

การสร้างวาทกรรมชาตินิยมของหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาจีนในสยาม ช่วงปลายพุทธศตวรรษ 2450 ถึงต้นพุทธศตวรรษ 2470

A Construction of Nationalist Discourse in the Siamese Chinese-language Newspapers in the 1910s and 1920s¹

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความชิ้นนี้มุ่งตรวจสอบบทบาทของหนังสือพิมพ์ในการก่อรูปจิตสำนึกชาตินิยมของคนจีนในสยาม โดยวิเคราะห์จากยุทธศาสตร์การใช้โวหารในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาจีนที่ตีพิมพ์ในสยาม โดยพิจารณาจากหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาจีนที่ตีพิมพ์ออกมาในช่วงปลายพุทธศตวรรษ 2450 ถึงต้นพุทธศตวรรษ 2470 และสำรวจว่าสื่อสิ่งพิมพ์เหล่านี้มีคุณูปการอย่างไรบ้างต่อการสร้างและเผยแพร่อุดมการณ์ชาตินิยมในหมู่ชาวจีนในสยามจากการวิเคราะห์ถึงข้อมูลต่างๆ ที่ปรากฏอยู่ในหนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาจีนสามฉบับ คือ เทียนฮั่นกงเป้า หัวเซียนชินเป้า และ จงหัวหมินเป้า งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้สามารถบ่งชี้ได้ถึงเครื่องมือทางโวหาร ตัวอย่างเช่น แนวคิด “ซานหมินจู้” (ลัทธิไตรราษฎร์) ของซุนยัตเซ็น [ชาตินิยมประชาธิปไตย และชีวิตความเป็นอยู่ของผู้คน] และแนวคิดแบบต่อต้านค่านิยมเก่าซึ่งเริ่ม

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ปรากฏขึ้นในช่วงขบวนการเคลื่อนไหว 4 พฤษภาคม พ.ศ.2462 คือสิ่งที่ถูกหยิบขึ้นมาใช้สนับสนุนอัตลักษณ์ความเป็นชาติและความเป็นเอกภาพของชาวจีนอยู่อย่างสม่ำเสมอ

ข้อค้นพบดังกล่าวแสดงให้เห็นว่า หนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาจีนดังกล่าวไม่ได้รับใช้ในฐานะเวทีของตัวแสดงทางการเมือง แต่ยังมีบทบาทสำคัญในการก่อร่างเรื่องเล่าที่ผนึกแนบแน่นอยู่กับเป้าหมายของขบวนการชาตินิยม ยิ่งไปกว่านั้น การศึกษานี้ยังได้เน้นให้เห็นถึงรูปแบบและเทคนิคทางวารสารศาสตร์บางอย่าง ตัวอย่างเช่น การรายงานข่าว การแสดงความคิดเห็น และการโฆษณาสินค้าของชาติ ข้อค้นพบเหล่านี้จะเอื้อต่อการทำความเข้าใจในเรื่องปฏิสัมพันธ์อันล้าลึกกระหว่างสื่อกับการเมืองในกระบวนการสร้างสำนึกชาตินิยมของชาวจีนในสยาม

คำสำคัญ: วาทกรรมชาตินิยม หนังสือพิมพ์ภาษาจีน การต่อต้านอำนาจนิยม การปฏิวัติวัฒนธรรมนิยม

Abstract

This article aims to examine the role of newspapers in shaping Siamese-Chinese individuals' nationalism by analyzing the rhetorical strategies used across various Chinese publications in Siam. The study focuses on Chinese-language newspapers published between the 1910s and 1920s and explores how these media outlets contributed to the creation and dissemination of nationalist ideologies. Through a detailed content analysis of three newspapers, i.e., *Tianhan Gongbao*, *Huaxian Xinbao*, and *Zhonghua Minbao*, the research identifies key rhetorical devices, such as Sun Yat-sen's Sanmin Zhuyi [nationalism, democracy, and people's livelihood] and anti-traditionalism proposed in the May Fourth Movement which started in 1919 that were commonly employed to promote national identity and unity.

The findings reveal that newspapers not only served as a platform for political actors but also played a crucial role in constructing narratives that aligned with the objectives of nationalist movements. Furthermore, the study highlights the specific formats and journalistic techniques used,

including news reports, commentaries, and advertisements for national products. These findings provide insight into the complex interplay between media and politics in the building process of the Siamese-Chinese's national consciousness.

Keywords: Nationalist Discourse, Chinese-language Newspaper, Anti-authoritarianism, Revolution, Culturalism

Introduction

It was believed that nationalism played a pivotal role in driving the Chinese revolution in 1911 (see, for example, Wright, 1968, p. 3). Evidently, the enduring presence of nationalism has been a consistent tide throughout China's prolonged revolutionary period. And it was undeniable that in response to imperialism, Western concepts was a determined factor that led to the emergence of a new nationalist mindset. This transformation, due to its impact on cultural and political identity, was a protracted and distressing process that has had a lasting effect on all aspects of the contemporary China. The heat contention between culturalism and nationalism that pigged the interest of the leading elites during the transition had taken a few decades long from the late Qing until early republican periods, especially from 1895 (when China's defeat by Japan ignited nationalist fervor) to 1919 (when the May Fourth Movement signaled the decline of culturalism).

