ABSTRACT

The objective of this dissertation is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth study of the life, editorial activities and poetry of Liu Si, a Singapore-Malayan Chinese poet, who has witnessed the different phases and significant periods in the development of the Singapore nation, during the Pre-War Period (1937-1941) and after the Post-War Period (1945-1970).

Liu Si (刘思, 1917—) stood out as one of the most prominent poets in the Singapore-Malayan modern Chinese literary scene especially in the days following the outbreak of Sino-Japanese War. As he was born in China, the Japanese threat to China evoked his strong patriotic sentiments and drew his concern to reflect the critical war situation. Hence, his early poems mainly revolve around motivating people to resist Japanese aggression. With a return of peace after the war, his poems gradually began to focus on the serenity of life and local scene, with an emphasis on local consciousness and matters pertaining to his daily life and Malayan society.

This dissertation attempts to examine the transition of the poetic structure (from modern to classical) as manifested in Liu Si’s poems. In addition, the mindset of the poet and other underlying factors influencing this unusual feature will be expounded. The distinct themes, art styles and language will also be put to comparison over the two periods.

The whole dissertation comprises of five chapters. The introductory chapter defines the scope and purposes of analyzing his poems and
highlights the research methods involved. Chapter 2 walks into the life of Liu Si by introducing his teaching career and editorial activities, as well as compiling and surveying his lost and found literary works. The next two chapters provide a detailed analysis of Liu Si’s poems, from different aspects such as the major themes, his style of poetry writing, i.e. social realism and romanticism, structure and language used, put under the historical time frame. The final chapter concludes with an overall assessment of the main orientation achieved in his poetry and seeks a deeper insight into his literary doctrine.