

【Special Feature Articles: *Chao Foon Magazine* and the Chinese Publication Network  
in East and Southeast Asia during the Cold War】

## The Afterglow of Tradition: Chinese Classical Literature Articles in *Chao Foon*, 1955–1999

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### Introduction: Exploring the Other Side of *Chao Foon*

*Chao Foon* is the oldest Chinese literary publication published in Singapore and Malaya/Malaysia. It was first published in 1955 on the eve of Malaya's independence and continued to be published until 1999, when it was temporarily suspended for a total of 488 issues. It was relaunched in 2002 at the Malaysian Chinese Literature Centre, and has been published ever since. *Chao Foon* is also an important venue for the production and dissemination of Malaysian Chinese literature, bearing in mind the colourful literary story of the Malaysian writer community. In recent years, academics in Taiwan, Malaysia and Japan have become very enthusiastic about the study of *Chao Foon*, actively organising symposia and publishing research monographs<sup>2</sup>, making *Chao Foon* a prominent study in the study of Malaysian literature.

The main views on the nature of *Chao Foon* are that it is “local”, i.e. “Malayanised”, that it is mainly a publication of local writers, and that it is a publication of “Malayan literature”<sup>3</sup>. The second is “modernity”, which means that *Chao Foon* has a strong modernist flavour and is an important arena for modernist literature, as opposed to the “realist” school<sup>4</sup>. In reality, however, although these two labels represent the main themes of *Chao Foon*, they are not absolute. The content of *Chao Foon* is quite diverse and includes different types of literary works and criticisms. First of all, *Chao Foon* actually publishes a lot of “non-local” content, including a large number of translations of Western literature, as well as works by

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<sup>2</sup> Related major publications in recent years include Lim (2021), Tee, Ng and Lee (2022), and Shinozaki, Masutani and Yamamoto (2022).

<sup>3</sup> Such as Lim Choon Bee's “Non-Leftist Local Literature: *Chao Foon* and its ‘Malayanisation’ Advocacy” (非左翼的本邦:《蕉风》及其“马来亚化”主张), published in Lim (2021).

<sup>4</sup> For example, in August 2016, an academic seminar on *Chao Foon* was held in Malaysia with the theme of “*Chao Foon* and the modernist literary trend of Malaysian Chinese Literature”, many papers tried to expound the “modernity” nature of *Chao Foon*.

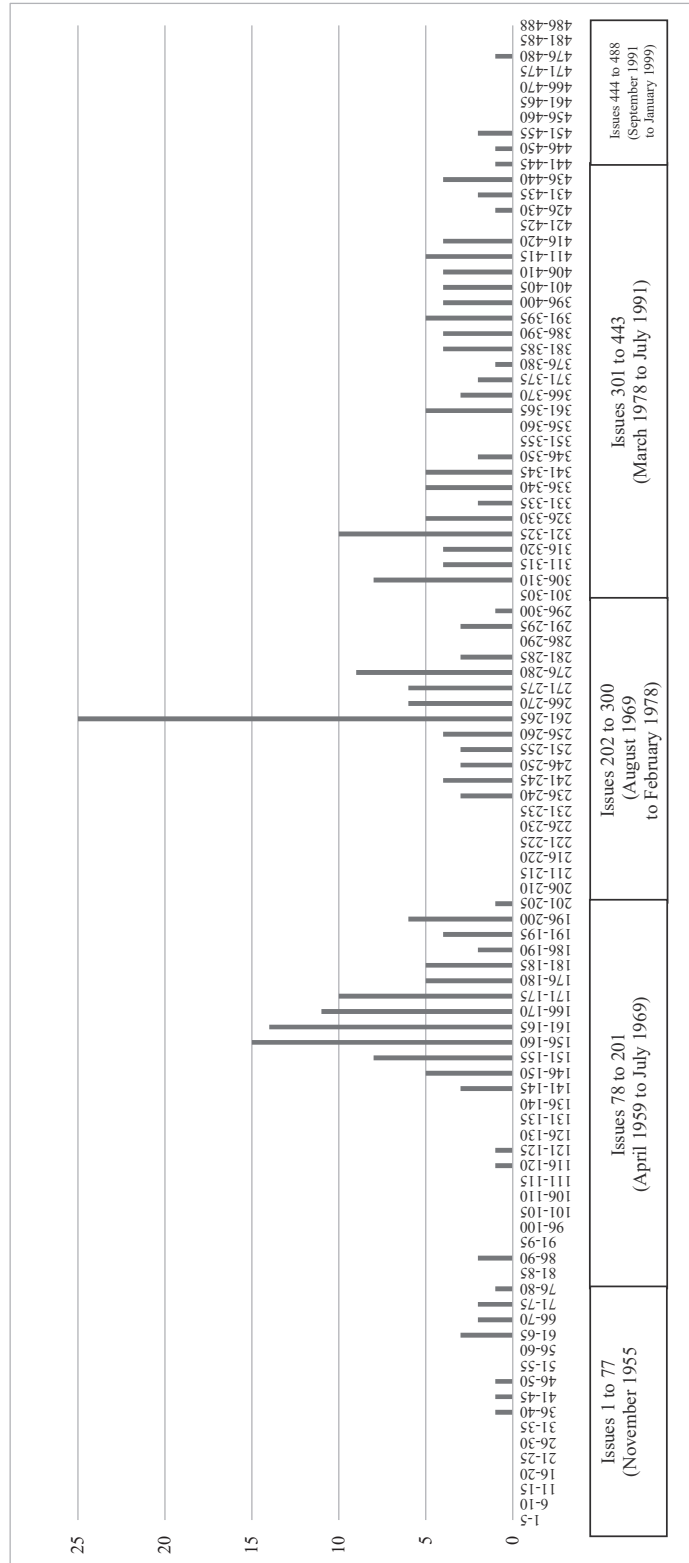
mainland Chinese writers and Taiwanese literature or related reviews. This has been discussed by scholars such as Ng (2007) and Hong (2019). Secondly, *Chao Foon* is not purely a “modernist” literary journal, but is simultaneously able to accommodate many works with “realist” overtones. Apart from Fang Tian (方天) in its earliest days in the 1960s and 1970s, when *Chao Foon* was actively introducing modernist literature, there was actually no shortage of realist works. Bai Yao (白堇), a long-time executive editor and editorial advisor of *Chao Foon*, published an article, pointing out the “realism” aspect of *Chao Foon* that could not be ignored (Bai, 1998).