Studies of China's imperial past that highlighted the lack of nationalism in the country's political heritage and studies of the contemporary era that traced the sources of the rising nationalist wave make up the whole of the study. Abundant evidences exist to substantiate this nationalist triumphalism (Levenson, 1968, p. 98-104; Townsend, 1992, p. 101). The xenophobia prevalent in the 19th century and the anti-Manchu sentiment at the turn of the century merged with the more refined

concepts and activities of the May Fourth period, which were characterized by their commitment to opposing imperialism and striving for national redemption and rejuvenation. From this juncture forward, analysts cited nationalism as a contributing factor in a wide array of occurrences: rejection of foreign concepts and endorsement of foreign concepts; rejection of customary culture and commemoration of national customs; and the triumph of Nationalist in 1927 (Levenson, 1968, p. 121).

China's transition from an imperialized system to a nation-state, as well as the most turbulent period of conflict between nationalism, authoritarianism, and culturalism, occurred in the first two decades after the Republic of China's establishment, before the Chinese history took another turn in the 1930s when its political forces had split into two camps, the nationalist and the Communist, that had started when the latter was purged out the late 1920s. In other words, the construction of a nation-state in China had resulted in a confrontation a Western import concept of nationalism, and China's intrinsic culturalism. The contention between these two forces propelled China's political agenda and reshaped its political structure. As a recipient of Chinese long-distance nationalism, the Siamese Chinese community's perception of nationalism was both homologous and isomorphic to Chinese nationalism in parallel, with the political upheaval and division of political forces in China had their manifestation in Siamese Chinese politics. Prior research tended to characterize the Siamese Chinese community as a monolithic political entity, neglecting the intricacies of Siamese Chinese political dynamics. It is contending that nationalism could be served as a lens through which to comprehend the Siamese Chinese community, and an understanding of Siamese Chinese nationalism cannot ignore the mouthpiece of Chinese politics in Siam -- the Chinese-language newspapers in Siam.

As Chinese long-distance nationalism fosters a sense of connection between individuals residing in various parts of the world and their homeland and the national crisis was escalating in China at the start of the 20th century, the overseas Chinese elite including those in Siam who remained steadfast in their allegiance to China, endeavored to establish Chinese-language newspapers in their communities. Their goal was to establish a connection between the Chinese community and their homeland, stir up national sentiments, support the cause of domestic national salvation, and showcase their political aspirations. In short, the nationalist discourse of Chinese-language newspapers served as a crucial instrument for implanting the Chinese identity and ideology of the Chinese community at the start of the 20th century.

According to G. William Skinner, the descendants of Chinese immigrants in Siam had gradually blend in with local society to the point where they would be difficult to tell apart from the native population. Skinner believed that ethnic Chinese will fully integrate and identify as Thai by the fourth generation. Assimilation, he says, had been going on among Thailand's Chinese population at a pace equivalent to that of Europeans in the U.S. throughout 1800 to 1950. The similarities between Chinese and Thai culture had facilitated Chinese assimilation into Thai society, whether in terms of foods, physical appearances, or religion (Skinner, 1957, p. 5).

Chan Kwok Bun and Tong Chee Kiong challenge Skinner's belief that the similarities between the Chinese and Thai people, particularly in terms of religion, were what made assimilation easier (Chan & Tong, 1993, p. 151). According to Chan and Tong's "Rethinking Assimilation and Ethnicity: The Chinese in Thailand," Skinner placed too much emphasis on assimilatory dynamics. They believed that the Chinese people in Thailand would perish as "Chinese" if Skinner was correct and assimilation was continuous (Chan & Tong, 1993, p. 48). However, there is reliable evidence of sizable communities

of ethnic Chinese in modern-day Thailand, such as Chinese organizations and private Chinese schools. And most Chinese in Thailand are multilingual and will use either their native tongue or their preferred language depending on the context. Bilingualism and multiple languages in diverse contexts, according to Chan and Tong, represent the preservation of Chinese cultural identity (Chan & Tong, 1993, p. 152). Even though previous academic studies in Chinese identity have heavily relied on Skinner's theory over the past decades, the work of Chan and Tong has garnered higher level of recognition. Therefore, a discussion on the identity of Siamese Chinese must both take Skinner's paradigm and Chan and Tong's findings into account.

Evidently, Skinner's assertion that the Siamese Chinese had assimilated into Siamese society during the early 20th century was clearly arbitrary, since it was mostly based on the identified parallels in religion, culture, gastronomy, and attire among the people of both nations. But the total rejection of Skinner's assimilation model by Chan and Tong is also intrinsically incorrect. Skinner's paradigm primarily concentrates on the Chinese community from the perspective of natural assimilation, ignoring the importance of forced assimilation. As newspapers served as a potent instrument for interfering in the process of natural assimilation, studies on Siamese Chinese reading culture would reveal that Siamese Chinese tended to interpret the concepts of "country" and "government" for judging identity from the perspective of China. This research would argue, thereby, that Skinner's claim might be applicable when expounding the identity of the middle class or lower class of Siamese Chinese. Nonetheless, the Chinese elites were deeply rooted in their Chinese heritage and influenced by the Chinese revolution and politics, undoubtedly owe their identity to their Chinese origin. As King Vajiravudh remarked in his "The Jews of the East," the blood of the Chinese was flowing in their bones (Vella, 1978, p. 202). Compared with the middle-class and lower-class Siamese Chinese,

there was no doubt that the political and economic power of the Chinese elite was much stronger. In the eyes of Siamese elites, the turmoil of the Siamese Chinese elites was thus undeniably a more potential threat to Siam.

