

The Pioneering Poet of Nanyang Chinese: The Spirit and Homeland Concern of Qiu Shuyuan's Classical Poems¹

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Abstract Qiu Shuyuan was better known in Singapore as a literary pioneer in late Qing Dynasty. He called himself a 'Singapore Resident' while always regarded himself as a Chinese nationality. As most traditional scholars, he defended the tradition and cared about the state of the country, and actively supported the Hundred Days' Reform. He highly concerned about the situation of his motherland. He helped to develop political consciousness and cultural literacy among the Chinese immigrants through the founding of Chinese press, literature societies and Chinese schools. He was one of the political and cultural movement leaders of the Nanyang Chinese. *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan* is his work. His poems contain strong personal feelings and had their propagative and demonstrative influences over the cultural circle of Nanyang Chinese. This article is to examine Qiu's homeland feelings and the refuge of his homeland concern and self-identity.

Key words Qiu Shuyuan; Khoo Seok Wan; Malaysian Chinese Classical Literature; homeland concern; self-identity

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Introduction

At the end of the 19th century, China suffered from internal and external problems, natural and man-made calamities, and a large number of Chinese people sought their livelihood overseas. After the failure of the Opium War, the Qing dynasty signed a treaty with the British in 1860, which allowed the Chinese to immigrate to the British colonies freely. By then more Chinese laborers went to Nanyang to do plantation and mining works. In 1881, Zuo Binglong (左秉隆) was appointed as the first consul of Singapore. At that time, there were more than eighty-six thousand Chinese people in Singapore, accounting for 62 percent of the total population. Qiu Shuyuan's father Qiu Zhengzhong (邱正中) was also a member among the tides of laborers. He first worked as a laborer to accumulate capital, then invested successfully in the rice industry and became one of the few millionaires in Singapore.

Qiu Shuyuan was born in Fujian Haicheng in 1874 and settled in Singapore at 24 years old in 1898, but he regarded himself as a Chinese all his life.¹ He was deeply edified by Chinese traditional culture and he thought, "people who concern about their country, will not be fettered by status and power" ("The Postscript of Gong Ding'an's Poem Collections" 2). He was concerned about the national affairs, promoted cultural activities, provided support and financial to Kang Youwei (康有为) and Hundred Day's Reform, but repeatedly rejected the invitation to be an officer in Fujian and Guangdong province as he refused to be constrained by fame and fortune. Later when he went bankrupt, he still expressed his concerns toward his homeland through newspaper columns and poems. He had been active in

1 Qiu Shuyuan's real name was Weixuan (炜蒹), Shuyuan (菽园) was his alternate name. He was also known as Khoo Seok Wan (邱菽园). According to himself, his ancestry's surname was originally Qiu (丘, a Chinese character without a right radical), it was changed to Qiu (邱, Chinese character with a right radical) to avoid the Confucius taboo in the early Qing Dynasty. After the May 4th Movement, Qiu Shuyuan changed his surname back to the original Qiu (丘), and his self-build tombstone used his "Qiu Shuyuan" (丘菽园). Hence, along with his intention, this article will use the original surname in its discussion, but in the case of reference to other's work, the surname from the original text will be remained.

writing since he was 15 years old, and he was especially good in eight-line poems that he was given the good reputation as the pioneering poet of Nanyang Chinese (“Qiu Shuyuan The Pioneering Poet of Nanyang Chinese” 89). His works include *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan* (《丘菽园居士诗集》), *Collected Poems of Xiao Hongsheng* (《啸虹生诗钞》), *Shuyuan’s Superfluous Talk* (《菽园赘谈》), *Study in Five Hundreds Stones Room* (《五百石洞天挥麈》) and others.

Researches are mainly focusing on political and cultural studies about Qiu Shuyuan, but there are not much exploration of his thought through poems. Studies on his poems are gradually being valued after the 80s, such as Zhu Jieqin’s (朱杰勤) *Sin Chew Poet Qiu Shuyuan* (1986), Shi Yilin’s (施懿琳) *Looking at Qiu Shuyuan’s State of Mind in Twilight Years Through Zen Poem and The Diplomatic* (2012), Wang Zhiwei’s (王志伟) *A study of Qiu Shuyuan’s Poetry On Historical Themes* (2000), Meng Xingyu’s (蒙星宇) *An Exotic in The Southeast Asia: A Research of Shuyuan Qiu’s Chinese Classical Literature Case* (2005), Chen Xiaoying’s (陈小英) *A Research of Qiu Shuyuan’s Chinese Classical Literature* (2012), Gao Jiaqian’s (高嘉谦) *Qiu Shuyuan and Singapore-Malaysia History of Literature* (2004), and Zhu Chongke’s (朱崇科) *Sprouting of The Native Consciousness or ‘Origin’ context: Homeland Concern In Qiu Shuyuan’s Poetry* (2008). These studies discussed Qiu Shuyuan’s achievements in literature generally. However, studies on his poems are relatively less than those on his status in political history and literary history. This article discusses Qiu Shuyuan’s spirit in defending traditional poetry and feelings in homeland concern, through his origin and contents of his poetry, in order to sort out the shift factors in his self-identity.

