SUMMARY

Among literary historians and critics, Zhang Xiao-xiang is widely acknowledged as a patriotic ci poet of the Southern Song Dynasty. Attention has been given to his works that express patriotism while those embody more private experiences and values are long neglected.

This six-chapter thesis attempts to offer a comprehensive and critical analysis of Zhang Xiao-xiang’s ci poetry.

As an introduction, Chapter One outlines the scope and approach of this analysis.

Since the life of a Chinese poet is always closely interwoven into the fabric of literary works, Chapter Two portrays the life of Zhang Xiao-xiang in order to understand the background of his ci poetry. It considers the impact of Zhang’s time and his political life, the influence from his family members, friends and colleagues, and the literary milieu of the time.

Chapter Three and Four discuss the intrinsic qualities of Zhang Xiao-xiang’s ci poetry. Chapter Three explores the "world" as a reflection of life's experiences and personal emotion in Zhang's ci poetry. It delves into three main aspects: (i) solicitude for his country, (ii) care for his family members, and (iii) introspection of
the self.

In Chapter Four, the artistic techniques of Zhang Xiao-xiang's ci poetry are analysed by considering four types of poetic skill that he frequently adopted. They are (i) the handling of imagery, (ii) the employment of allusions, (iii) the construction of contrasts, and (iv) the pattern of emotional expression.

Chapter Five evaluates Zhang Xiao-xiang's ci poetry in synchronic as well as diachronic perspective. It examines the importance of Zhang Xiao-xiang as a poet in the development of ci poetry.

Chapter Six is a concluding chapter that summarises the findings of this thesis.

This study proves that the significance of Zhang Xiao-xiang is far greater than just being considered as a patriotic ci poet. In his works, Zhang Xiao-xiang expresses more complex feelings and experiences of life. His ci poetry not only stands out among the vanguard of poetic trends of early Southern Song ci poetry, but also provides impetus for further development of the "heroic" (hao-fang) style of ci poetry.