In addition, the “non-modern” aspect of *Chao Foon* is also reflected in the fact that it publishes many articles related to classical Chinese literature, including theoretical and heavy academic papers, as well as essays on classical literature and culture of a casual and rambling nature. According to the author’s statistics (Graph 1), in the 43 years between its inception in 1955 and closure in 1999, *Chao Foon* published 276 articles on classical literature criticism or essays<sup>5</sup>. In particular, it published two issues of “Issue for Classical Literature” (Issue 261 and 262, November and December 1974), which comprised several columns on classical literature. The *Chao Foon* book series (蕉风文丛) even published three monographs on classical literature, namely *Collected Essays of Zhen Zhen* (《秦秦论文集》) by Zhen Zhen (秦秦)<sup>6</sup>, *Study of Yuan Dynasty Sanqu Literature* (《元代散曲文学研究》) by Chew Kok Chang (周国灿), and *New Analysis of Tao Poetry* (《陶诗新析》) by Hao Yi Min (郝毅民). These articles and monographs may seem sporadic and weak in the context of the publication history of *Chao Foon* as a whole, but they are nonetheless a real phenomenon that cannot be ignored, showing that *Chao Foon* has indeed retained a certain amount of “classicality”. As there seems to have been no relevant academic discussion on the subject in the past, this paper attempts to sort out the publications of classical Chinese literary criticism in *Chao Foon* to present this neglected aspect of *Chao Foon*.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: Chapter I divides the publication period of *Chao Foon* into five sections, and introduces an overview of classical Chinese literary criticism and its main authors. Chapter II examines the background of the repeated disappearance of articles from Chinese classical literature criticism in the five periods, with its renewal and changes in editorial direction, only to be revived after a while, from the three perspectives of editor, author, and reader. Chapter III examines the content of articles on Chinese classical literature published in *Chao Foon* from several perspectives, and the role of Chinese classical literature, which in mainland China in the first half of the 20th century was regarded as a hotbed of conservative ideology that hindered development and

<sup>5</sup> This includes a series of serial articles, which are counted here by instalments of each.

<sup>6</sup> Zhen Zhen, whose real name is Chou Liu Chuan (丘柳川), is a modern Singaporean poet and author of the poetry collections *Statues* (《塑像》) and *Zhenzhen’s Poems* (《秦秦诗》).



Graph 1 Number of Articles on Classical Literature in Each Issue of Chao Foon

modernisation. *Chao Foon* re-evaluated classical Chinese literature from the perspective of the development and modernisation of Malaysia. It also shows that *Chao Foon* provides a transnational platform for sharing knowledge through classical literature.

## I The *Chao Foon*, A Departure from the Classical

Throughout its 43-year history, *Chao Foon* has had an uneasy relationship with the classics. Graph 1 shows the changes in the number of articles published on the Chinese classics. This chapter provides an overview of the changes in the number of articles on Chinese classics, focusing on changes in the editorial team, which can be divided into five periods, as shown in Table 1.

### 1. Issues 1 to 77 (November 1955 to March 1959)

At its inception, *Chao Foon* was specifically billed as “purely Malayan”, with an editorial emphasis on localism, but not exclusively “purely literary” content. It also published several articles on local anecdotes and episodes in Malaya and Singapore. Perhaps because of this “purely Malayan” approach, for the first year and a half, *Chao Foon* had no content related to classical Chinese literature.

The first appearance of classical Chinese literature criticism in *Chao Foon* was as late as Issue 38, which contained an article by Ren Qian Li (任千里) (38)<sup>7</sup>, focusing on the character of Qu Yuan (屈原), and briefly discussing the main themes and analysing the characteristics of his works, such as “Li Sao” (《离骚》), “Tian Wen” (《天问》), and “Jiu Zhang” (《九章》). Qu Yuan is one of the most important poets in the history of ancient Chinese literature, and it is logical that this should be the starting point for *Chao Foon*’s commentaries on classical Chinese literature. However, the reason for publishing a review on Qu Yuan in *Chao Foon* at this time was not really to promote classical literature, but rather to coincide with the Duanwu Festival (端午节), which is associated with the traditional festive culture of Malayan Chinese. The following year, on the occasion of the Duanwu Festival, *Chao Foon* also published Chu Ke (楚客) (64) and Xia Ri Yan (夏日炎) (64).

In any case, after the precedent of reviewing Qu Yuan’s works, a small number of reviews of classical Chinese literature gradually began to appear in *Chao Foon*, including several articles by Wang Hui (王恢) (42, 47, 61, 77). Wang had just come to Malaya from Hong Kong to teach. The most important article on classical literature in the early *Chao Foon* was Pan Chong Gui’s (潘重规) articles (71, 72). Pan was a famous scholar who came from

<sup>7</sup> The number in brackets after the author’s name indicates the issue number of *Chao Foon* in which the article appeared. See Table 1 for bibliographic information.

Table 1: List of Articles on the Chinese Classics Mentioned in this Paper

Period	Issue	Year. Month. Day	Author	Chinese name	Title	Chinese title
1	38	1957.5.25	Ren Qian Li	任千里	The Immortal Qu Yuan	不朽的屈原
	42	1957.7.25	Wang Hui	王恢	The Thought, Personality and Works of Tao Yuanming	陶渊明的思想、人格和作品
	47	1957.10.10	Wang Hui	王恢	The Personality and Academic Thought of Zhu Shunshui	朱舜水的人格和学术思想
	61	1958.5.10	Wang Hui	王恢	A Brief Knowledge of Chinese Literature	中国文学浅识
	64	1958.6.25	Chu Ke	楚客	I See Qu Yuan	我看屈原
	64	1958.6.25	Xia Ri Yan	夏日炎	An Experimental Translation of Qu Yuan's National Elegy	屈原国殇试译
	70	1958.9.25	Pan Chong Gui	潘重规	Questioning Hu Shih's Study of The Dream of the Red Chamber	胡适《红楼梦》考证质疑 (上)
	71	1958.10.10	Pan Chong Gui	潘重规	Questioning Hu Shih's Study of The Dream of the Red Chamber	胡适《红楼梦》考证质疑 (下)
	77	1959.3	Wang Hui	王恢	The Tragic Consciousness of Chinese Novel and Opera	中国小说戏曲之悲剧意识
2	89	1960.3	Li Wei	季薇	Long Journey of Prose Development	散文发展的悠长旅程 (上)
	90	1960.4	Li Wei	季薇	Long Journey of Prose Development	散文发展的悠长旅程 (下)
	119	1962.9	Wen Zi Chuan	温梓川	Miscellaneous Stories on Water Margin	水浒杂话
	123	1963.1	Wen Zi Chuan	温梓川	Essay on Novels	小说琐谈
	143-175	1964.9 - 1967.5	Yue Qian	岳骞	Essays on Charactors of Water Margin	水浒人物散论
	150	1965.4	Nan Dao Ju Shi	南岛居士	Essay on Miao Yu	论妙玉
	152	1965.6	Su Xue Lin	苏雪林	The Characteristics of Li Yishan's Poetry	李义山诗的特色
	156	1965.10	Su Xue Lin	苏雪林	Common Knowledge and Research on the Classic of Poetry	关于《诗经》的常识和研究 (上)
	157	1965.11	Su Xue Lin	苏雪林	Common Knowledge and Research on the Classic of Poetry	关于《诗经》的常识和研究 (中)
	158	1965.12	Su Xue Lin	苏雪林	Common Knowledge and Research on the Classic of Poetry	关于《诗经》的常识和研究 (下)