Able to Develop the South Island with Culture

Qiu Shuyuan’s profound cultural attainments came mainly from his own natural gift, the sophisticated scholar environment he had during his childhood, and his father’s deliberation cultivating him to fame. Before Qiu Shuyuan arrived in Singapore at 8 years old, he had finished reading *Four Books and Five Classics* (四书五经) in a traditional school. He did not give up studies when he settled in Singapore, later then he could recite *The Zhuo Xiu Trilogy* (左绣正传) at the age of 12, and pen the *A Scripture of Eight Strokes* (八笔之文) at 13 years old (“The Explanation of A Private School Tutor” 1). In 1888, the 15-year-old Qiu Shuyuan was back to Haicheng to prepare sitting for the County Exam, which he passed and became a scholar (秀才). After that he learned to Zeng Shiyu (曾士玉) and Zeng Zongyan (太史曾宗彦), who had great influences on his writing and thinking in his life later.

Qiu Shuyuan was endowed by nature with intelligence and he rose to fame

at young age. *The Jade Flute Poem* (《玉笛诗》) he wrote at 15 years old in his hometown was rhythmically, literally and artistically strong, that he obtained his teachers and friends' appreciation, as well as the title Qiu The Jade Flute which had made him famous in his hometown.

When Qiu Shuyuan was in the literary town Haicheng, he wrote *Surviving in The Year of Tiger Gengyin Oucun* (《庚寅偶存》, 1890) at the age of 17. These poems, a total of eighteen poems written by the teenage Qiu Shuyuan were later collected in the 7th volume of *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan* (《丘菽园居士诗集》). His precocious talent in poetic work was appreciated by the chief of Zhangzhou prefecture Hou Caiji (漳州太守侯材冀), who often gave exhortation to his youthful temperament and became a guide for his life ("Foreword of Hou Caiji" 1).

Qiu Shuyuan was the first member of the same generation in his family who passed the imperial examinations at the provincial level and became a *juven* (举人) when he was 21 years old. Both his first and second wives had literary talent as they liked poetry and prose, and they were his friends and inspiration for writing. At 18 years old, Qiu married Wang Mei (王玫), who is the eldest daughter of Wang Zhengzhong (王振宗) of Longxi (a county in Hokkien province, also known as Wang Yuchi Yourong 龙溪王玉墀游戎), who called herself "The Lady of East Gate." According to Qiu Shuyuan's description in *Shuyuan Zhuitan*, Wang Mei liked reading and was talented in poetry writing. Qiu Shuyuan taught her the Tang Dynasty and Song Dynasty poetry, and he used her poems as the children's teaching materials for a private school. At the second year of their marriage, Wang died of illness in Gulang Island (鼓浪屿). Her death was a great pain for Qiu, and he expressed his love for her and her untimely decease in his writing ("The Lady of East Gate" 17). Later, he hired artist to draw a portrait of her but was unsuccessful, then he wrote two odes for her with the title *Ti Wangfu Dongmen Nüshi Cangao* (《题亡妇东门女士残稿》, *A Draft of After The Death of The Lady of East Gate*) and seventeen poems to yearn her ("A draft of after the death of the lady of east gate" 8).¹

After the death of Wang Mei, Qiu Shuyuan wallowed in prostitution and alcohol. At the age of twenty, he married Lu Jie (陆结), who was also a literary talented woman. She was with Qiu Shuyuan through the ups and downs of the second half of his life for forty-four years and never left him even when he was poor and sick, hence Qiu Shuyuan respected her. After Qiu Shuyuan's bankruptcy, Lu Jie showed her homemaking accomplishment and gave full support to his hobbies. Lu Jie's considerate characteristics had made Qiu Shuyuan enjoyed in the pleasure of reading and writing at the time when he had financial difficulties in the later period

1 The poems quoted in the following sections of this article are from the above publications.

of his life.

Qiu Shuyuan grew up in the late Qing Dynasty when enemies raided the borders and the national affairs was declining, but it was also a time of the glorious years for young Chinese students. This group of students was traditionally educated, they were proficient in classical works, poetry and prose, and were high in the spirit for reformation. In 1894, Qiu Shuyuan passed the provincial examination and received the title of *juren* (举人), in the same batch with Huang Naishang (黄乃裳), the father-in-law of Lin Wenqing (林文庆). In 1896, Qiu Shuyuan failed the examination in Beijing and then spent some days roaming in Suzhou and Hangzhou. When he went to Hong Kong, he was associated with those who were known as Eight friends in the poems (诗中八友) like Lin Henian (林鹤年) and Pan Feisheng (潘飞声). In times of instability, they became good friends as they were like-minded and sharing similar views. He also witnessed Kang Youwei's essays and he admired Kang's political view in reformation when he was in Shanghai, and this had led to their friendship in days to come.

