Department, to the sacred institution of learning as well as to the hundreds and thousands of the members of the public who have made vast contributions towards the foundation of Nantah. Nantah is a sacred national University. The Chinese Language and Literature Department is a department which has achieved a high academic status. Any mean attempt to lower its academic status by way of changing its name can never succeed.

(vii) Fallacies detrimental to the sound development of Nantah

Nantah follows a rough and bumpy path. Those persons who nurtured a great hatred and prejudice towards Nantah first slandered Nantah as having low academic standards, and started a rumour that the administration of Nantah was in a mess. Later when true facts have rendered useless their slanders and rumours, another tiny group of people made its appearance and alleged that Nantah was a miniature Yenan, and that the students manipulated the university administration. By the time when the Government employed troops to take over Nantah by force, a new assertion presented itself. In brief, so long as the medium of instruction of Nantah remains unchanged, there are bound to be fallacies of all kinds which appear at any time these people think fit. We must be alive to such fallacies, because they are designed to bring about a qualitative transformation of Nantah, and therefore they are unfavourable to the sound development of Nantah.

New objective circumstances give rise to new fallacies. Likewise, the Curriculum Review Committee Report generates new fallacies. Now let us consider some of them:-

(A) The Report states: "the nature of our society must be reflected in any institution of higher learning which purports to serve that society." (Chapter I, Section 4.)

What is "the nature of our society"? How should it be reflected in any institution of higher learning? Only after having all these questions correctly answered can we give a correct comment on the above assertion. According to the views expressed in the Report, for achieving the objectives stated above, it is only necessary to make certain "appropriate changes" in the curriculum and to ensure that "entrance qualification concerning languages be carefully and clearly defined." In other words, our social characteristics can be reflected in Nantah by way of raising the standard of English, changing the present medium of instruction, lowering the standard of Chinese in order to qualify students from all streams of education for admission. Otherwise the existence of Nantah would not be in conformity with the national interests. What a strange assertion! Each and everyone who has a love for Nantah will never allow such an assertion to go unheeded. Tricks of all kinds which are meant to deceive the people are doomed to failure. The NUSU has at a much earlier date seen through such captivating words which turned out to be a hoax. Let those who are prone to slandering NUSU take a short read at the "NUSU's Statement on the Reorganisation of Nantah":

"The fact that Nanyang University accepts only Chinese students was very much condemned by some prejudiced individuals; and they thus conclude that Nanyang University has already become a racial university. They maintain that only when Nanyang University becomes a place for the sons and daughters of all races to pursue their higher learnings, could it strip itself of the hot bed of the narrow-minded cultural ideas of racialism. According to their logic, Nanyang University must mechanically absorb large numbers of youths of different races, including, even only apparently, students of all races, before she can be actually Malayanised..... We find it unacceptable to give others a false impression of the so-called 'Malayanised', which in reality exists in its outer appearance only. That whether Nanyang University should include students of all races is not the core of the problem; the main question is whether Nanyang University could do any good to the task of nation building of Malaya. It is our hope that Nanyang University should be a university which really belongs to the people of Malaya, a university which really belongs to the country spiritually. Hanging the signboard of 'all races live together harmoniously' before one's front door and pretending to be Malayanised in every possible outward appearance, while in actual practice acting contrarily to its principle and existing only as a colonial-patterned university -- such a university is not only superfluous but also impedant in our nation building.

"Gaining a good name merely by creating a false impression of being a so-called multi-racial university, is an act we strongly object. Nevertheless, we enthusiastically support the suggestion of accepting students of all races to Nanyang University. However, in so doing, a fundamental principle should be recognised, i.e. the initial objectives of establishing Nanyang University should neither be violated nor contradicted; and the characteristic of being a national university of Nanyang University should never be altered. Although technical difficulties, as regarding to Nanyang University, would arise out of the acceptance of the students of all race but these difficulties could gradually be solved. For instance, preparatory classes could be opened for those non-Chinese educated students in order to improve their Chinese so as to suit Nanyang University's language standard. This measure, we hold, is very appropriate."