The study of Chinese newspapers in Siam from the 1910s to the 1920s aims to provide insights into the emotional attachment and identity recognition of the Chinese community towards China in the early 20th century. It establishes a connection between the contents published in Siamese Chinese-language newspapers and the discourse of nationalism, seeking to expound on the content and structure of Siamese Chinese nationalist speech during the period of ideological rivalry between culturalism and nationalism in contemporary China. The research gap concerning Chinese-language newspapers in Siam and the diverse viewpoints on the issue of Chinese identity necessitates an investigation into the discourse of Siamese Chinese nationalism. This study will focus on analyzing the Chinese-language newspapers in Siam, aiming to uncover the nationalist rhetoric advocated in these newspapers and explore their fundamental modes of expression. In short, this research aims to provide insight into the understanding of Chinese identity via the examination of Siamese-Chinese nationalist rhetoric appeared in Chinese-language newspapers in Siam.

Literature Review

The emergence of nationalist consciousness among the Chinese population in Siam during the early 20th century was, thus, viewed as unavoidable (Skinner, 1957, p. 155). Skinner contended that after China's defeat to Japan in 1895, a surge of Chinese nationalism was rapidly boiling across Southeast Asia. Several historical events, such as the establishment of the Siam Branch of Tongmenghui [The Chinese Revolutionary Alliance and the Chinese Association in Siam] in 1907, Sun Yat-sen's visit to Siam in 1908,

the establishment of the Huaxian Yinhang [Bank of China-Siam] in 1908, and the founding of the first Chinese school, the Huayi School, helped forged the development of Chinese nationalism in Siam (Skinner, 1957, p. 155-156). Admire all these developments, Skinner's narrative of Chinese nationalism started with the founding of a Chinese newspaper in Siam.

Whereas late study by Disaphol Chansiri believes that the Siam Chinese Newspapers, contingent to these circumstances, served as a means of connecting the Chinese community with Chinese culture and politics. By keeping informed about Chinese news, the Chinese community was able to sustain their connection with China (Chansiri, 2008, p. 143). Earlier, Yuparet Milligan (1969) pointed out that ever since the Xinhai revolution in 1911, the Chinese newspapers served as the political medium of each political group in directing political agenda, invoking the nationalist sentiment, and enlisting the support of the overseas Chinese in Siam. Nevertheless, Eiji Murashima's investigation on the genesis of Siamese Chinese nationalism, relied on the Siamese Chinese newspapers, concluded that the real national awakening of the Siamese-Chinese was the Russo-Japanese War in the early 20th century, half a decade before the 1911 revolution (Murashima, 2013, p. 173). Wasana Wongsurawat asserted that the Chinese-language newspapers in Siam played a crucial role in the hierarchical distribution of China's national political progress, providing a reflection of the multitude of disputes and prolonged lack of unity in Chinese politics throughout the transition of the century (Wongsurawat, 2019, p. 52). Undeniably, Chinese newspapers in Bangkok integrated the Chinese diaspora with the imagined Chinese community (Wongsurawat, 2019, p. 49). Similarly, Prasenjitt Duara highlighted that the bounds of the imagined community of the Chinese nation were not based on territorial but rather on cultural and economic factors. Military might or economic development level did not determine a country's

strength. Instead, the cultural reservoir of the nation, including newspapers, played a vital role (Duara, 1997, p. 42).

Academia often employs Chinese nationalism as a theoretical framework to examine the issue of the Chinese community in Siam. Scholars often discuss it in conjunction with the emergence of Siamese nationalism during the same era, providing a rationale for the rise in anti-Chinese sentiment in Siam. Specifically, the Chinese nationalism that coincided with the Chinese revolution instilled fear and animosity in King Vajiravudh's social imagination (Wongsurawat, 2016, p. 560; Chaloemtiarana, 2014, p. 480), who was renowned as "the father of Thai nationalism" (Skinner, 1957, p. 159; Wilson, 1966, p. 109; Vella, 1978, p. 13) and held an extremely extremist stance towards China. Two factors, the rise of Chinese nationalism and King Vajiravudh's strong stance towards China, contributed to the genesis of the China problem in Siam during the early 20th century (Skinner, 1957; Anderson, 1979, p. 211-223; Anderson, 1983, p. 94-95). Based on these assertions, scholars have conducted research on the issue of Chinese in Siam, encompassing aspects such as Chinese cultural identity (Tejapira, 1992; Chantavanich, 1997), Chinese emotions (Eaksittipong, 2020), and Chinese education (Watson, 1976; Wongsurawat, 2008). In short, the previous study of Siamese Chinese nationalism has facilitated the all-round enhancement of Siamese Chinese community studies.

In the study of Chinese identity, Kasian Tejapira challenges Skinner's view of the pigtail as a symbol of Chinese identity (Skinner, 1957, p. 72) by deconstructing the political connotation of the pigtail and proposing that it was Thai racist discourse that created the term Chinese identity (Tejapira, 1992, p. 95). Tejapira's contribution to the study of Chinese people lies in his incorporation of political and economic factors into cultural research. Similarly, Chantavanich included political elements in cultural studies, but she held different perspectives on the so-called Chineseness. Chantavanich

argues that nationalism has contributed to the changing identity of the Chinese community in Siam. The nationalist ideology as expounded by the Kuomintang and the rise of the anti-Japanese movement made Chinese identity dominant in the early 20th century (Chantavanich, 1997, p. 255). Further, Sittithep Eaksittipong's account of the emotional chronicle of the Chinese community in Siam reveals that the Chinese newspapers extensively embedded the profound sentiments expressed by the Chinese regarding the nation, society, and their experiences in their diasporic lives. The Siamese elite sought to exert their dominance over the Chinese community by using shame as a means of control. However, the Chinese community in Siam found solace and emotional support from newspapers, which played a significant role in fostering the growth of Chinese identity politics (Eaksittipong, 2020, p. 398).