In the winter of 1901, Qiu Shuyuan became the president of the General Chinese Trade Affairs Association in Singapore (新加坡华商阁 , the predecessor of Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry). At the age of 24, he had begun to have an actual and lofty social status in the Chinese society. Qiu Shuyuan spent the longest period of his life living in Singapore for 52 years except for the 7 years before he was 8 and the 9 years between 15 to 24 years old, but his heart belonged to China all the time. At that time, Singapore was still a British colony, and his status was only a Chinese living in Singapore. Singapore was oriented to the whole world and was the intersection of the eastern and western society, a place where different ideology came together. When Qiu Shuyuan arrived in Singapore, he inherited most of his father's fortune and became a wealthy eminent man in Singapore. He mingled between the eastern and western civilizations, as well as business, political and literary circles. It was rare for someone who have a profound cultural foundation and rich resources in the business world at that period of time.

Advocating learning and studying was Qiu Shuyuan's lifelong philosophy. He was the only *juren* in Singapore and Malaya, when he had settled in Singapore, he became the leader of the Chinese literary circle. He dedicated himself in promoting Chinese literary and traditional cultural to Chinese immigrants in Singapore while running his family business. His hope to promote culture can be seen from the sentence below, "Singapore is separated (from Mainland) by oceans, it was not influenced by royal culture but vulgar habits, it is land of natural wilderness, it is not a town of poetry. However when Lu Ji entered Luoyang city, more works

from literary talent appeared; when Han Yu came to Chaozhou, he nourished the barren surrounding” (“Poetry Commentary in the Room of Five Hundred Stones”). Influenced by strategy of the Huixian Association (会贤社) and Tunan Association (图南社) founded by the consul of the Qing Dynasty in Singapore Zuo Binglong (左秉隆) and Huang Zunxian (黄遵宪), he founded two literature associations named Lize (丽泽) and Lequn (乐群), and at the same time, he managed the Huiyin Association (会吟社) founded by Wang Huiyi (王会仪), Tong Meisheng (童梅生) and others. The three associations had different functions: Lize was mainly used for teaching poetry, traditional prose, contemporary writing, ode, essay etc.; Lequn which was expanded a year later was focusing on practical knowledge. Qiu Shuyuan’s earnest effort in promoting poetry writing on the newspapers had a far-reaching impact. In 1924, he founded the Xingzhou Poetry Association (星洲诗檀社), and five years later when he was teaching in Nanhua lecture house (南华讲舍), he apprenticed thirteen female disciples to teach them poetry. Qiu seemed to be very happy as the scenario coincided with Yuanmei’s (袁枚) story of apprenticing thirteen female disciples in the Qianlong times, and he wrote “desiring a magical drawing pen, to rewrite the gathering of the poets at Hulou” (《南华讲舍纪事》, Notes of Nanhua lectures).

Qiu Shuyuan was aware of the importance of national education. Before his bankruptcy, besides sponsoring the local Chinese schools, he also donated a huge sum of money in the founding of the Japan Tokyo Datong High School (日本东京大同高等学校) where he was appointed as the director, and also donated one thousand dollars to Cui Ying School (萃英书院) to aid free schooling. During Emperor Guangxu’s reign (1899), Qiu Shuyuan, Lin Wenqing (林文庆), Chen Hecheng (陈合成), Song Hongxiang (宋鸿祥) and others co-founded Singapore Chinese Girls’ School. The school fund was six thousand dollars at that time, and he donated three thousand dollars alone. The twelve volumes of *Poetry Commentary in the Room of Five Hundred Stones* were also published in the same year. Although he could only merely maintain his living after bankruptcy and became less in power later, he still enthusiastically engaged in culture, education, religion and social welfare undertakings, and continued writing as well as participated in the cultural construction.

