A STUDY OF THE ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCES OF CHINESE
WRITERS IN SINGAPORE, 1927 - 1948

Abstract

Between 1927 and 1948, a number of important Chinese writers came to Singapore from China. They exerted considerable impact on the local society. This thesis is a study of their activities and their influences on the development of literature, culture, and social and political thinking in Singapore.

This thesis consists of nine chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, wherein I have defined the term "Modern Chinese writers" and explained the scope and aims of this study.

Chapter Two is an examination of the reasons and motivations for their migration from China to Singapore and Malaysia. I have discovered in the course of my research that this migration took place in roughly three stages: (a) During 1927 to 1937, the period before the Sino-Japanese War; (b) from 1937 (after the beginning of major hostilities in the Sino-Japanese War) to 1941 (before the Japanese Invasion of Singapore); and (c) from 1945 to 1948.

From Chapter Three to Chapter Seven, I sketch the lives and contributions of the noteworthy writers who came to Singapore from China between 1927 and 1948. The important writers discussed are Hung Ling-fei, Lao She, Ai Wu, Wu T'ien, Yü Ta-fu, Hu Yü-chih, Kao Yün-lan, Chin Shan, Wang Chi-yuan, Yang Sao, Wang Jen-shu (Pa Jen), Shen Chih-chiu, Ch'en Ts'an-yün, Tu Yün-hsüeh, Hsia Yen and Yüeh Yeh.

The important influences exerted by these writers are discussed in Chapter Eight and Nine. Chapter Eight deals with the literary aspects whilst Chapter Nine concentrates on socio-cultural aspects. Being famous literary figures with an admirable sense of social responsibility, many of the writers emerged as prominent community leaders exercising considerable influences on both literary and social thought, and cultural development in Singapore. All these have shaped and influenced the present Chinese writers and the development of literature in Singapore to quite an appreciable extent.