	159	1966.1	Lao Kan	劳榘	On Wang Guowei's Lyrics in Huan Xi Sha	说王国维的浣溪纱词
	160	1966.2	Lao Kan	劳榘	Shen Yun Theory and Jing Jie Theory	神韵说与境界说
	161	1962.3	Yi Teng	依藤	Essay on Tan Chun	论探春
	163	1966.5	Xu Shi Ying	许世瑛	Talk about The Scholars	谈谈《儒林外史》
	164	1966.6	Liu Wen Xian	刘文献	Liu Zong Yuan's Travelogue	柳宗元的游记
	165	1966.7	Ye Qing Bing	叶庆炳	Writing Techniques of The Tale of the Curly-Bearded Guest	《虬髯客传》的写作技巧
	166	1966.8	Ye Jia Ying	叶嘉莹	The Appreciation of Poetry from The Human Words	由《人间词话》谈到诗歌的欣赏
	198	1969.4	Xia Yu	夏语	He Shao Ji on Imitation and Originality	何绍基论模仿和独创
3	237	1972.11	Lai Swee Fo	赖瑞和	Dramatic Representation in Classical Chinese Poetry	中国古典诗里的戏剧性表现
	238	1972.12	James J. Y. Liu (translated by Lai Swee Fo)	刘若愚 (赖瑞和译)	The Chinese Mind in the Light of Classical Chinese Poetry	从中国古典诗看中国人的思想诸貌
	239	1973.1	Liu Chuan	流川	Criteria of Literary Criticism: Guo Mo Ruo's Critique of Li Bai and Du Fu's Criteria	谈文艺批评的准绳——从郭沫若批判李白杜甫的准绳谈起
	242	1973.4	Archibaid Mac Leish	(赖瑞和译)	The Mournful Song of the Falling Leaves: An American on Chinese Poetry	落叶哀蝉曲——美国人谈中国诗
	243	1973.5	Yue Heng Jun	乐蘅军	Rise and Fall of Liang Shan Po: Tragic Mockery of The Water Margin	梁山泊的缔造与幻灭——论水浒的悲剧嘲弄
	248	1973.10	Luo Jin Tang	罗锦堂	Goethe and Chinese Novels and Dramas	歌德与中国小说和戏剧的关系
	249	1973.11	Liu Chuan	流川	An Analysis of Liu Xie's Imagination and other works	析论刘勰的神思及其他
	255	1974.5	Liu Chuan	流川	Preliminary Chinese Typography	中国文字学初步
	258	1974.8	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Discussion in Sun Tzu's Art of War	从孙子兵法谈起
	260	1974.10	Zhen Zhen	蔡蓁	How sorrow are you?: Analysis of Li Hou Zhu's the Beautiful Lady Yu	问君能有几多愁——李后主的虞美人分析

261	1974.11	Zhen Zhen	秦秦	Romance of the Western Chamber: a play gained popularity	谈民间流传的《西厢记》
261	1974.11	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Jing Jie against Jing Jie	境界对境界
262	1974.12	Zhen Zhen	秦秦	Romance of the Western Chamber: a play gained popularity	谈民间流传的《西厢记》(续)
262	1974.12	Chen Shi Xiang	陈世骧	The Chinese Lyrical Tradition	中国的抒情传统
262	1974.12	Xia Zhi Qing	夏志清	Chinese Classical Novels	中国古典小说
263	1975.1	Liu Chuan	流川	Recognition of 108 heroes of Liang Shan Po and their being Forced onto the Liang Shan	梁山泊一百另八条好汉及其被迫上梁山之识辨
263	1975.1	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Talk about Records of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang	谈《洛阳伽蓝记》
264	1975.2	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Talk about Romance of the Western Chamber	也谈西厢
265	1975.3	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Poems of the People	人间诗谱
266	1975.4	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Shi Li Fa Zhong	诗礼发冢
268	1975.6	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Heavenly Questions - A Compilation of Southern Myths	天问——南方神话的汇编
270	1975.8	Yun Qi Shi	云起时	A Study of Yuan Dynasty Prose Literature	元代散曲文学研究(一)
271	1975.9	Yun Qi Shi	云起时	A Study of Yuan Dynasty Prose Literature (2)	元代散曲文学研究(二)
272	1975.10	Yun Qi Shi	云起时	A Study of Yuan Dynasty Prose Literature (3)	元代散曲文学研究(三)
273	1975.11	Yun Qi Shi	云起时	A Study of Yuan Dynasty Prose Literature (4)	元代散曲文学研究(四)
275	1976.1	Huang Ji Hao	黄继豪	A Study of Dreams in Tang Novels	唐人小说里的梦境研究
275	1976.1	Chen	陈慧桦	Characters and language in Killing of a Dog	《杀狗记》里的人物和语言
276	1976.2	Huang Ji Hao	黄继豪	A Study of Dreams in Tang Novels	唐人小说里的梦境研究

	277	1976.3	Chai Xiu Ying	蔡秀英	Li Dongyang's Poetic Theory and Its Influence - A Study of Huailutang Poetry Talk (1)	李东阳的诗论及其影响——《怀麓堂诗话》研究(上)
	278	1976.4	Chai Xiu Ying	蔡秀英	Li Dongyang's Poetic Theory and Its Influence - A Study of Huailutang Poetry Talk (2)	李东阳的诗论及其影响——《怀麓堂诗话》研究(下)
	279	1976.5	Li Nan Fa	李南发	A Study of the Mulberry Tree in the Classic of Poetry	《诗经》中的桑树研究
	285	1976.11	Ho Khai Leong	何启良	Reading the English Translation of Su Dongpo's Prelude to Water Melody	读苏东坡水调歌头英译
	291	1977.5	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Authenticity of Lie Zi	《列子》辨伪
	293	1977.7	Lai Shan Fang	赖山舫	Comparative literature and Chinese literature	比较文学与中国文学
4	301	1978.3	Liu Chuan	流川	A combination of tradition and modernity: an analysis of Tan Ying's Five poems on wistfulness	传统与现代的结合——析论淡莹的怀古五首
	309	1978.11	Hao Yi Min	郝毅民	Series of Poetry of Form, Shadow, and Spirit	《形影神》诗组补谈
	310	1978.12	Hao Yi Min	郝毅民	An analysis of the sentiment of Ting Yun	陶诗《停云》的情意分析
	311	1979.1	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	A projection of the tragedy of Sima Qian (1)	司马迁悲剧的投影(之一)
	312	1979.2	Mei Shu Zhen	梅淑贞	Dialogues in The Dream of the Red Chamber	《红楼梦》里的道白
	322	1980.1	Ma You-woon (Translated by Lai Swee Fo)	马幼垣 (赖瑞和译)	Themes and Contents of Chinese Historical Novels	中国讲史小说的主题与内容
	323	1980.2	Zheng Bai Nian	郑百年	Liu Zong Yuan's Yongzhou Miscellany (1)	柳宗元“永州杂记”(一)
	325	1980.5	Liang Zong Dai	梁宗岱	Li Bai and Goethe	李白与哥德
	328	1980.7	Cyril Birch (Translated by Lai Swee Fo)	Cyril Birch (赖瑞和译)	Tragedy and Farce in Early Legendary Drama: A Comparison of Tale of the Pipa and A Thorn Hairpin	早期传奇剧中的悲剧与闹剧——琵琶记与荆钗记的比较



