ABSTRACT

Studies on Chinese leaders in Singapore are many; nevertheless, most of the studies focused on politicians, entrepreneurs and philanthropists, while writers and journalists were less frequently examined. This dissertation therefore aims to examine the role of Lien Shih Sheng, for he was not only a famous Chinese writer in Singapore and Malaysia, president and committee member of various cultural societies and organisations, and the editor of Nanyang Siang Pau between 1948 and 1971, but also because during those years, Singapore and Malaysia were undergoing many significant historical events such as the end of colonialism, industrialisation and the establishment of Nanyang University.

The objectives of this dissertation are to study the views and influence of Lien Shih Sheng on the development of the Chinese culture of Singapore and Malaysia, especially in the field of education, literature and the arts. It also aims to understand that how his upbringing and education in China had an influence on his value system. The materials used for this dissertation are drawn from editorials, columns and books written by Lien Shih Sheng, and various journals and books written on Nanyang journalism and culture.

There are four chapters in this dissertation: Chapter 1 introduces the life of Lien Shih Sheng, providing a background to understanding the formulations of his ideas and cultural thoughts; Chapter 2 studies his views on the education, literature and the arts of Chinese in Singapore
and Malaysia, using materials mainly from his editorials; Chapter 3 illustrates how he put his words into actions and the factors contributed to his success; Chapter 4 is the conclusion.

In the analysis and comparison between his views on the Chinese culture of Singapore and Malaysia and his background, the study reveals that Lien Shih Sheng was much influenced by both the traditional Chinese values and the modern Western values. This was especially obvious when he was discussing on the education matters. This study also shows that he made various contributions to the literary and artistic circles of Singapore and Malaysia and to the studies of Nanyang (Southeast Asia) through the South Seas Society, China Society and Singapore Association of Writers as well as by writing good literary works. His works were not only being published in the newspapers and books, but also in journals such as the "Nanyang Monthly" and in textbooks or teaching materials used by schools in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and even the United States.

In conclusion, the study on Lien Shih Sheng and the Chinese culture of Singapore and Malaysia would lead us to look at the education and literature of Singapore and Malaysia during the 1950s-1960s from another perspective. It also offers a cultural approach to understand Chinese societies of Singapore and Malaysia in the mid 20th century.