SUMMARY

Shen Congwen (1902-1988) is a well-known writer of modern China. With some fifty works of fiction, he has gained the fame as a prolific author.

Among his fictional works, romances and Buddhist tales written between 1928 and 1933, describing the life and emotions of Xiang Xi's Miao people have the most unique theme. These fiction, which have the narrative characteristic of the folk tale, show strong romanticism which depicts the beauty and serenity of the remote countryside and the various strange incidents that happened in the lives of the Miao people.

Shen Congwen's romance of aboriginal tribes is a unique genre in modern Chinese fiction. Literary critics, used to the notion of the grand realistic tradition of the May Fourth literature, are at a loss to say anything positive when confronted with romances lauding the beauty, innocence and courage of Miao people who are described as model humans. Critics tend either to ignore these stories that apparently depart from the realistic tradition or criticize them as the unsuccessful product of an eager novice squandering his talent and energy on something worthless.

What sorts of pictures have this series of tales presented to us? What are the emotions and ideals that have been expressed through the pictures? Have these tales sincerely reflected Shen Congwen's thinking? Do they have any literary values? Therefore, from these points of view, the study of Shen Congwen's legends and romances of the Miao people has great significance.
This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. First and foremost, it deals with the objectives, scope and approach for the study. The second chapter covers the life and writing activities of Shen Congwen in a study of his relationship with the Miao people. The third chapter studies the background and its related theory for his legends and romances of the Miao people. The following two chapters analyse in detail the background, content and characteristics of Shen Congwen's five representative works on Miao tales and four Buddhist stories. The sixth and seventh chapters discuss through the selected stories, Shen Congwen's ideology and his various ways of depicting Miao's mythical world and in the last chapter, various scholars' and critics' opinions on Shen Congwen are summarized in order to establish the status and the literary value of Shen Congwen's tales of the Miao people.

Generally speaking, Shen Congwen's legends and romances of the Miao people have not only added colour, but have also greatly enriched modern Chinese literature. More significantly, they have become important to the study of Chinese folklore and sociology.