In 1910, Qiu Shuyuan asked Kang Youwei to revise his poems when the later arrived Singapore in a trip to the five continents. In May, Kang Youwei selected some of Qiu Shuyuan’s poem and wrote Preface of Qiu Shuyuan’s Poetry (丘菽园所著诗序), lauded Qiu Shuyuan’s enthusiastic spirit in the reform movement and praised his moral as his poem goes “be rich in knowledge although the household is

poor, one gains skillful in poetry due to poverty.” To express appreciation in lines, Qiu Shuyuan specially wrote *Proofreading of My Work form Mr Kang Gengsheng and My Proofreading towards his Masterpiece* (康更生先生检定拙稿复出大作属校), *Four Poems Dedicated to The Revisit of Mr Kang Gengsheng After He Travelled the Five Continents* (康更生先生自五大洲游归, 重晤新坡, 蒙出诗稿全集属校感赋四首), and *A Poem Sent Out to Mr Kang Gengsheng* (犹记一首寄康更生先生). Between 1917 to 1922, Qiu Shuyuan’s four volumes of *Xiao Hongsheng Shi Chao* and three volumes of *Xiaohongsheng Shi Xu Chao* (《啸虹生诗续钞》, Sequel to Collected Poems of Xiao Hongsheng) were combined, most of them are erotic poetry. Kang Youwei not only wrote a foreword in *The Recount of Qiu Shuyuan Poems Collection*, but also funded the printing and publication (*The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan Kulapati* 1).

In Qiu Shuyuan’s later years, he suffered from Polydipsia and Leprosy Disease. He rearranged his own poems and compiled *Shuyuan Shiji Chubian* (《菽园诗集初编》, *Shuyuan’s Collection of Poems, First Edition*), consisted of 696 poems. Those which were in *Xiao Hongsheng Shi Chao* were excluded. Besides recuperating, he read and wrote poetry in a clear mind. In 1940 itself, when he was sixty-seven years old, he wrote 317 poems in just one year. It shows his high enthusiasm for writing and his exuberance for poetry. He compiled the poems he wrote in the year into *Shuyuan Shiji Erbian* (《菽园诗集二编》, *Shuyuan’s Collection of Poems, Second Edition*)

Qiu Shuyuan had a sense of accomplishment for his self-assessment: “this man didn’t let down his youth time, although some business during his young age cannot be continued. Be able to develop the south island with culture, remain poetry to support the national customs. The Skills at old time shocks the remaining people, at the same time competes with thousands of men. Having more leisure time to enjoy meal and rest, and to learn from Lu Fangweng at the later stage when older” (《易老》, *Easily Getting Old*). Qiu Shuyuan was feeling thankful for “living the youth time to the fullest,” although he could not continue some of his career, but what he had done on the saying “Be able to develop the south island with culture, remain poetry to support the national customs” was comparable with the achievements of many other people. Since he was like Feng Tang (冯唐) who was unable to achieve his ambition at old age, he learned Lu You’s (陆游) way of delighting in peace, let bygones be bygones, and being satisfied with the company of poems and wine. This poem of Qiu Shuyuan describing the ancients not only summarized himself very well and said of his lifelong goal, it also expressed his attitude towards life in the future, that he would not be sorrowful nor grudgeful, and it showed his level

of achievement in open-mindedness and living beyond the touch of earth. These poems revealed his thoughts and aspirations, and his courage to face the past and self-criticism. His sincerity, objectiveness, and not belittling himself was exactly the result of his own self-scrutiny.

Body Settled at the South but the Heart is at the North

Qiu Shuyuan grew up in three distinct environments throughout his life. After he was born in Haicheng, he then lived in Macau with his mother the next year until eight years old, later on he moved to Singapore. In 1888, he returned to Haicheng with his father to study, attended examination, underwent marriage, and lived in Beijing for eight years until he went for examination in Beijing at the age of twenty-two in year 1895. During 1896 and 1897, he had been travelling within China, Hong Kong and Singapore due to the decease of his father, then he settled down in Singapore. At that time, Macau was a loan state for the Portuguese, Singapore was a British colony, while China was in the turbulent times of the Qing Dynasty. Qiu Shuyuan settled in Singapore from the age of 24 until his death on December 1, 1941. He lived in Singapore for 52 years of his life. In his childhood, teenage and young adulthood, he learned from the various cultures of the east and the west, which had a great influence on his future thoughts and personality.

The Chinese literati had been inseparable from national politics since ancient times, that one who excels in learning could be an official and the scholars persevered ten years in studies despite hardships, it was all for earning the fame and becoming an official, and to serve for the country and the community. The Chinese traditional education that Qiu Shuyuan had been receiving since young had made him a strong sense of literati's mission. Even though he spent not much time living in China, but he still regarded himself a China civilian. The literati's tradition of Chinese civilization was to concern about China and the people as well as hoped to make a different to the country, hence the scholars were particularly sensitive to political and national tensions. Qiu Shuyuan followed this ideology to write poetry. At the end of the nineteenth century when China was struggling with internal conflicts and diplomacy, he was like his compatriots in China, worrying about the tensions in the motherland, was discontented with the incompetence of the ruling class, and was ashamed of being oppressed by other powerful countries. On one hand, he actively supported the reform and rescue of the country, on another hand, he did not give up the right to criticise.

