ABSTRACT

The objectives of this Academic Exercise are two-fold. Part One of the paper, based on primary research and academic study, examines the impact of the Sino-Japanese War on Malayan Chinese Literature and attempts to trace the development of Resistance Literature, a literary manifesto created by the needs of the time. Part Two of the paper translates into English some pieces of representative works of the period showing the essential spirit and main themes of Resistance Literature. The selected works have never been translated into English.

1937 - 1942 was the period chosen for my study because that was the time when Japanese aggression in China became pronounced and open warfare was inevitable. This was also the time when China and her people were all out to fight the aggressors, despite formidable odds, which in turn generated an unprecedented wave of patriotism and nationalism among the Malayan Chinese who forgot their social, economical and political differences and united together in their resistance and salvation work. The wide publicity of the Chinese newspapers and literary supplements facilitated the growth of this patriotism. Literary workers too, rose to the occasion and played their part in the resistance and salvation movement and were a part of the driving force behind the people's waves of patriotic sentiments. They advocated Resistance Literature, a tool of dual purpose: as a manifesto of their loyalty and a device of propaganda
to inspire the people to action and greater heights of loyalty. Both Chinese-oriented and Nanyanised writers overlooked the importance of regional consciousness in their advocacy of a greater cause and the quantity of literary works flourished and flooded the Malayan Chinese literary realm, sometimes at the expense of quality. Furthermore, most of the Resistance Literature works were faithful depictions of the resistance and salvation work going on at that time and through reading them, we may get better insight into the sentiments and activities of the Malayan Chinese during the Sino-Japanese War and have a better understanding of the history of Malayan Chinese before the Japanese occupation.