Two categories of people will have two different standpoints and two different views. Who are truly safeguarding and protecting the interests of Nantah, and who are intent on having complete control over Nantah and plotting to transform Nantah? The answer to this is clear beyond doubt, and no further elaboration is needed.

(B) The allege that Nantah "has so far served only a limited purpose" (Chapter I Section 3)

Every university can take upon itself a specific task (or a limited task, as one might put it) in society. Nantah is no exception. That Nantah takes upon itself a specific task incurs great dissatisfaction of the Curriculum Review Committee. It seems that they have some "unlimited task" in mind. In reality, the Report has the intention of depreciating the value of the existence of Nantah through the intangible "unlimited task". However, from the concrete expression of Nantah as a whole in the past ten years, anyone who is seeking truth from facts will arrive at the following conclusions:

Firstly, the establishment of Nantah is in full accord with the development of the national education. It provides thousands of students graduating from the Chinese secondary schools in both territories with an opportunity for furthering studies. It helps complete the entire system of the Chinese stream of education, and promote the laudable spirit of self-reliance and independence inherent in the national education notwithstanding the fact that it is subject to suppression and violation as well as constant heavy blows. The founding of Nantah is a splendid endeavour in the history of the Malayan national education. Any underestimation of the role and significance of Nantah is erroneous, and is not without ulterior motives.

Secondly, the academic achievement of Nantah is a matter which needs no further controversy. Though not given recognition by the Singapore Government, the Nantah degrees are being respected and accepted by prominent universities abroad. Nantah graduates are fully qualified to study for master degrees and doctorates. A great number of Nantah graduates have been offered scholarships by foreign universities.

According to the statistics available, up till December 31, 1963, before the take-over of Nantah by the Government, those Nantah graduates going abroad for further studies numbered 102 persons. In other words, there was one out of 20 graduates who studied overseas. This estimation does not include those who are equipped with the necessary conditions for going abroad but unable to obtain passports from the Government.

Thirdly, the excellent performance of the Nantah graduates in society is generally acknowledged. Mr. Yong Nyuk Lin, former Minister for Education, and present Minister for Health, Singapore, in his speech at the second Convocation of Nantah, openly gave praise to the Nantah graduates in the Civil Service: "I am pleased to announce that Nanyang University graduates in the Civil Service has justified the Government's faith in their intrinsic worth! To date, there are only two thousand odd Nantah graduates. However, they can be seen and their loud voices heard in the Government offices, the Legislative Assembly, as well as the industrial and commercial enterprises. The graduates have lived up to the expectation of Nantah. Similarly, Nantah has lived up to the expectation of society.

The Report asserts that in Nantah "attention has been paid to producing large numbers of graduates without adequate consideration of the prospects of employment for the graduates." (Chapter I, Section 3)

It is true, that many among the graduates are confronted with the problem of employment. However, can it be said that it is a fault of Nantah? The Curriculum Review Committee should have sought explanation from the Government policy-makers. Does the Government engage civil servants on the merits of their ability? Or does it engage them by judging according to the political stand of one party? To-day, under the educational policy of a Government advocating "English above all", Chinese school students are being given extremely unequal treatment of all sorts. In such a situation, how could the Curriculum Review Committee expect the University Authorities to adequately consider "the prospects of employment for the graduates"? The Curriculum Review Committee pays no heed at all to the Government's prejudice against the Chinese education, further, it confounds right and wrong, laying all the blames on Nantah. Can such fallacy bear examination?