	334	1981.1	Mei Shu Zhen	梅淑贞	Late Tang Poems	晚唐诗
	340	1981.7	Cyril Birch (Translated by Lai Swee Fo)	(赖瑞和译)	Some Concerns and Techniques in Ming Sagas	明传奇中的一些关注和技巧
	341	1981.8	Li You Cheng	李有成	On Sima Qian's View of Literature	论司马迁的文学观
	362	1983.7	Mei Shu Zhen	梅淑贞	Reading Six Records of a Floating Life	读《浮生六记》
	363	1983.8	Mei Shu Zhen	梅淑贞	Reading The Legend of the Sea Flower	读《海上花列传》
	368-372	1984.1-1984.5	Hao Yi Min	郝毅民	A Peek into the Poetic Mind of Du Fu	杜诗心态窥测
	383-388	1985.4-1985.9	Hao Yi Min	郝毅民	Literature and Eroticism	文艺与情欲
	384	1985.6	Li You Cheng	李有成	Zhong Rong Talks about 'Taste'	钟嵘论“味”
	388	1985.10	Wei Zi Yun	魏子云	The Real Society in The Plum in the Golden Vase	《金瓶梅》中的现实社会
	395	1986.9	Chou Chao-Ming (translated by Nan Ge Zi)	周昭明 (南柯子译)	The Extrospective Mode: The Art of Hsieh Ling-yün's Shan-Shui Poetry.	谢灵运山水诗的外观模式
	401-403	1987.3-1987.5	Hao Yi Min	郝毅民	Review of Gao Shi: on the artistic and psychological images of the Youth's Journey	评高适——论《少年行》的艺术心理形象
	408	1987.10	Mai Ke	迈克	Who Understands the Taste of Obsession	谁解痴中味
	411	1988.2	Huang Yun Yo	黄润岳	This is how it was, Hao Liao Ge	“好了歌”原来如此
	438	1990.10	Huang Yun Yo	黄润岳	Ramblings on Old Poetry	旧诗漫谈
	439	1990.12	Huang Yun Yo	黄润岳	Jing Jie in the Human Words	从《人间词话》中的境界谈起
	442	1991.6	Huang Yun Yo	黄润岳	The Crystallization of Eastern Wisdom: Yi Ching	东方智慧的结晶：《易经》
5	451	1992.12	Huang Wei Liang	黄维樑	Musicality in Literature	文学的音乐性
	455	1993.8	Wei Hao	韦晕	The Characterisation of The Scholars	《儒林外史》的人物造型
	477	1997.4	Lim Chooi Kua	林水椽	The Prose Achievement of Liu Yuxi	刘禹锡的散文成就

Hong Kong and Taiwan to teach at Nanyang University.

## 2. Issues 78 to 201 (April 1959 to July 1969)

In Issue 78, *Chao Foon* saw its first major revamp, explicitly advocating “humanist literature” and “individualist literature”, thus starting the first wave of the modernist movement in Malaysian literature, with a strong effort to introduce Western literature and modernism. For about five years after this revision, classical literature reviews almost completely disappeared from *Chao Foon*, except for Ji Wei (季薇) (89, 90) and Wen Zichuan (温梓川) (119, 123). It is noteworthy that in the “Editor’s Note” (〈编者的话〉) in Issue 91, the editor had stated his views on China’s literary heritage: “(We) already parted ways with the old literature forty-one years ago. We can absorb ancient literature to some extent, but we cannot apply it today” (*Chao Foon*, 1960.5:2). Clearly, the editor of *Chao Foon* at that time (perhaps Huang Si Cheng (黄思骋), who had just arrived in the south at the time), deliberately rejected classical Chinese literary criticism in favour of absorbing and studying the works of famous Western writers in terms of the implications for modern literary production.

It was not until issue 143, a considerably expanded “renewal” issue, that classical Chinese literature reviews were brought back to life in *Chao Foon*. It started publishing a series of essays on characters of *Water Margin* (《水浒传》) by the famous Hong Kong novelist Yue Qian (岳骞, whose real name is He Jia Hua, 何家骅), a total of 32 articles (143–175). At the same time, from Issues 150 to 201, *Chao Foon* also published a series of 43 articles on the characters of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (《红楼梦》) by Yi Teng (依藤)<sup>8</sup>.

*Chao Foon* added a column entitled “Writers’ Mailbox” (作家信箱) during this period, in which it invited several Taiwanese scholars to discuss classical Chinese literature, such as Su Xue Lin (苏雪林) (152, 156–158), Lao Kan (劳榦) (159, 160), Xu Shi Ying (许世瑛) (163), Ye Qing Bing (叶庆炳) (165), and Ye Jia Ying (叶嘉莹) (166). These articles injected a significant amount of classical Chinese literature into *Chao Foon* during this period, and two or three articles on classical Chinese literature were often published in the same issue, bringing the “classicality” of *Chao Foon* to its first peak.

## 3. Issues 202 to 300 (August 1969 to February 1978)

Yao Tuo (姚拓), Bai Yao (白垚), Li Cang (李苍, alias Lee Yu Cheng, 李有成) and Mu Ling Nu (牧羚奴, alias Tan Swie Hian, 陈瑞献) took over the editing of *Chao Foon* from Issue 202, reforming it once again, and focusing on the promotion of *Chao Foon* in modern

<sup>8</sup> His real name is Wang Kaijing (汪开竞). His other pen name is Nan Dao Ju Shi (南岛居士).

literature as before. Over the following three years, articles on classical Chinese literature were almost completely absent from *Chao Foon*. It was not until Issue 237 (November 1972) that this silence was broken by Lai Swee Fo's article. Since then, the number of articles on classical literature criticism in *Chao Foon* has increased rapidly, with Liu Chuan (流川, alias Tan Sen Kwel, 陈生贵), Zheng Bai Nian (郑百年, alias Tay Lian Soo, 郑良树), and Zhen Zhen actively publishing articles on classical Chinese literature.

Particularly noteworthy are the two consecutive issues of *Chao Foon*, Issues 261 and 262 (November and December 1974), in which a number of classical Chinese literature reviews were published, including classic essays by renowned scholars, Chen Shi Xiang (陈世骧) (262) and Xia Zhi Qing (夏志清) (262).

This was the period in the history of *Chao Foon* when the most frequent and voluminous reviews of classical Chinese literature were published.