In Singapore, Qiu Shuyuan was wealthy, standing at the forefront of the current affairs. He could actually stay away from the war, but he did not forget

his responsibility as a scholar. He used his influence and financial resources in Singapore to make a proactive response to the affairs in China, such as the launch of 578 people joint telegram to the Qing government, donated a fortune to fund Kang Youwei and Tang Caichang's (唐 才 常) royalist activity and military uprising, raised funds from the wealthy businessmen in Singapore for national salvation, as well as published the *Thien Nam Shin Pao* to promote China's reform and spread the reformism thought. His feelings of concern, effort, and humiliation for his motherland were consistent with the patriotic spirit of intellectuals in China at that time.

In 1898 when the Reform Movement (戊 戌 变 法) had failed, Empress Dowager Cixi put Emperor Guangxu under house arrest, abolished the new government and ordered the killing of the reformers. That led to the death of the six men of the reform movement, and the exile of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao (梁 启 超). With the influence of Kang Youwei, Qiu Shuyuan actively supported the reformed royalist. When he heard this news, in a painful mood he wrote the poem "Whirlwind" (〈 骤 风 〉):

Repeated calls of trading shocked the traveler's windows, the flag is waving in the wind.

Yellow leaves fall when the wind blows, clouds at the mountain wish to cross over the river.

Sun sets light dims and the Dragon is on land, sand calms shadow scatters but wild goose hard to meet each other.

Belongs to whom the title of brave warrior, the ruthless of heaven and earth make me struggling myself.¹

This poem expresses an overseas intellectual's sympathy on the China's reformation comrades and the failure of the revolution movement. The beginning of the poem describes the news of the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898 abroad, and the rising tides of the situation makes people who cared about the fate of the motherland tension. Yet, the expected reformation has been hit by failure, great aspiration was difficult to fulfil, and lives were sacrificed heroically. The poet was regretful of the bad timing and the cruelty of the reality, which had led the people of the country into such a terrible tragedy. The sadness and frustration expressed in the poem showed the political tendency of Qiu Shuyuan.

Then China experienced the boxer rebellion (义 和 团) and also The Eight-

1 Qiu noted: in August, written when heard of the coup in Beijing.

nation Alliance (八国联军) incident. Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu took refuge in Xi-An, while the alliance robbed and burned around, the national assets were looted and the people lost their homes. Sensing the domestic chaos, Qiu Shuyuan felt sad in the overseas, so he wrote six poems namely “Six Poems of Thoughts in 1900” (〈庚子感事六首〉), and one of them as follows:

The mighty power invaded the metropolis, homeless at the corner of the sea,

Floating clouds covered the sunrise, hometown stopped the returns.

Soldiers came to the door gate, officers and descendant of the throne scared of being killed.

The braves at the river town, still believed in the rumours for saving country.

Qiu Shuyuan lamented the chaos of the boxer rebellion which led to the occupation of Beijing by the eight allied forces. “Wen Wu” means his hope to back homeland was obstructed. During the national turmoil where the country fell, the people also turned homeless. In the emergency of the arrival enemies, the ruler was unambitious and did not counteract the outsider together with the people. It had led to an intensified internal strife. The boxer rebellion was loose, and the saying “supporting the Qing Dynasty and wiping out the foreign invaders” was just an empty talk. At the turning point of the century, China’s internal consumption and corruption intensified, hence it was unable to compete with the other powerful countries in the world.

Although Qiu Shuyuan was in the South Asia, but his heart was still remembering China, sharing the honour and disgrace with his fellow countryman in China. In “Six Poems of Thoughts in 1900” (〈庚子感事〉), the fifth and sixth poems, Qiu Shuyuan narrated “everyday look at the South East side, calling for North West souls,” “righteous flags desolated, the soul of new dead mixed with grievances,” “there are not many officials left,” to describe the state although himself was staying overseas, but he was still grieving about the loss of the life of many compatriots in China. At that time, Qiu Shuyuan became the president of the Royalist Party branch (保皇党分会) that had been established for almost a year in Singapore. He donated 100,000 yuan to help Kang YouWei, and he expressed his determination to support the new campaign with concrete actions. He hoped that the monarch would return to governance, and the country would unite and become stronger.

After the overthrow of the Manchu regime, Qiu Shuyuan accepted the reality and looked forward to the emergence of a new country government. However, the civil war in China continued, and warlord overrun, he felt sad and anxious when he saw the chaos in the motherland. On May 9 1915, Yuan Shikai (袁世凯), who schemed to be the emperor, signed a treaty with Japan, and this day became the national humiliation day. Qiu Shuyuan wrote: “the heat of the lonely island is making the wave to surge up, causing the mist from mountain to the river,” “rather than going to the altar to look for contend, old veteran as I will also able to join the army” (*Jia Yin Chang Xia Da Feng Xi An the Consul*, 甲寅长夏答冯息盒领事). He proclaimed that although he was in Singapore, he still had the feeling towards the political turmoil in the motherland, and although he was aged, but he was still willing to sacrifice his life to serve the country. As compared with his pride in the past time, his enthusiasm was unabated.