(3) The recommendation that "language training has become one of the key issues in the future development of the University." The Report says: "In view of the changing conditions of our society language training has been one of the key issues in the future development of the University." (Chapter 2, Section 8) What changing conditions have our society actually undergone? What "changing conditions" have made the language training as one of the key issues of Nantah? We hold: "There are no shocking events occurring in our society which are of such nature as may require changes in the founding principles of Nantah. The key issues concerning the development of Nantah are the problems relating to university autonomy and academic freedom, the problem of how to carry through the founding objectives of Nantah and the problem of unconditional financial aid by the Government to Nantah. No other problems can be more important than these. The language training is not and will not be the key issue in relation to the development of Nantah. This is not without good reasons:

(1) Nantah is a national university using Chinese as its main medium of instruction. Its students are mainly drawn from the Chinese stream of education. The Chinese school students come to further their studies in Nantah which uses Chinese as its main medium of instruction. As it is, how can there be such a thing as "language training has become one of the key issues in the future development of the University"?

(2) It has been claimed that the standard of English of the Nantah students is low, thereby abstaining them from reading English books. However, the Government has made great efforts to raise the standard of English starting from the primary schools onwards. In future, after having got through three Government examinations, those students passing the Chinese Higher School Certificate examination presumably must have acquired such a standard of English as may enable them to read reference books in English. Therefore, certainly, language training need not be one of the key issues in the future development of Nantah.

(3) If we agree that Malay is now the national language of our country, then the training in such a language should begin from the primary schools, and should not start at the university level. Thus, training in Malay can never be one of the key issues of Nantah in future.

(4) It is also claimed that Nantah should open preparatory classes for students from non-Chinese streams of education, so as to raise their standard of Chinese. Neither can this lead to the conclusion that "language training become one of the key issues in the future development of the University".

As things are, what is the trouble then? What causes the Report to elevate the language problem to such a high position? It is actually not difficult to find out the real essence of the problem. We have outlined it at the very beginning, namely, it is a problem relating to the medium of instruction, and it is a problem of whether or not Nantah can exist as a national university. To talk of the changing conditions of society when discussing the problems of Nantah at this juncture is nothing but an attempt at deception. The real cause for asserting that language has become a key issue of Nantah in future, is that those who have an axe to grind are anxious to change the medium of instruction and they are anxious to bring about a qualitative transformation of Nantah. No sooner is Nantah transformed into an English university than the assertion that language training is an key issue will no longer be maintained. We have never heard of any "Language Centre" being set up in the University of Singapore, nor have we heard of its being set up in the University of Malaya. Why should Nantah choose to have a "Language Centre"? All this is self-explanatory. It is clear beyond doubt as to why the Report recommends the closing down of the Modern Languages Department, and the establishment of the "Language Centre" in its place? The existence of the Modern Languages Department is really an obstacle to the popularisation of the English education and the changing of the medium of instruction of Nantah. This is due to the fact that the Modern Languages Department helps bring about the concentration of Chinese school students having a liking for English. As a results, English is not able to have a strong pressure in Nantah, and the spread of use of English to all Departments is

beset with extremely great difficulties. If the Modern Languages and Literature Department is got rid of, the whole student body can be requested to raise their standard of English, thus creating the objective basis and a conducive atmosphere for introducing English into all faculties. According to the Report, such language training is to be conducted as "students should be made to use, through a system of regular written assignment, the language in which each course is conducted. In this, they are expected to use the language concerned as a tool for the mastery of their chosen subjects." (Chapter II, Section 11)

The word "language" in the "Introduction", as everyone can understand, refers to English. In other words, in future, not only will the students be trained to attain the ability to read English and listen to lectures delivered in English, they will also have to undergo such training as may enable him to acquire the ability to write essays in English. Are the motives for regarding the language training as one of the key issues in the future development of the University not clear enough?

(viii) Summing-up

(A) There is practically no difference in spiritual essence among the Report of the Curriculum Review Committee and that of the Prescott Report and the Gwee Ah Leng Report. The conclusion drawn with regard to both the Prescott Report and the Gwee Ah Leng Report is only too clear to need any elaboration and the correct views expressed on them have been generally agreed upon. However, the recommendation in the Report of the Curriculum Review Committee are more specific and rigorous in content and nature than those of the Prescott Report and the Gwee Ah Leng Report. If the latter reports have confined their review to the question of the management of Nantah, then the Committee headed by Prof. Wang Gung Wu does not confine their comments to that, but it has proceeded further by way of questioning the justifications for the existence of Nantah (Editorial of Sin Chew Jit Poh, Sept. 16). We feel that the move on the part of the Committee to act ultra vires by way of questioning the justifications for the existence of Nantah besides reviewing the curriculum is not only unusual but preposterous as well. We are justified in being sceptical of the purity of their intentions and motives.