#### 4. Issues 301 to 443 (March 1978 to July 1991)

After peaking in the early 1970s, reviews of classical Chinese literature in *Chao Foon* entered a long period of stability, with articles not appearing in as large a volume as before, but continuing in a steady stream. In Issue 301 (March 1978), Qiao Ling (悄凌), Zhang Ailun (张爱伦 alias Tee Kim Tong, 张锦忠) and Sha Qin (沙禽) took over as editors of *Chao Foon*, which was again revamped. After this, *Chao Foon* went through a number of editorial changes, with May Soo Chin (梅淑贞), Zi Yi Si (紫一思), Tee Kim Tong, Zhou Qing Xiao (周清啸), Wu Mei Cai (伍梅彩), Wang Zu An (王祖安) and Khor Ewe Pin (许友彬) all taking part in the editorial duties one after another. Although they all had different editorial ideas, the publication of classical literature reviews in *Chao Foon* remained relatively stable during this period with a regular column on "Classical Literature", and it continued publication of classical Chinese literature reviews.

During this period, Zheng Bai Nian, a leading Malaysian scholar of traditional Chinese studies, continued to contribute to *Chao Foon*, publishing a series of essays on Sima Qian's (司马迁) *The Records of the Grand Historian* (《史记》), ten essays in total, and on Liu Zongyuan's (柳宗元) *The Eight Records of Yongzhou* (《永州八记》), four essays in total. In addition, Hao Yi Min (郝毅民), another important critic of classical Chinese literature, also began to contribute to *Chao Foon*, publishing a number of essays on Tao Yuanming (陶渊明) and his poems (309, 310). Hao also published a series of essays on Du Fu's (杜甫) poems (368-372).

## 5. Issues 444 to 488 (September 1991 to January 1999)

In September 1991, after Xiao Hei (小黑) and Duo La (朵拉) took over the editorship of *Chao Foon*, the publication of Chinese Classical Literature reviews became significantly less frequent, and there was no longer a column for “Classical Literature”. Moreover, during the six years they edited *Chao Foon*, there were only a few articles in *Chao Foon* that could be classified as Chinese classical literature reviews, including Wong Wai Leung (黄维樑) (451), Wei Yun (韦晕) (455) and Lim Chooi Kua (林水椽) (477), of which Huang Wei Liang’s article is not yet a typical essay on classical literature (it only discusses the musicality of literature, mainly using classical poetry as an example). Wei Yun’s article was published by *Chao Foon* after Wei Yun was awarded the Malaysian Literary Award.

After Xiao Hei and Duo La, Lim Choon Bee (林春美) took over the editorial duties of *Chao Foon* in 1998. There were no more reviews of classical Chinese literature at all in Issues 482 to 488, which she edited. It is clear that during the last seven years of the Union Press period, *Chao Foon* had almost completely disassociated itself from “classicality”, and the majority of literary criticism at that time was mainly on Malaysian Chinese literature, which shows that the authors of *Chao Foon* had shifted the focus of their literary discourse to the local community, and that the criticism of classical Chinese literature had clearly lost its vitality.

## II Why *Chao Foon* is “Classical”: the Combined Role of Editors, Authors and Readers

An examination of the publication of classical Chinese literary criticism in *Chao Foon* over time reveals a clear pattern: when *Chao Foon* was revamped or changed editors, classical Chinese literary criticism tended to disappear for a while. This may be due to editors reviewing its positioning and overhauling its content every time *Chao Foon* was revamped, and they usually deliberately adjusted it towards “modernity”, especially in Issues 78 and 202, both of which had a markedly “modernist” tendency.

Why, then, did classical Chinese literary criticism slowly reappear in *Chao Foon*? The editors, authors and readers of *Chao Foon* all played a part in this process. Such mutual relations resulted in *Chao Foon* being neither too close nor too distant from classical literature.

### 1. Editor’s Attitude

As mentioned, the early editors of *Chao Foon*, either because of the idea of “pure

Malayanisation” or because of their focus on modern literature (from Issue 78 onwards), on the whole did not attach much importance to classical Chinese literature, and even stated outright that classical Chinese literature no longer had any practical relevance in contemporary writing (*Chao Foon*, 1960.5: 2). However, as time passed and editors changed, the editorial principles and positioning that they initially set out may gradually loosen, coupled with the editors’ desire to enrich the diversity of *Chao Foon*, or the fact that some of the editors themselves retain a certain affection for classical literature.

After its renewal in Issue 78, *Chao Foon* did not publish a review of classical Chinese literature until Issue 119 (September 1962), when it published an article by Wen Zi Chuan. In this issue, the “Editor’s Note” states: “We have long said that this journal has no preconceptions about modern or classical literature, or Oriental or Western literature; we recognize that literature should have a vertical side as well as a horizontal side, and that only with the complementarity of both vertical and horizontal sides can literary works shine brilliantly” (*Chao Foon*, 1962.9: 2). This statement, which is already very different from the “Editor’s Note” in Issue 91, expresses the inclusive editorial attitude of *Chao Foon* and its affirmation of the ancient Chinese literary tradition.

Later, in Issue 143, *Chao Foon* saw a diversification, starting with the serialisation of Yue Qian’s essays on the Characters of *Water Margin* (《水浒传》). Before that, the “Editor’s Note” in Issue 140 announced that “in terms of content, we will not only expand the length as much as possible, but also try to accommodate works of various genres and forms” (*Chao Foon*, 1964.8). It declared a more inclusive and pluralistic editorial direction, covering literature from both East and West, as well as modern and classical literature. In Issue 150, Yi Teng made his debut in *Chao Foon*, and began publishing a series of articles on the characters of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. The “Editor’s Note” in that issue advocated that the *Chao Foon* will treat classics and modern literature equally (*Chao Foon*, 1965.4). By Issue 202, Yao Tuo, Bai Yao, Li Cang and Mu Ling Nu had taken over the editorship of *Chao Foon*, with Bai Yao penning the current issue of “Windy News” (《风讯》), stating that “We have no intention of shouting slogans about traditional, modern, realistic or romantic literary schools, we respect all different styles of work” (*Chao Foon*, 1969.8).

Issues 261 and 262 were published as “Issue(s) for Classical Literature”, which shows the ultimate expression of the editor’s respect and tolerance for Chinese classical literature. In “Windy News” in Issue 261, the editor expressed his intention to break *Chao Foon*’s modernist label. The editor began by quoting readers’ observations that *Chao Foon* was, in the general opinion of the time, a journal of modern literature, to which the editor responded: “This is a sort of biased impression. We examined the content in back numbers and found that many of the articles were in classical literature. Nonetheless, this is the reader’s impression and it is worth considering them” (*Chao Foon*, 1974.11). The editor was aware

that *Chao Foon* was already perceived by many people at the time as too modern, so he deliberately introduced “Issue for Classical Literature” in order to re-establish the image of *Chao Foon* as a diverse literary journal that is eclectic and straddles modernity and tradition.