As Qiu Shuyuan was far from China, he had more freedom of speech in the British colony, Singapore. Therefore, his poems were daring to criticize the political situation directly, especially the corruption and incompetence of the rulers. The critical spirit was the distinct ideological of Qiu Shuyuan’s poems. And because of his profound cultural foundation, he also made full use of the ancient allusions and the poetic art with a high degree of integration of metaphorical skills so that the functions of the poetry commentary could be vividly demonstrated. Qiu’s poetry for political criticism were able to comment on current events in a timely and specific manner, and be an allegory of the rulers. Qiu Shuyuan was good in recording the history by using poems, creatively describing the details by using allusions. His poetry was straight to the point, full of personal feelings, impassioned, touching, and it was rare at home country and abroad.

The Downfall and Settlement in Singapore

In 1907, Qiu Shuyuan was declared bankrupt when he failed in his investment, and he was sentenced to poverty. He left the business and politics, was falling from the top, and ended his career. However, he remained the spirit of “body is at south, but the heart belongs to the north,” and he did not stop paying attention to the development of the political situation in his motherland. At that time, he believed that Qing Dynasty had come to the end, and he claimed, “the lost path makes the dog tired,” “the nation is dying” (“Strolling,” 〈野步〉). His efforts without hesitation was unable to bring a bright future to the country, perhaps over disappointed with the situation, adding to having just experienced the great changes in life, Qiu Shuyuan started to see through the worldly affairs. In his poem *A Reply*

to *Xu Yunbo* (《寄酬许允伯》), he revealed “only able to survive in Singapore, solicitude of sadness and happiness bring me closer to Zen Buddhist religion.” We can notice the emergence of his intention to stay in Singapore for the rest of his life and the tendency to receive the Buddhist believes.

From the status of a powerful and influential figure to a normal civilian, and several times of troubles he got in life, the changing of identity did not destroy the spiritual will of Qiu Shuyuan. He could still have fun in everyday life, from a poem he wrote, “Wife untied the books and basking in the sun with a helper, husband did nothing but just sleep. Another day has wasted, alone the tree is blossom with flowers but the guest was self-pitied” (sixth of the “Eight Poems of The Alley,” 〈陋巷杂事诗八首〉之六), we can see that his life was still relaxed. His wife, Madam Lu, was with him through the ups and downs, and they respected and loved each other, just like Zhao Yun (朝云) for Su Dongpo (苏东坡). There is a saying in *Ding Feng Bo* (定风波) by Su Dongpo, goes “always envy the handsome young man on the earth, even the heaven loved him and gave him a beautiful lady. Everyone praised the girl’s song, her smile was gentle, and the song of wind began to make the world cool as a snowflake flew over the hot summer day. You came back from a faraway place, but you looked younger. The smile still looked like the fragrance of Lingnan plum blossoms. I asked you, shouldn’t life in Lingnan be very tough for you? But you answered calmly, for where my peaceful mind belongs, it is my homeland.” Qiu Shuyuan found peace in Singapore while China was in chaos, learned the Buddhist teaching and Zen, hence his spirit lastly found a sense of belonging, and had a feeling that the best days were just that, being able to share the teaching of Buddha and Zen with his wife and needed not to “envy Dongpo has a compassionate wife.”

At this point, we can see that Qiu Shuyuan was not merely remembering his homeland China, but also had a wider world in his heart. He said, “why limit the remaining border only to south and north,” although “surging waves in thousands of miles is unlimited,” but he was still worrying about the country as he wrote “the current political situation is worrying” (“Remembering Yi Shi Fu (Shun Ding) During Travel to Hong Kong,” 〈寄怀易实甫(顺鼎)香江旅次〉). As the Zen study of Qiu Shuyuan grew higher, his thoughts gradually merged into his poems, so the Zen’s thinking in the poem became more and more intense. From the poem, *Chan Yin Ji* (《忏因偈》, *Gatha of Repent Karma*) he wrote at his forty, he narrated “who believe in triple lives are still unable to fill it, repent at human and heaven stage to eliminate the cause and effect” as a self-reflection. Until he wrote the poem, *Understand the Buddha Gatha* (《参佛偈》), at his fifty goes “meditation separates

one from live in front of the niche, I am joining the Buddha in the morning, how could I see the Buddha if I don't know Buddha, I won't talk about this statement in those years," he had been able to calmly face the life and death, the rich and poor due to his reflection for the past. Qiu Shuyuan at this time, had reached the point of quiet and detached.