Another research perspective is to explain the problem of Chinese education through the lens of Chinese nationalism. Watson believes that with the growth of Chinese nationalism, Chinese schools aimed at helping overseas Chinese descendants learn Chinese, understand China, and cultivate patriotism have also increased. At this time, Siam was also cultivating a similar nationalistic spirit, and the contradiction between the Chinese community and the Siamese elite was thereby inevitable (Watson, 1976, p. 434). Wongsurawat further explains Chinese nationalism went beyond China's geographical boundaries and strived to seek support from overseas Chinese groups. Education was an ideological means for Chinese nationalism to extend to Siam. The competition between Siam and China for the right to educate overseas Chinese in the early 20th century was essentially a competition between emerging nation-states to exert their influence in the discourse of civilization (Wongsurawat, 2008, p. 177-178).

Above all, there is an agreement among academics that Chinese-language newspapers were vital in analyzing the emergence of Siamese

Chinese nationalism, despite differing perspectives on the chronology of its development. Xiao Focheng, a prominent figure among the Chinese nationalists abroad in Siam, contacted *Zhongguo Ribao* (a revolutionary newspaper founded on 25 January 1900 in Hong Kong) as early as 1905 in order to get assistance in founding a revolutionary newspaper in Bangkok. In the next year, Xiao and Chen Jinghua founded *Meinan Ribao*. In 1907, the two continued to found *Huaxian Xinbao*, a prominent revolutionary Chinese-language newspaper in Bangkok. The newspaper was available in Thai and Chinese editions then. The Thai version had received acclaim for its candidness and independence, while the Chinese edition more prominently embedded the revolutionary ideals of the founders (Skinner, 1957, p. 155-156). Successively, a series of Siamese Chinese-language newspapers had emerged. Xie Yurong's study revealed that Siam has founded a total of 22 Chinese newspapers from its birth to the 1930s (Xie, 1964, p. 115).

Nevertheless, most studies only mention a few words about Chinese newspapers; and their discussions also invoke some problems. As an example, according to Skinner, *Meinan Ribao*, founded in 1906 by Xiao Focheng and his supporters, was the first Siamese Chinese-language newspaper (Skinner, 1957, p. 155). Xie claimed that the first Chinese newspaper was *Hanjing Ribao*, founded in 1903 (Xie, 1964, p. 115). Chansiri asserted that the founding of the first Chinese newspaper in Siam dated back to 1905 (Chansiri, 2008, p. 144). Murashima postulated the founding of the first Siamese Chinese newspaper in October 1904 (Murashima, 2013, p. 150). And Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit agreed with Chansiri that it was in the year 1905 that the first Chinese was founded (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2014, p. 95). But scholars from HCU stated in its introduction to the Thailand Digital Chinese Newspaper (TDCN) that, as early as 1903, there was a pro-monarchy Chinese-language newspaper, *Hanjing Ribao*, in

Thailand (HCU Library, 2016). Further study is required to enhance understanding of the historical progression of Chinese newspapers in Siam.

Some of the given historical facts are apparently inaccurate. According to Wongsurawat, *Zhonghua Minbao*, a significant progressive newspaper in the Chinese community, published from 1912 to 1928 (Wongsurawat, 2019, p. 63). But survey shows that the Siamese Chinese community still continued to publish the newspaper in the 1930s. Besides, the primary focus of Siamese Chinese newspaper studies was overwhelmingly on the founding background and history of Chinese newspapers, with less emphasis on their contents.

The research on Siamese Chinese-language newspapers and Chinese nationalism is characterized by its variety and fragmentation. During the initial stages of the study, academia focused primarily on investigating the correlation between Chinese-language newspapers and long-distance Chinese nationalism, ultimately establishing an intrinsic linkage between the two (Skinner, 1957; Wilson, 1966; Vella, 1978; Chansiri, 2008). These findings had significant implications for studies on Chinese-language newspapers and nationalism. Subsequent research often utilized Chinese language newspapers as a foundation, integrating nationalist research into the examination of ethnic identity in Chinese communities (Tejapira, 1992; Chantavanich, 1997), the history of Chinese emotions in Siam (Eaksittipong, 2020), and the competition for cultural discourse authority between Siamese and Chinese elites (Watson, 1976; Wongsurawat, 2008).

In short, the academic community has reached a consensus that Siamese Chinese-language newspapers, as an ideological instrument, deeply embed Siamese Chinese emotional life and shape Siamese Chinese identity. As the discourse of Chinese long-distance nationalism exported by newspapers and magazines inevitably conflicted with the Siamese nationalism promoted by Siamese elites, the academic community rarely

addresses the form and content of nationalist discourse in Siamese Chinese-language newspapers.