The open-mindedness of the editors of these two issues on classical literature is notable; however, there unfortunately is no record identifying who the editors were. According to the famous Malaysian literary historian Lee Kim Chong (李锦宗), Yao Tuo and Bai Yao should have been the executive editors of *Chao Foon* from 1973 to 1975 (Lee, 2010). On the other hand, in the “Windy News” of Issue 259, there is the phrase “Lai Swee Fo, editor of this magazine” (*Chao Foon*, 1974.9), so it is likely that Lai Swee Fo was also involved in the editing of those two issues.

Neither Yao Tuo nor Bai Yao agreed with the label of modernism attached to *Chao Foon*. Yao Tuo published an article in Issue 458 (January 1994), in which he said:

In 1970, after Huang Ya (黄崖) left *Chao Foon*, Bai Yao edited it and began publishing modern poetry. Later on, when Zhou Huan (周唤) was chief editor, *Chao Foon* publication published *V-Shape of Beauty* (《美的V形》), containing a large number of modern poems, which led to *Chao Foon* being called “modernist”. *Chao Foon* has always been diverse, publishing both modern and nonmodern works. Works and articles by Huang Yun Yo (黄润岳), Tay Lian Soo (郑良树) and myself were “not modern” at all. (Yao, 1994)

Tee Kim Tong pointed out that Bai Yao was an important driving force behind *Chao Foon*'s inclusion of other kinds of literature, in addition to modernism. Tee even recalled:

One day, Brother Liu [Bai Yao] brought a copy of *Ming Pao Monthly* (《明报月刊》) and asked me to read an essay by Xu Fu Guan (徐复观) on Wang Guo Wei's (王国维) *Human World and the Ci Theory* (《人间词话》). He thought that this was a nice essay and talked about Xu's writing and literary theory. At that time, it did not occur to me that Liu's literature course had already entered the section of opening classical books. (Tee, 2015)

Bai Yao was a great admirer of classical literature and related commentaries. Lai Swee Fo, a graduate of the Department of Foreign Languages at the National Taiwan University, published or translated a number of reviews of Western literature in *Chao Foon* in the early 1970s, but later turned his academic interest to ancient Chinese literature and history. Lai's opinion may have influenced the decision to publish Issues 261 and 262 as “Issue(s) for Classical Literature”, which became a major reversal of *Chao Foon*'s long-standing modern

literary style.

## 2. Author's Influence

In addition to the role of the editors, the role of the authors, who could contribute to high-quality essays on classics, was also significant in the publication of review articles on classics by *Chao Foon*. In fact, the threshold for writing literary criticism is usually higher than that for creative writing in general, and Chinese classical criticism in particular is difficult to do without professional disciplinary training or long-term reading and research, so much so that the editors of *Chao Foon* have pointed out their lack of classical literature contributions several times. Therefore, having a group of excellent classical literature review writers, is another important reason *Chao Foon* has been able to maintain a certain level of classical literature content.

In addition, the contributions of some heavyweight scholars, with their academic reputations and the value of their articles, were sufficient to break the established editorial line of *Chao Foon* and make the editor willing to publish their papers in classical Chinese literature. In its early days, *Chao Foon* emphasised “pure Malayanisation”, for example, in its guidelines for contributions (稿约). In Issue 71, it stated: “All literary works with Malayan background, such as novels, essays, plays, new poems, etc., ... are all welcome” (*Chao Foon*, 1958.10: 9). However, in Issues 70 and 71, Professor Pan Chong Gui devoted a significant amount of space to a typical and highly academic essay on classical Chinese literature. According to the “Reader-Author-Editor”, the editors asked Pan during his visit to Nanyang University in Singapore to write articles on the review on *The Dream of the Red Chamber* by Hu Shih (胡适). The editor of *Chao Foon* also chose to make an exception by publishing articles by another scholar, Su Xue Lin (156-158), who had come from Taiwan to teach at Nanyang University.

Huang Yun Yo described his 28 years of writing columns for *Chao Foon* by saying, “Once, a reputable writer said to me, ‘Even though the style of *Chao Foon* keeps changing, it still publishes your articles’. He did not know that all of the previous editors-in-chief of *Chao Foon* had been close personal friends with me” (Huang, 1985: 11). It is clear that the close relationship that some authors have built with *Chao Foon* over time is one of the reasons they have been able to influence its editorial orientation. Lai Swee Fo, for example, began to contribute poetry and literature to *Chao Foon* in the late 1960s, and he published a number of translations and reviews of Western literature in *Chao Foon* in the early 1970s. Later, around 1973, he also participated in the editorial work of *Chao Foon*. He had been focusing his literary interests on Chinese classics since at least 1972, when one of his articles was published in Issue 237. It was the first article on classical Chinese literature published in

*Chao Foon* in more than three years after the revamp of Issue 202. Subsequently, Lai translated and published a number of essays on classical Chinese literature by Western scholars in *Chao Foon* (238, 322, 328).

In fact, the launch of the “Issue(s) for Classical Literature”, Issues 261 and 262, had been suggested by authors. In a letter enclosed in the manuscript, Zhen Zhen, who contributed an article on the classics in Issue 260, suggested that *Chao Foon* publish a special feature of the classics. The editorial team took this suggestion in good stride (*Chao Foon*, 1974.10: 94). Like Lai Swee Fo, Zhen Zhen was also a fairly active writer in *Chao Foon*, having published modern poetry in *Chao Foon* since the late 1960s, and translated commentaries by Western writers. He enjoyed a friendship with the editor. He subsequently became interested in the study of Chinese classical literature, and began to send relevant essays to *Chao Foon* for publication, suggesting that the editor publish special issues on classical literature.

Another important author of commentaries on classical Chinese literature in *Chao Foon* is Zheng Bai Nian. Zheng, whose real name is Tay Lian Soo, was a renowned Sinologist born in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, with a Ph.D. in Chinese from the National Taiwan University. He had taught at the Chinese Department of the University of Malaya, the Chinese Department of Hong Kong Central University, and the Chinese Department of Southern College in Malaysia. In 1974, while teaching at the University of Malaya, he made his debut in *Chao Foon* with the publication of a review article on classical works entitled “Discussion on Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* (《孙子兵法》)” in Issue 258. Since then, Zheng has maintained a very close relationship with *Chao Foon* for a long time, having been in charge of four serial columns on Chinese classical literature: “Learn and Think (学与思)”, “Literature and History (文史丛谈)”, “Bai Nian’s Column (百年专栏)”, and “Essays on Hong Kong (香江随笔)”. He was one of the most important writers of *Chao Foon*, having publishing nearly 100 articles in the journal, and has been one of its editorial advisers since June 1986. Zheng was aware that *Chao Foon* had a modern literary tone; however, he consciously injected classical elements into the publication. He expressed his views on the relationship between classical and modern literature in his “Windy News” article in Issue 304:

Modern literature depends on classical literature for its nourishment and innovation in modern literature. Writers of Malaysian Chinese literature should have a good understanding of classical literature in order to be able to blend it with modernity and become first-class writers. (*Chao Foon*, 1978.6: 116)

He was therefore moved by *Chao Foon*’s lack of attention to classical literature, and published a number of articles on classical Chinese literature and culture in the hope of



drawing the attention of Malaysian Chinese writers to classical literature.