Since then, Qiu Shuyuan had been investing a lot of time and energy in the creation of poetry and newspaper. On 1st January 1913, *Cheng Nam Jit Poh* (《振南日报》) started publication and Qiu Shuyuan became the director. He had close ties with 12 newspapers in Singapore, Penang, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Shanghai in all his life. As a founder, distributor, general compilation, editor and other positions, he was a very experienced cultural promoter. His main occupation after bankruptcy was in the Singapore newspaper publication until his old age.¹

In year 1934, Qiu Xinmin (邱新民), a nephew of Qiu visited them from Xiamen. When he returned to Xiamen, Qiu Shuyuan dedicated a poem titled "Send A Friend Home" (《送友人返国》) to him, to encourage him to be a real man, do his best to defend his country and his future. That year, Qiu was in his sixty-one, he wrote a poem to greet himself, goes "Look inside South Mountain, there are a lot of fun before honour is gained, thirty six thousand drinking place, the great hundred years I have passed sixty percent of them" ("Sixty One Self-wish Birthday," <六一自寿>), he was still heavy rely on liquor. His self-greeting poem was even more freestyled one year later:

Three thousand disaster allowed to point out, sixty-two years old appeared illusion.

When mentioned about life-less and world-less, the evidence were me and the solid body.

It's necessary to eat and dress, look and smell as the karma of past life has not yet fulfilled.

Self-laugh wild fox by using Rap song, waiting and follow closely to

1 The relationship of Qiu Shuyuan and the Newspaper and publishers, see Qiu Shuyuan's Newspaper activities, Retrospect and Prospect of Sinology Research (philosophical history) volume 2, page 176-190 (Beijing: Zhonghua Bookstore, 1995). Besides, there are Wang Kang Ding's Qiu Shuyuan and Zhen Nam Jit Poh (1990-1991), Journal of the South Sea Society, volume 45 and 46, page 82-92; Wang Kangding's (1991) Qiu Shuyuan and Sin Chew Jit Poh (Attached to the catalog of poems and poems written by Qiu Shuyuan in Sin Chew Jit Poh in 1929), Xue Cong (Singapore), volume 3, page 239-260; Wang Kangding's (June, 1995) Historical Facts Retraces of Tian Nan Xin Bao, volume 16, page 169-176, Singapore: Asian Culture; Wang Kangding's (1995) Qiu Shuyuan and Hong Kong Hua Zhi Daily, page 56-76. Singapore: Chinese literature and culture in southeast Asia.

counting the dust.(Sixty-two Year Old Birthday)

Compared to the time, Qiu Shuyuan felt that his soul had freed itself from the body at his fifty, he watched his body and created a farewell poem: “The end of a famous man remains gorgeous, the end of person meditate Zen should be brightened. Laugh freely and walk on the cloud, received infinite life and walk freely” (〈乙丑清明节午倦假寐, 忽觉已魂离体, 回视块躯留诗作别, 醒记其语, 因录出之〉, “Ching Ming Festival on year 1925, when taking a nap at noon, suddenly felt like the soul was out of the body, created a poem when look at the body to say goodbye, recalled it after awake, so recorded it down”), it can be seen that he has normal heart on his life, however, for the motherland, he was still unable to let down. When his friends from Fujian told him about the exile in the inland China and the the failure of manipulation of the Minzheng 闽政 (Fukien) government; Japan attacked and occupied the northeast of China, proclaimed Pu Yi as the emperor and set up an illegal ManChu country, sent troops to Rihe, Hebei, built Yin Ru Geng an illegal organization, and pressed forward to Beijing, Qiu was extremely filled with grief and indignation. Verses with such feelings always occurred in his poems such as “Booklet recorded the dream but I was afraid to think of it, feel sad when talking about home country” (“A Poem About The Pain of Exile in The Mainland when The Guest from Min (Fukien) Visited To Singapore,” 〈闽乡新客抵坡相访, 为言内地流亡之痛, 诗以志慨〉), and “Suddenly thought of the east coast wind and sea, I felt Shame for being leisure and do nothing”(“Feeling After Watching The View After A Rain At Residence,” 〈寓斋雨后观物有感〉).

In 1936, Qiu ShuYuan was sick and poor, he lay on bed for three months, knowing his time has come. Hence, other than Lu’s tomb, the sixty-four-year-old’ Qiu Shuyuan had also built his own graveyard, and he wrote himself an inscription poem:

There is no space in the seas and hills to build my abode, how can the buried bones leap across the sword lake.

I could no longer arise even if you beckon 3 times, laying in Singapore enduring long thirst.

Flying flowers realized their butterfly past life, caressing the epigraph thoughts stop and future generations prepare the chariot.