This research helps to understand why the attitude of Siamese elites towards the Chinese community has sharply shifted since the rise of Siamese nationalism. While the clash of nationalist discourse between Siam and China did not extend to the Chinese-language newspaper sector during the 1910s to 1920s, the vigilance and control of Siamese elites towards the Chinese-language newspapers became evident in the 1930s. After the outbreak of the war of resistance against Japan, the Thai police suppressed Chinese nationalist groups and any endeavors aimed at assisting China in its fight against Japan from January to August 1939. During April 1939, the Ministry of Education reduced the allocated time for Chinese instruction in private schools to a mere two hours per week. A quick series of school closures ensued, culminating in August. The same month saw the closure of all Chinese-language newspapers, with the exception of one (Landon, 1941, p. 147-153; Skinner, 1957, p. 245). Undoubtedly, it should attribute Siamese elites' anti-Chinese stance to the dissemination of Chinese long-distance nationalist discourse and the rise of Siamese nationalism. The contents of Chinese materials, rarely researched by academia, help further comprehend the tension between Siamese elites and the Chinese community.

Research Methodology

This article is documentary research on the nationalist discourse of the Chinese community in Siam with a historical approach, and its mode of presentation is an analytical description (see Stanford, 1998; Carr, 2018 [1961]). Its primary documents were the Chinese-language newspapers published in Siam during the 1910s and 1920s, particularly the Siamese Chinese-language newspapers archived in the Thai Digital Chinese Newspaper (TDCN) database at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University (HCU).

Generally, the primary factor in using these documents as historical evidence is their ability to accurately represent social meanings and historical facts. And these documents can be accessed and cross-checked by using criteria like authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (see Scott, 1991).

The careful selection of archival materials would be the top priority in newspaper research. During the examination of newspaper contents, this study uses multitext analysis to enhance the significance of the research findings and guarantee the credibility of the chosen texts as well. In order to ensure the representativeness of the selected newspaper texts, the study analyzes pertinent materials from many newspapers reporting on the same event. Simultaneously, it conducts a comprehensive analysis of the newspaper's primary columns---news, commentaries, literary works, and advertisements---to fully grasp the ideological implications of newspapers and the essence of its contemporary Chinese reading culture.

Documentary research involves much more than just documenting facts. People should engage in self-reflection to figure out the ethical foundations of the documents (Coles, 1997, p. 6). Therefore, one cannot fully understand the content of documents without situating them within a theoretical framework or historical context (Atkinson, & Coffey, 1997, p. 55). Thus, prior to examining Chinese-language newspapers, known for their rich and diversified discourse of long-distance nationalism, this research first configures nationalism as its theoretical framework. In terms of interpreting newspaper contents, this research will thoroughly examine the historic context. Most importantly, these Chinese-language newspapers published in Siam in the 1910s and 1920s were not only significant in understanding the oversea Chinese in Siam during that period, but would portrayed the Chinese community in Siam in perspective, especially the general strike of the Chinese business operation that brought Bangkok to “a standstill for

three days with an absence of dock workers, food peddlers and the majority of the city's retail business" (Zhang & Wongsurawat, 2019, p. 49).

Nonetheless, the Chinese-language newspapers accessible for this research are limited. Notwithstanding HCU's considerable efforts in preserving Chinese-language newspapers, the database TDCN created by HCU still has problems in terms of the complete preservation of newspapers. The HCU analysis revealed that a significant number of Chinese newspapers published between the 1910s and 1930s were unable to endure natural deterioration over time owing to the paper's quality (HCU, 2018). Evidently, the newspapers incurred irreversible damages as a result of recurrent folding and infestation by insects. An on-site study at the TDCN database of HCU shows that only three Chinese-language newspapers published from the 1910s to the 1920s are preserved there: *Tianhan Gongbao*, *Zhonghua Minbao*, and *Huaxian Xinbao*. Among them, *Tianhan Gongbao*, the earliest remaining Chinese-language newspaper in HCU, only contains newspapers published between July and August 1917. Although the preservation of *Zhonghua Minbao* and *Huaxian Xinbao*, the two most influential old Chinese-language newspapers, is better than that of *Tianhan Gongbao*, the publication of these two newspapers preserved in TDCN are also incomplete, covering only four years: 1922, 1923, 1926, and 1929. This research specifically examines the primary channels through which newspapers express nationalist rhetoric, including news, commentary, and advertisements. It aims to investigate their main contents, expression forms, and ideological implications in nationalist discourse. The author will complete the translation of newspaper archival materials from Chinese to English.

As the literature review illustrate that even though most studies on the Chinese community in Siam commonly refer to Chinese-language newspapers, it is evident that newspaper discourse analysis has not yet

received much attention. Particularly, there is a lack of research that investigates the nationalist discourse of the Chinese community in Siam. In combination with the historical context of modern China's transformation from an empire to a nation-state and the objective fact of the rise of Chinese nationalism in Siam, this research adopts the theoretical framework of nationalism to explore the main content and characteristics of nationalist discourse in Chinese-language newspapers in Siam.

Nationalist Discourse in the Siamese Chinese-language Newspapers, 1910s-1920s

The news reports, commentaries, and advertisements of the Siamese Chinese-language newspaper from the 1910s to the 1920s illustrated that during this period, the nationalist discourse of the newspaper prominently showcased the Chinese identity of the Siamese Chinese elite, conveyed patriotism, and proactively engaged with the zeitgeist of China. The ways of nationalist discourse expression primarily involved urging the Chinese populace to endorse domestic products, expressing nationalist sentiments, articulating patriotic feelings through literary works, and promoting Chinese political and cultural ideologies, such as the Three Principles of the People and the May Fourth Spirit.

Promoting Nationalism through the Product Propaganda

The nationalist discourse presented in Chinese-language newspapers deeply impacted the daily lives of the Siamese Chinese. The prevalence of nationalist discourse in advertisements indicated that nationalism had emerged as a significant societal trend among the Siamese Chinese population, particularly among the Chinese elites. News and advertising had become the primary arenas for newspapers to disseminate nationalist ideology. Advertisements often applied nationalist rhetoric to products for daily use. Meanwhile, many products' trademarks were also strongly

nationalist, indicating that nationalist discourse had become the dominant discourse in the reading lives of the Siamese Chinese community.