### 3. Readers' Interest

Readers' interest and demand are also important factors in the publication of Chinese classical literature reviews in *Chao Foon*, as the purely modernist style inevitably has a limited audience. Therefore, the editor of *Chao Foon* should take into account the interests of readers and publish such articles to increase *Chao Foon's* market size and to promote sales.

For example, in the mid-to-late 1960s, when Huang Ya was the editor-in-chief, *Chao Foon*, while strongly promoting modernism, devoted an extended period of time to serialising Yue Qian's series of essays on the characters of *Water Margin* and Yi Teng's series of essays on the characters of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. One reason for this was that the series received considerable attention from readers at the time. The "Reader-Author-Editor" section published in Issue 156 commented that Yue Qian's essays had attracted the attention of readers since the first article (*Chao Foon*, 1965.10: 75). Also, the "Reader-Author-Editor" in Issue 179 commented that Yi Teng's essays were the most popular columns among readers outside Malaysia (*Chao Foon*, 1967.9: 179). In response to readers' preferences, editors published classical Chinese literary reviews, which opened a broader market in addition to the "modernist" and "purely Malayan" lines.

In *Chao Foon's* 152nd issue, a new column, "Writer's Mailbox", was created for readers to ask questions of interest to them, and the editor invited relevant writers and scholars to respond thereto. Interestingly, most of the questions asked by readers at that time were related to classical Chinese literature. For example, one reader asked, "What are the characteristics of Li Yi Shan (李义山)'s poems?" Articles written in response to these questions were published in Issues 152 to 166.

There were also many submissions on classical literature, with some articles not fully published in the "Issue(s) for Classical Literature" (Issues 261 and 262). In order to publish these articles, *Chao Foon* frequently published a "Classical Literature Review" column after Issue 263. This indicates that many readers were interested in classical literature, and supported the publication of classical literature in the third period.

In the mid-1970s, Zheng Bai Nian and Huang Run Yue published several articles on classical literature. Some articles indicated that their writings were popular among readers (*Chao Foon*, 1975.1: 83). Such perpetual support from readers can motivate *Chao Foon* to continue publishing articles on classical Chinese literature.

### III Tendencies and Characteristics of Articles on Classical Chinese Literature Published in *Chao Foon*

*Chao Foon* focuses on modern literature and the development of Chinese literature in Malaysia. There are relatively few articles on literary theory and analysis of works. Therefore, reviews of classical Chinese literature are less suitable for *Chao Foon*. In many cases, however, articles in the classical literature on *Chao Foon* have distinctive tendencies and characteristics.

#### 1. Analysis Based on New Perspectives and Approaches

In publishing articles on classical Chinese literature, the editors of *Chao Foon* were alert to the development of new methodologies for analysing literature. “Windy News”, Issue 275, wrote as follows: “Classical Chinese literature has a rich heritage. However, it can only be enjoyed by approaching it using new methods and finding new perspectives” (*Chao Foon*, 1976. 1: 96).

The new methods and perspectives here mostly refer to Western theories and perspectives, such as psychoanalysis and mythology, which differ from traditional Chinese literary studies. For example, Liu Chuan (249) explained Liu Xie’s (刘勰) “divine imagination” (神思) theory by supporting the theoretical views of Western literary critics such as Eliot, Spencer and Hume. Li Nan Fa (279) also discusses *Classic of Poetry* (《诗经》) on the basis of mythological theory.

There are articles discussing the influence of Chinese classics on Western literature, such as those by Luo Jin Tang (罗锦堂) (248) and Liang Zong Dai (梁宗岱) (325). Lai Shan Fang (赖山舫) (293) advocates the importance of the method of comparative literature in understanding classical literature. Ho Khai Leong (何启良) discusses the challenges of translation, using an English translation of Su Dong Po’s (苏东坡) *Water Melody* (《水调歌头》) as an example (285).

The introduction of numerous studies of classical Chinese literature by English-speaking scholars is another indication of *Chao Foon*’s emphasis on new methods and Western theoretical perspectives. These articles include James J. Y. Liu (238), Ma Youwoon (322), and Cyril Birch (328).

Hao Yi Min (郝毅民), who has contributed many articles discussing the poetry of Tao Yuan Ming (陶渊明) and Du Fu (杜甫), makes extensive use of Western theory, including Freudian theory, biological theory and psychology, to analyse the classics (401, 402).

However, in classical Chinese literature, the content of these essays still carries a strong sense of modern thinking and standards of literary criticism, seeking to extract values

from classical works that are in line with modern aesthetics.

## 2. For the Sake of the Development of Modern Literature

Articles on classical Chinese literature by *Chao Foon* often focused on contemporary relevance, particularly in relation to modern literary creation. In the mid-1960s, in his forward serialised articles on the characters of *Water Margin* in *Chao Foon*, Yue Qian wrote:

*Water Margin* is the most successful of the old Chinese novels in terms of characterisation. I intended to write this essay not so much to introduce the characters as good or bad, strong or weak, virtuous or unworthy, but rather to see how *Water Margin*'s depiction of the characters can serve as a model for writing novels (Yue, 1964.9: 50).

It is clear that Yue Qian's series of articles on the *Water Margin* was intended primarily to introduce creative methods for reference by contemporary writers of fiction. The editors of *Chao Foon* were satisfied with publishing such commentaries in the expectation that they would inspire and help contemporary writers. Another example is the article by Xia Yu (夏语) (198), which introduces the poetry theory of the Qing poet He Shao Ji (何绍基) as an example of a theory of literary creation.

Both Zheng Bai Nian and Liu Chuan, important authors of classical literature criticism in *Chao Foon*, emphasise that modern literature cannot abandon the traditional nourishment of classical literature; thus, they publish relevant articles in *Chao Foon* with the intention of injecting classical aesthetic heritage into modern literature, and bridging the gap between classical and modern literature. Liu Chuan said:

Many modern poets, including the early Yu Guang Zhong (余光中), attempted to demolish traditional poetry, but as soon as they entered the colourful garden of traditional poetry, their strong stance immediately melt away. They no longer want to mourn the death of the tradition. When they understand traditional poetry, which is as vast as the ocean, they realise that traditional poetry has many positive influences on the development of modern poetry and promotes the productivity and driving force of modern poetry. Therefore, modern and traditional poetry are not confronted with each other but are tightly integrated (*Chao Foon*, 1985.10: 3).

### 3. Focus on Popular Literature, Especially Vernacular Novels and Operas

According to the author's statistics, among the 276 articles on classical Chinese literature in *Chao Foon*, apart from those on synthesis, specific writers, literary theory and cultural essays, there are a total of 191 articles that focus on specific literary categories or works, of which 52 are on poems, lyrics and songs, 13 on ancient prose, and 126 on novels and operas (including myths and fables). Of these 126, a vast majority are popular vernacular novels or operas.