(B) When evaluating Nantah, the Committee takes no account of the historical background of the establishment of Nantah, and it is blind to the practical conditions under which Nantah strives to exist. The Report, proceeding from the viewpoint of the English stream of education, negates the social significance of the existence of the national education. We can hardly expect such evaluation to be correct and scientific. Under such conditions, to take this Report as the blueprint for improving Nantah is not only impractical, but will also lead to such serious consequences as converting Nantah into an English university.

(C) The prejudice embodied in the Report of the Curriculum Review Committee manifests itself most prominently in its approach towards the question of the medium of instruction. In the Report a great deal of "theoretical justifications" have been enunciated for changing the medium of instruction. It is claimed that the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction has restricted in no small measure the opportunity of students from non-Chinese streams of education (English stream of education) to gain admission to Nantah, as a result of which, Nantah fails to reflect the characteristics of our society. It is also asserted that Nantah "has so far served only a limited purpose". Such fallacies are not lacking in the Report.

We have offered the necessary refutations and criticisms to prove that fallacies arguments appearing in the reports cannot hold water at all.

(D) The setting up of the Language Centre constitutes one of the important points of the recommendations made in the Report. It contrives to change the medium of instruction as well as the nature of Nantah. The Report unfoundedly regards language training as one of the key issues in the future development of the University, and on the basis of such an argument, it tries to justify the setting up of the "Language Centre". We are of the opinion that putting forth such a recommendation is not without ulterior motives. Tracing back to the origin of the idea of setting up the "Language Centre", it can be found that the "Language Centre" is in actual practice a variation of the one-year Pre-university English Classes, as recommended by the Gwee Ah Leng Report, but the present Report has translated the idea into a more specific, more complete and more impressive form.

(E) Regarding to the recommendation on a new degree structure, we have earlier pointed out that the so-called new degree structure is merely a reproduction of the system practised in the University of Malaya and the University of Singapore. It is designed to disrupt basically the entire degree structure of Nantah which consists of 4-year courses, in order to materialise the educational policy of cultivating a minority of "privileged students" while force a large number of students to quit on the ground of their having below standard.

We have also pointed out that the honours degrees recommended will only be introduced after the anglicisation of Nantah, and "when everyone concerned is satisfied that staff and students, equipment and facilities of the required quality are available."

Thus the honours degrees are nothing but a catalyst for quickening the anglicisation of Nantah and they also constitute a means for transforming Nantah. In view of these reasons, we resolutely oppose any arrangement for introducing the new degree structure.

(F) The recommendation for closing down of the Departments of Modern Languages and Literature, Chemical Engineering and Education is a frivolous as well as a crude act. It is true that individuals departments are not without shortcomings. However, in evaluating these departments, we should look back to the past as well as project into the future. We should not restrict ourselves to the ephemeral situations. The Report is lacking in such a scientific spirit. The frivolous act of recommending the closing down of the three departments cannot be acceptable to those who interest themselves in the development of the national education.

(G) The existence of the Chinese Language and Literature Department is one of the characteristics of Nantah as well as the dignity of a Chinese university. The Report recommends the change of its name into the "Department of Chinese Studies". This is an outright prejudice, and an extremely intolerable insult to the sacred institution of learning. Through changing the name of the Department, it attempts to abrogate by degrees the study of the Chinese Language and Literature, at the same time encourage the study of dialects. It is an intention on the part of the Committee to deal blows to the Chinese Language and Literature Department which possesses a high academic status. We resolutely oppose such a recommendation.