Of all the commodity advertisements, those promoting cigarettes were the most prevalent. In the 1920s, under Sun Yat-sen's leadership, the Chinese's prevailing nationalist discourse revolved around the concept of "Guojia" [Nation] and its associated terms such as "Jianguo" [Founding of the Nation], "Guofu" [Father of the Nation], and "Guohuo" [National Products]. For examples, *Huaxian Xinbao* published an advertisement for Jianguo brand cigarettes on 17 April 1929, urging all patriotic smokers to commemorate the founding of the Republic of China and the success of diplomacy by purchasing Jianguo brand cigarette (see Figure 1). Made by Shanghai Sanxing Tobacco Company in China, Zhongshan brand cigarette aimed to raise national consciousness by highlighting Sun Yat-sen's political achievements and persuade the public to purchase through advertising (see Figure 2).



Figure 1 “Jianguopai Xiangyan Guanggao” [Advertisement for Jianguo brand cigarette]

(Source: *Huaxian Xinbao*, 17 April 1929)



Figure 2 “Zhongshanpai Xiangyan Guanggao” [Advertisement for Zhongshan brand cigarette] (Source: Zhonghua Minbao, 6 February 1926)

Literary Expression: The Most Intense Expression Manifestation of Patriotism

The expression of nationalist discourse in literary genres, particularly essays, was a crucial component of the nationalist discourse in Chinese-language newspapers. In the early days of the establishment of the Republic of China, fostering national and republican awareness and striving for national construction became the main nationalist discourse. Due to its powerful emotional expression, exquisite written language, and meticulous discourse organization, the literary expression of nationalism is undoubtedly the most straightforward and heartfelt. *Huaxian Xinbao*’s two essays in 1922 shared the common objective of inspiring people’s political awareness. The essay “The Concept of Nation,” which was published on 2 May 1922, stated:

Our people lack concern for national and political issues. Chinese, both residing domestically and internationally, generally hold a detached and indifferent attitude to political issues. This is a deeply ingrained problem widespread among

the Chinese population. Today, our ancestors entrusted us with the gorgeous mountains and rivers. Enhancing the political system and strengthening the fundamental structure of the nation are urgent problems that deserve immediate attention to ensure a sound social structure and secure livelihoods for the population. Therefore, it is crucial for our people to have a deep understanding of the concept of the state. Nowadays, the notion of state serves as the foundation for all concepts we hear worldwide, including humanitarianism, peace treaties, and national rights. In the absence of a collective national identity among the people, these concepts would merely be meaningless rhetoric (“Guojia Guannian” [the Concept of Notion], *Huaxian Xinbao*, 2 May 1922)

Another article, “Explanation to Endeavor,” wrote:

The living circumstances of each individuals vary. However, it is a shared reality that individuals will inevitably face challenges in their lives, and they need a sense of determination and persistence. An analogous principle applies to a nation. At its inception, a republic may encounter numerous difficulties, and its formation also hinges on the diligent effort and resilience of its people. Only when our people fulfill their responsibilities can we hope for the cohesion of the nation (“Fendou De Jieshi” [Explanation to Endeavor], *Huaxian Xinbao*, 23 May 1922).

Era Expression: Responding to the Prevailing Zeitgeist in China

A) The Spread of The Three Principles of the People and May Fourth Spirit

From the 1910s to the 1920s, the major focus of Chinese nationalist rhetoric revolved around the Three Principles of the People, the New Culture Movement, and the May Fourth Movement. In 1905, Sun Yat-sen developed “The Three Principles of the People,” aimed at achieving national redemption (Sun, 2023, p. 5). The inclusion of nationalism in “The Three Principles of the People” garnered significant attention from Chinese intellectuals, owing to its expression of patriotic feeling, emphasis on unity, and perception of Chinese culture as superior (Gasster, 1980, p. 493).

In a similar vein, the New Culture Movement, initiated in September 1915, heralded the commencement of a new age of change. *Xin Qingnian* [La Jeunesse], a journal that played an important role during the May Fourth Movement, compiled the fundamental principles of cosmogony at the inception of the reform movement in the 1890s. The nationalists began to reject traditional Confucian ethics and instead explained evolution using naturalistic scientific terminology (Furth, 1980, p. 396).

The New Culture Movement has a nationalist political orientation and an internationalist cultural perspective, primarily characterized by its opposition to Confucianism (Uberoi, 1972, p. 54). During this period, Confucianism faced criticism primarily due to two factors: its association with the monarchy and its fundamental authoritarianism, which saw devotion to the emperor, father, and husband as a virtue (Uberoi, 1972, p. 58). The May Fourth Movement (1919), led by Chinese nationalists, was a comprehensive response to both the decline of traditional Chinese culture and resistance against imperialist aggression. It also aimed to rebuild the country by embracing progressive discourses throughout the world (Meisner, 1972, p. 21). The interplay between nationalism and internationalism was evident in

Chinese society throughout the first three decades of the 20th century. Thereby, the Chinese newspapers had prominently featured the rise of nationalist sentiment and the waning influence of Confucianism.