The ancient Chinese concept of literature is different from the current concept of pure literature. Traditionally, in China, literature was considered a tool for Confucian ethics and morality, and had to be of practical benefit. In contrast, in *Chao Foon*, the main focus of discussion was on the beauty of expression and the portrayal of feelings, characterisation, and emotions. At the time, editors, authors, and readers were familiar with the concepts of modern Western literature. Classics such as the Confucian scriptures, and the ancient philology, phonology and exegesis, had too narrow a readership. What was more likely to attract readers were well-known popular literature such as *Water Margin*, *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Romance of the Western Chamber* (《西厢记》). Although these are classics, they also were vernacular novels. Therefore, they were closer to modern novels and provided many references for creative techniques.

### 4. Reader-friendly Essays that Concisely Summarise Difficult Arguments

*Chao Foon* is, after all, not a serious academic journal and does not target literary professionals as its audience. Therefore, to make classical literary criticism more accessible to readers, the editors of *Chao Foon* generally welcome articles that are profound in content but very easy to understand and not too formal or heavy. Some authors have kept this in mind.

Zheng Bai Nian is the most notable example of this. Zhang specialises in the study of Chinese classics. However, he writes extensive articles in an easy-to-understand manner. Zheng's writing style is flexible and lively, with clear expressions, and the light of the author's thoughts can be seen everywhere, attracting many readers. Zheng (261, 265, 266) is a good example, as are May Soo Chin (梅淑贞) (312, 334, 362) and Huang Yun Yo (411, 439, 442).

### 5. Cross-border Knowledge Sharing and Cross-referencing

Most of the writers of classical literature reviews in the early years of *Chao Foon* were literati or scholars from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Wang Hui was former editor of the

Humanity Magazine (人生杂志社) in Hong Kong, who came to Malaya around 1957 to teach. Professors Pan Chong Gui and Su Xue Lin are university teachers who came to Singapore for teaching. Yue Qian was a Hong Kong novelist originally from Anhui Province, who also went to Taiwan. Yi Teng had long settled in Penang, and was already considered a local writer in Malaya, but was, in fact, a literary figure who hails from China. As late as Issue 388 (October 1985), *Chao Foon* published an article written by Taiwanese scholar Wei Zi Yun (魏子云), submitted from Taipei.

In addition, there are many articles on classical Chinese literature in *Chao Foon* that were reprinted from Hong Kong and Taiwan publications, such as Yue Heng Jun (243), which was reprinted from the *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly* (《中外文学》). Luo Jin Tang (248) was reprinted from *The China Monthly* (《中华月报》), Hong Kong. Hao Yi Min (310) was reprinted from *Ming Pao Monthly* (《明报月刊》), Hong Kong. Chou Chao-Ming (395) translated and reprinted an article published in 1985 in *Studies in English Literature & Linguistics*, Department of English, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan.

Articles on classical Chinese literature by *Chao Foon* have been published in the context of multi-layered interrelationships in the creation and transmission of literary knowledge in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan. Scholars from Hong Kong and Taiwan published in *Chao Foon* while teaching in Malaysia and Singapore. Some deliberately sent their articles to *Chao Foon* from outside Malaysia. Some of the reprinted papers have been published in other journals in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Those who received academic training or taught Chinese classical literature in Hong Kong and Taiwan, such as Zheng Bai Nian, also disseminated knowledge of Chinese classical literature in Hong Kong and Taiwan to Malaysia through their contributions to *Chao Foon*. *Chao Foon* was both a product and platform of the cross-border network of classical Chinese literary knowledge among Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan.

It is worth mentioning that those engaged in *Chao Foon* in Malaysia are not always on the “receiving end” of the dissemination of classical literature. For example, Yi Teng’s serial essay *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, published in *Chao Foon*, was popular with readers outside Malaysia. Knowledge of classical Chinese literature produced in Malaysia has been disseminated abroad.

### Conclusion: The Entanglement of “Modern” and “Traditional” of Malaysian Chinese Literature

*Chao Foon* has been an important publication of contemporary Malaysian Chinese literature since 1955, but also published a number of reviews and essays on Chinese classical literature, as well as two issues of “Issue for Classical Literature”. Classicism cannot be

ignored in *Chao Foon's* history.

The tendency to publish articles on classical Chinese literature varies by publication period. In the early years, *Chao Foon* published very few articles on classical Chinese literature, as it was promoting “purely Malayanisation”. In addition, in the renewal Issues 78 and 202, *Chao Foon* moved in the direction of modernist literature, and articles on classical Chinese literature disappeared for a while. However, some time after the renewal, a number of essays on Chinese classical literature appeared in the period from Issues 143 to 201 and from Issues 237 to 300. From Issues 301 to 443, essays on Chinese classical literature appear in *Chao Foon* recurrently. There were almost no articles in Chinese classical literature in Issues 444 to 488.

Interactions among editors, authors, and readers supported the publication of articles on Chinese classical literature in *Chao Foon*. The editors were sufficiently broad-minded to accept all articles, even those with conflicting characteristics. The authors were aware of the need to promote traditional literature and cultures as many readers liked and were familiar with the classics.

*Chao Foon* placed emphasis on studying classical literature using Western literary theories and novel research methods, such as comparing Chinese and Western literature. In particular, there are many articles on popular literature, especially vernacular novels and dramas, which are similar to contemporary literature. The significance of referring to classical literature in the creation of contemporary literature is emphasised. This is in line with the aim of *Chao Foon*, who was oriented towards modern literature.

The articles on Chinese classical literature in *Chao Foon* reflect a network of transnational production and dissemination of knowledge of Chinese classical literature among Hong Kong, Malaya/Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan from the 1950s to the 1990s. Articles on Chinese classical literature by scholars and writers from Hong Kong and Taiwan often appeared in *Chao Foon*. Classical literature articles by local literati in Malaya/Malaysia and Singapore can also be disseminated to Hong Kong and Taiwan through *Chao Foon*. *Chao Foon* functioned as a platform for the exchange and sharing of knowledge of classical Chinese literature in Hong Kong, Malaya/Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan.

As a literary journal known for its modernist stance, the articles on classical Chinese literature in *Chao Foon* are noteworthy aspects that reveal the contradictions and pluralism within the journal. It is the entanglement of modernity and tradition in both theory and creative practice of Chinese-language literature in Malaya/Malaysia. Reflecting the clash between locality and Chineseness and the contestation between modernists and classicists in the theoretical discourse and critical consciousness of Chinese-language literary circles in Malaya/Malaysia, an afterglow of tradition emerges in *Chao Foon*. Here, we see a complex attitude that oscillates between the inheritance and innovation of classical Chinese literature

while actively seeking the locality and subjectivity of Malaysian Chinese-language literature, inheriting China's May Fourth New Literature Movement and Western modernist literature.

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