(H) The essence of the Report is to change the medium of instruction of Nantah as well as its characteristic as a national university. It basically runs counter to the founding principles of Nantah and the common aspirations of the general public. We maintain that it should not be the blueprint for the development of Nantah. Nantah is the highest link in the Chinese-medium national education. Not only

does its existence affect that of the whole of the Chinese education, it also affects the existence of the Malay as well as Indian education. This is because the interests of the three communities are closely linked together. The people of our country, be it under the long colonial rule or during the period when all types of national education were subject to repression and violation, always rendered assistance to one another and launched a common struggle. The fact that today different types of national education still exist is inseparable from the common struggle waged by the three communities over a long period in the past. Since we could in the past treat each other as brothers had fought constantly shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for national salvation and right of education, we believe, to-day the three communities will never allow a group of people who advocate "English above all" to destroy our national culture by a gradual process.

4. PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NANTAH HEREAFTER

(i) Problems relating to university autonomy and academic freedom

Soon after the Governments of both territories jointly planned to have control over Nantah, the Vice-chancellor and the Nanyang University Councillors who dare to speak out and who resolutely uphold the purity of Nantah were forced to quit. Over one hundred Nantah students were subject to expulsion and arrest; the administration of Nantah and students' organisations were subverted. Crude and unreasonable disciplinary actions were taken against the students. All this has created in the campus an atmosphere of white terror. The fundamental rights of university autonomy and academic freedom have been totally deprived of. Such rights constitute the basis for the existence of a university. They are the fundamental conditions for any university to achieve its objective and carrying out its mission effectively. Therefore, in order to have a sound development hereafter, Nantah should permit no further encroachment upon university autonomy and academic freedom. That is to say, the Government should forthwith cease control and intervention of the administration of Nantah, discard its hostile attitude and policy, allow the Nanyang University Students' Union and other suspended students' organisations to resume their activities at the soonest date, unconditionally release all the Nantah students who have been arrested, allow those students who have been asked to quit the University to resume their studies, tranquilise the surroundings for study and provide the conditions for the normal activities of academic bodies within the University.

(ii) Problem relating to carrying through the founding objectives of Nantah

The founding objectives of Nantah were made public on the 7th, April, 1953. In a nutshell, they are as follows:-

- 1) Opening the door for further studies to students graduating from the secondary schools;
- 2) To cultivate teachers for secondary schools;
- 3) To cultivate trained personnels for our country;
- 4) To meet the needs of the population;
- 5) To effect an interflow of Eastern and Western cultures;
- 6) To help build a Malayan culture.

In the Declaration on the Foundation of Nanyang University, it is pointed out:

"To-day the Chinese school students in our country number over 300,000. Students graduating from the senior middle schools are no less than five to six thousands in number. It is inevitable that the number will increase with each passing year..... Though there exists the University of Malaya, much emphasis is placed on English in the qualifications for admission. Besides, vacancies available are limited

"We find excellent youths, wandering before the evil paths, at a loss, what to do. The education they have received is wasted, while the country suffers a loss of potential talented people. What a pity it is!"

For the past ten years, the founder-members of Nantah have unswervingly been carrying through its founding objectives. Since the founding of Nantah is to meet the needs of society, then it can never be "not conforming to the interest of the country" as asserted by the Report of the Curriculum Review Committee.

Now we find certain people accepting the Report which is, in fact, not fair and detrimental to the development of Nantah, unreservedly, before listening to the public opinion as well as the views of the general public, and they have already hurriedly set up an "Implementation Committee". On the other hand, they openly gave an assurance that the medium of instruction will never be changed. It is difficult to understand. It is indeed intolerable that they should act in an arbitrary manner under the acquiescence of those in power. Now they even go to the extent of resorting to deception and fraud, as though they could "cover the sky with their hands". Obviously, the Report has openly violated the agreement arrived at between the representatives of Nantah and the Government on June 6, 1964, that "the Government of Singapore re-assures that Chinese will be the medium of instruction of Nantah."

