ABSTRACT

Lat Pau was the first Chinese daily of Singapore. It started publication in 1881 and ended in 1932. Being the first, it influenced and shaped the development of Chinese journalism in Singapore. Although some comprehensive studies have been carried out on the newspaper, none is on the supplementary pages in the period 1887 to 1922. The purpose of this Honours Thesis is to trace the development of the supplementary pages, both their formats and contents, with the objective of filling in the missing links in the development of Singapore's Chinese journalism.

The period under study spans from 19 August 1887 to 15 April 1922. The first date was selected because earlier copies of the newspaper were completely lost. On the other hand, since 17 April 1922, radical changes had been made to the supplementary pages. The supplementary pages of Lat Pau between 19 August 1887 to 15 April 1922, however, are self-contained and deserved a detail study. Materials for this study are based on microfilms of the newspaper.

The supplementary pages of a newspaper carry light-hearted articles as opposed to the serious news reported in the main section. The contents of the supplementary pages include funny happenings, strange encounters, essays, poems, stories and others. The scope under study includes the formative years (19 August 1887 - 16 January 1907) and the span of the first supplement, Lat Pau Supplement Pages (17 January 1907 - 15 April 1922). During the formative years, supplementary articles were published alongside with the daily news, commentaries and advertisements. No definite pages were dedicated to such articles. With the appearance of the first supplement, such articles began to have their own pages.
The materials used in this study are selected through a sampling procedure. The sampling was carried out at two levels. Firstly, at intervals of 3 years from 1887/1888 to 1906 and from 1907 to 1922. The year 1887 and 1888 are taken collectively as one because the available microfilms records of the newspaper in 1887 do not cover a full year (for reasons mentioned above). In addition, as publication of the supplementary pages started in 1907, the year was used as the next starting point for the sampling procedure. Secondly, only newspapers of the months April, August and December were examined before 1907. This is because the articles under study during these formative years do not exhibit much changes. On the other hand, for those years selected for study after 1907, all issues of the supplementary pages published throughout the year were examined. This is done so that the development of the supplementary pages can be closely monitored.

Altogether, the articles that appeared in the supplementary pages were classified into 10 genres for analysis purpose. Out of these 10 genres, "essays" (笔记) has the largest number of articles published. This is followed by "poems" (诗词). Majority of the essays are about funny happenings and strange encounters that took place both in Singapore and overseas. As for the poems, most of them are on classical themes like those describing sceneries, objects, love and personal feelings.