At the turn of the twentieth century, *Tianhan Gongbao* that published in Siam also mirrored the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, and anti-traditional nationalist rhetoric of contemporary China. *Tianhan Gongbao*, first published in 1917 and preserved at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University, was the oldest available Chinese-language newspaper in Siam. From an archival perspective, it serves as a valuable historical resource for studying the nationalist discourse of the Chinese community in Siam. During the early 20th century, authoritarian regimes were the response of the ruling power to Chinese nationalism (Young, 1980, p. 244). The rise of nationalism inevitably necessitated a struggle against authoritarianism. In a significant number of commentaries published in *Tianhan Gongbao*, anti-authoritarianism were the strongest voices of nationalist discourse. A commentary, “Dictator and Profiteerer,” posited that the rise of a particular clan often leads to the establishment of autocratic rule over an extended period. Similarly, a political party often sacrifices the republic for its own interests when it gains power (Dictator and Profiteerer, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 25 August 1917).

The Chinese community’s stance on anti-dictatorship and anti-authoritarianism during 1910s to 1920s was resolute, as evidenced by a series of thorough analyses on the causes of the China’s decline and authoritarianism. These reasons included the implementation of inappropriate national policies (Policies, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 24 August 1917), the competition for power and profit among politicians (Quell the Conflict, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 9 August 1917), the incompetence of governmental institutions (The Reason why the Current Police System cannot Promote Social Change, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 9 August 1917), and national debts (Borrowing, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 26 August, 1917).

In addition, *Tianhan Gongbao* reflected that Sun Yat-sen's proposition of "The Three Principles of the People" had already subconsciously permeated the lives of Chinese in Siam, particularly people's livelihoods. The word "livelihood" refers to the well-being and welfare of people, as well as the overall prosperity of a nation (Sun, 2023, p. 54). The Chinese community have embraced and proactively adhered to "The Three Principles of the People." Commentaries in newspapers sympathized with the plight of the people's lives. Simultaneously, they tried to explore the societal factors attributing to the deterioration of people's lives. "The Casinos' Past and Present" stated that Cantonese were keen on gambling, and throughout the late Qing Dynasty, Guangzhou had a multitude of casinos adorned with lavish decorations. The majority of those going to the casino were avid gamblers who staked substantial sums of money. Since the era of the Republic of China, gambling continued to maintain its popularity, with casinos becoming more widespread. Even impoverished vendors are enthusiastic about gaming. This directly resulted in destitution and economic depletion (The Casinos' Past and Present, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 19 August 1917).

The commentary "The Hazards of Drug Abuse" examined the opium prohibition, which has made minimal progress since the establishment of the Republic of China. People ranging from prominent government figures to ordinary citizens were highly addicted to it, and the eradication of opium appeared as distant as ever (The Hazards of Drug Abuse, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 21 August 1917). In the commentary "Public Opinion," the author first asserted that the populace was the primary entity inside a democratic nation. Subsequently, the paper contemplated the precise meaning of popular opinion. More than often, the privileged upper class shaped public opinion. However, what about the impoverished individuals who are currently struggling to make ends meet? Who pays heed to their

vocalizations? The Chinese nationalist discourse of “democracy” in the commentary obviously stem from the second principle of Sun Yat-sen’s “The Three Principles of the People,” resurging within the Siamese Chinese community (Public Opinion, *Tianhan Gongbao*, 18 August 1917).

The literary works published in the newspapers of the same period also echoed the rising anti-imperialist and anti-feudal voices of the Chinese in Siam in the 1910s. *Tianhan Gongbao* serialized a story with a prominent political flavor, titled “The Princess of Taohuashan,” in July 1917. The story illustrated a scholar named Chen Sheng, who collaborated with the admiral to defeat the Tusi [chieftain] and made him “subject to the imperial court.” At the end of the novel, the three parties joined efforts to defeat a snake-headed monster (Taohuashan Gongzhu, *Tianhan Gongbao*, July 1917). The novel’s main idea was unambiguously clear. Firstly, the term “Tianchao [celestial empire] was a classical expression that emphasized sinocentrism within the same category as “Tianxia” [all under heaven], “Tianzi” [the son of heaven], and “Zhongguo” [the middle kingdom] (Fairbank, 1968, p. 19). Secondly, the story used Chen Sheng and the Admiral to represent the people and military forces, respectively, and the Tusi to represent the feudal warlords. The story’s depiction of the Tusi subjugating Tianchao implied that the warlords were subject to the Beijing government. The snake-headed monster mentioned at the end of the story undoubtedly referred to imperialism. The central idea reflected in the novel was nothing more than anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism.

B) The Increasing Anti-traditional and Revolutionary Spirit

Since the 1920s, the Chinese community in Siam has embraced an anti-traditional cultural superiority complex and a nationalist rhetoric, fiercely denouncing Confucian conventional philosophy. This mindset has influenced all aspects of their spiritual lives. The Chinese believed that by adopting and incorporating the educational, political, and cultural ideas of

Europe and America, their nation might definitely become powerful (A Chinese Who is Keen on Traveling Around the World, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 26 February 1923). They taken the role of leading the way in the new era. Between 1911 and 1939, *Zhonghua Minabo*, which had been running for 28 years (Xie, 1964, p. 114), emerged as the primary front for disseminating nationalist rhetoric after the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement. The articles in the “New Life” commentary column covered diverse themes and presented insightful contents, leading the Siamese Chinese community to keep pace with the evolving trends of the era. This was an uncommon occurrence among other Chinese newspapers during the same time frame.