If you don’t believe just look at the tomb grass, yearly they come back with new greenness.

As the motherland turmoil was unlike the stability in Singapore, Qiu Shuyuan had planned to stay in Singapore. He also stressed that his great ambition would not die, and his cultural career could be extended in Singapore. During a serious illness, his friend monk Rui Yu (瑞于和尚) and Li Juncheng (李俊承) had been sending him continuous sympathy, he could therefore feel the affection between friends. Qiu Shuyuan liked to accept new information and were very interested in science. That year he wrote *Jin Youxian Sishou* (〈今游仙四首〉 , *Four Poems of Nowadays Fairyland Excursion*), a description of Mars, man landing on the moon, hot air balloon and microscope, which was a rare type of written work in classical poetry with clever thoughts. Besides, he wrote “Four Chapters of Testimony of Becoming Buddhist” (〈课心自证成偈四章〉) in observance of the things and his body. It was not a coincident that Qiu Shuyuan in his sixty was still good in his eye sight and hearing, full of black hair without a single grey hair, but it was the results of his training. Where he would be buried, was no longer important for him.

On November 27 1941, three days before Qiu Shuyuan passed away, he wrote the last poem of his life:

It's a long journey to send him home, a word of thank you in return is glad enough.

All passengers were speaking in the same dialect, step on the boat and feel like already been at home.

(“A Postscript After Awaken From Dreaming of Sending A Friend Off Home,” 〈梦中送人回国醒后记之〉)

Qiu Shuyuan dreamt of sending a friend off home, perhaps an instinctive projection of his inner desire, that even if he had decided to be buried in the south, but his soul would return to his homeland. “All passengers were speaking in the same dialect, step on the boat and feel like already been at home,” describes his eagerness to return to the homeland, as if there were a bunch of folks possessing the same mood as he had, having a common destination. Once he was on board, they departed with bustling noise. Though he was on his way home, he felt like he had already returned to his hometown. The entire poem runs over with the excitement and pleasure of returning home, it is more likely an inner passion and hope when perusing the feeling. To Qiu Shuyuan who was in his twilight of his life and having a good understanding about the meaning of life and death, death meant return home for him, where his soul belonged was his homeland. At this moment, he was longing to return to his spiritual homeland.

On November 30, 1941, Qiu died in a small pavilion. His funeral was on December 4th.¹ He was buried at the graveyard at the Bukit Brown Cemetery that he built before he died. “Comes at the time that myself have the charm of Yuanming, when the sorrow will think about the mausoleum” (“A research on Qiu Shuyuan” 98), fully describes his character. Qiu Shuyuan’s life has been through a great storm, he was once a businessman, cultural worker, politician, and poet; a line of seven words “Tomb of Intellect Qiu Shuyuan” (处士丘菽园君墓) on the tombstone, summed up his rich and dramatic life.

In 1949, 8 years after Qiu Shuyuan passed away, his daughter Qiu Mingquan (丘鸣权) and his son-in-law took *The Poems of Shuyuan Kulapati* written and edited by the late Qiu Shuyuan as the blueprint, edited and published the *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan Kulapati*, and make the thoughts and creative essence of Qiu Shuyuan’s life to be passed down to the next generations.

Conclusion

Qiu Shuyuan had undergone great ups and downs in all his life, he was talented, and open-minded. He was greatly concerned about his homeland throughout his life, and he was at the state of “the place where my heart settles is my homeland” in his later years, staying in Singapore for a long time until it became his second home. He lived in “the age of violent cultural and political collisions between the east and the west”², where the the motherland was internally and externally troubled, precarious, while the place he was staying was rich and stable, provided him the environment to become a wealthy businessman and a literary leader, and allowed him to showcase his ability. Earlier on political enthusiasm, then the earnest in the promotion of Chinese culture, he was able to do his best with no regrets and truly archived the attainment of “In success, let others be benefited; in hard time, seek self-development,” perfected himself in poem writing. Whichever way we value him, he was the most outstanding Chinese intellectuals in oversea at that time. He practiced all he learned from his life in “able to develop the south island with culture,” published the newspaper, ran schools, and set up poets society, his acts of inheriting and developing the Chinese traditional culture can be described as pioneering at that time. From the life of Qiu Shuyuan, we saw a late Qing dynasty

1 The National Library of Singapore's exhibition shows the death certificate of Qiu Shuyuan, showing his death date at 10pm on November 30, 1941, with the death registration on December 1. The funeral date taken from Qiu Xinmin's argument.

2 Li Yuanjin in her book, "the impact of East and West culture and three responses of Singapore's intellectual elite: Qiu Shuyuan, Lin Wenqing, Song Wangxiang comparison" one of the main point.

scholar migrant, although in the end he did not return to his homeland, but he found his physical and mental home in poetry production.

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