No sooner was the Agreement signed than it was torn up in a crude manner. Under such circumstances, guarantees made by individuals are hardly reliable. We hold that the important thing is not the guarantees but the practical actions for carrying through the founding principles of Nantah. This is one of the key issues in the development of Nantah hereafter, and it constitutes the deciding factor for the existence of Nantah.

(iii) Problem relating to the Government financial aid to Nantah and the recognition of Nantah degrees.

It is quite incomprehensible that the Report makes no reference to the Government financial aid to Nantah and the recognition of Nantah degrees. It is the legitimate right of the taxpayers to request and the obligation of the Government to render financial aid to a public-owned university.

Mr. Yong Nyuk Lin, former Minister for Education, in an important statement on the educational policy made in the Legislative Assembly on February 10, 1960, pointed out: "The Singapore Government prepares to support Nanyang University on the same basis in supporting the University of Malaya (now the University of Singapore)" (translated from the Chinese version)

In the 1st Convocation of Nantah, he proudly declared: "Nanyang University from now on shall not be neglected by the Government. It shall have the similar regard as the University of Malaya has from the Government. Financial aids shall not be in small sums but in terms of millions of dollars." (translated from the Chinese version)

However, what are the facts? A period of 5 years have elapsed, but a cheque for "millions of dollars" has not been cashed. We notice that the Curriculum Review Committee in reviewing the curriculum and evaluating Nantah, practically pays no heed to this factor. This is an inexcusable error. We are of the opinion that the Government should render unconditional financial aid to Nantah, and the aid should date back to 1960. With regard to the question of giving recognition to Nantah degrees, the attitude adopted by the Government arouses indignation. The academic status of Nantah is generally acknowledged. The British Commonwealth University Association has accepted Nantah as one of its members. The Nantah graduates are allowed admission to the outstanding universities in Europe and America to study for their Master Degrees and doctorates. These are prominent examples testifying to the academic position of Nantah. The Government, however, chooses not to give recognition to Nantah. To date, it still has not changed its mind, but it has, instead, given various excuses for adopting such an attitude. Such a gesture is attributable to a traditional prejudice it has against Nantah. In the past, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister said that Nantah will naturally be recognised if the University of Malaya and Nanyang University merge into one. Today, the Government seems to have changed their attitude, but in substance, its attitude remains basically the same, namely, if Nantah is not to merge with the University of Malaya, then its medium of instruction should gradually be changed, so as to accommodate more students from other streams of education. That being done, Nantah will then be given recognition. According to the estimation of the Government, it takes 5 to 10 years for Nantah to pass into a non-Chinese university. Thus, Nantah will not be recognised within 5 years' time at the least. All those who have a love for Nantah and the national education should at no time allow the Government to succeed its machinations. We demand that the Government recognise unconditionally the Nantah degrees.

(iv) Conclusion

Our comments on the "Report of Nanyang University Curriculum Review Committee" and the key issues confronted by Nantah in its development thereafter, have hereby come to an end. We are of the opinion that the appearance of this Report is anything but accidental. It provides the P.A.P. Government with justifications for qualitative transforming of Nantah, and at the same time, it constitutes an extremely serious step for subverting the Chinese educational system. Delving into the substance of the problem we have made a detailed analysis of the detrimental effects of the Report, and seen through its sweet patter. We wish to stress that the basic spirit of the Report runs counter to the founding principles of Nantah, and as such, it should not be accepted as the blueprint for the development of Nantah.

We have also expressed our views on the key issues confronting the development of Nantah. These views are based upon our personal experiences of the varsity life for the past few years.

It is a lapse of ten years since the inception of our University. Throughout the period, it has been put to the test of various storms, but never in its history has Nantah been placed in such a critical situation as to-day. We, as the students of Nantah, deeply feel that we are duty-bound to give expression to our opinions, instead of remaining reticent. Nantah belongs to the people. It is the common wishes and aspirations of each and every person who possesses national pride and cherishes a love for the national education to safeguard the purity of Nantah.

Long live the national education!

Long live Nantah!