In the field of fine arts. *Zhonghua Minbao* published the article “Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Singapore Overseas Chinese Academy of Fine Arts” on 9 January 1923, outlining the academy’s mission to leverage China’s existing arts foundation, incorporate the knowledge of the West, and promote new form of fine arts in China (Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Singapore Overseas Chinese Academy of Fine Arts, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 9 January 1923). The article “The Value of Drama” discussed how Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen’s plays had a significant impact on Western society by inspiring social reform and ideological change. While Western plays often hold social and educational value, China’s contemporary drama was not immune to vulgar and low-quality pseudo drama. The primary objective of drama reform was to acquire knowledge from Western practices and developed inspiring drama of high quality (The Value of Drama, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 12 January 1923).

The Chinese community in Siam was adept at introspection on history, tradition, and the current state of affairs. The “New Life” column in *Zhonghua Minbao* prompted the Chinese community in Siam to critically reassess traditional Chinese culture, not only in fine arts but also in other

fields. The 1920s and 1930s marked a pivotal era in the development of contemporary Chinese literature (Schwartz, 1980, p. 421). Literary thinking was a subject of contemplation in literature. The essay “The Significance and Method of Literary Criticism” criticized China’s literary tradition, stating that literary criticism had a long-standing history in the West spanning thousands of years but remained relatively unknown and unexplored in China. Chinese historically lacked a discerning and analytical mindset, resulting in few advancements in literary studies (The Significance and Method of Literary Criticism, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 2 February 1923). The commentary also included discussions on literary reform. The emergence of the New Literature Movement, which encapsulated the essence of the May Fourth Movement, coincided with China’s escalating social and political challenges, eventually leading to the emergence of left-wing writing (Schwartz, 1980, p. 421). Meanwhile, *Zhonghua Minbao* also disseminated the concepts of the May Fourth Movement and the New Literature Movement to the Siamese Chinese community through Chinese literary scholar and politician Hu Shi’s article, “The Significance of the New Literature Movement.” Hushi posited that the New Literature Movement stemmed from a period calling for a dynamic and accurate depiction of a vibrant society and thriving nation (The Significance of the New Literature Movement, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 4 Fourth 1926).

Social changes often coincide with religious concerns. The article “The Method of China’s Reform,” published on 21 February 1923 by *Zhonghua Minbao*, proposed two arguments. The first was about the Confucian tradition, stating that Westerners’ belief in religion was akin to Chinese belief in Confucianism. European societies have achieved intellectual freedom and societal advancement as a result of religious reform. The second point pertained to the concepts of “nation” and “civilization.” It asserted that “our predecessors never came across a nation

that surpassed our own. Over the course of its two-century history, even the Qing dynasty has inadvertently integrated with Han's culture, therefore making the revolutionary process of the 1911 Revolution seem effortless. However, the Western society we are now encountering has far more strength than our own, therefore making the change in our country very difficult." When considering Chinese societal reform, the article highlighted that the most pressing task was to achieve freedom of speech, publication, and assembly. It stressed that tradition, including Confucius reverence, was the main obstacle to free thought (The Method of China's Reform, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 21 February 1923). The article essentially critiques the longstanding practice of venerating Confucius.

Apparently, the Siamese Chinese's critique of the Confucian legacy was not a mere slogan but rather a tangible contemplation of societal problems, particularly those pertaining to female. As a subsidiary category inside the "New Life" column, "Female Issues" often sparked criticism of traditional moral values. A commentary raised concerns about the traditional Chinese cultural emphasis on female's virginity and the use of archways as a means to entice ladies. In light of this, the author reflected on whether temptation could really lead to morality (Social Communication between Males and Females and Chastity, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 24 February 1923). During the 1920s, Siamese Chinese society launched a relentless criticism of traditional Chinese customs and moral principles. The commentary "Breaking the Shackles of Women: Old Ethics," published on 3 May 1926, addressed women's difficulties by specifically referencing old Chinese ethical and moral standards (Breaking the Shackles of Women: Old Ethics, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 3 May 1926). The criticism of the Confucian ethical cultural framework, specifically the Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues, as well as the moral principles promoted by feudal society, was also evident in another commentary titled "Women's

Movement and Economic Independence.” It highlighted that one of the significant factors contributing to women being subordinate to men was the establishment of the Three Cardinal Guides by Confucianism (Women’s Movement and Economic Independence, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 24 February 1923).

Revolution is a visible form of transformation and a force that moves upwards. Revolution and evolution are closely intertwined. Only revolution can spark evolution, and without it, progress stops. The essence of revolution is the transition from an imperfect state to a state of perfection, which involves the complete dismantling of corrupt structures and cultures in the old society and the construction of a new, utopian society in accordance with the idea of social evolution (“Shi Gemin” [An Interpretation to Revolution], *Zhonghua Minbao*, 31 August 1926).

Revolution originates from ideals. Contemporary society tends to lack tolerance for revolutionary tactics and policies. Nationalist social reform has gradually achieved its objectives over time. The royalists, proponents of constitutional monarchy under the Qing Dynasty, attempted to resist the revolutionaries and argued that China was ill-suited for revolution. However, the triumph of the Wuchang Uprising had a decisive blow to the royalists. Later, the torrent of the revolution ultimately annihilated Yuan Shih-k’ai, who attempted to reinstate the monarchy. Empirical practice shows that only revolutionaries can promote societal progress (“Gemin Jingshen” [Revolutionary Spirit], *Huaxian Xinbao*, June 1922).

The political discourses of the Chinese-language newspapers in Siam throughout the 1920s were characterized by their openness and candiness, although their fundamental nature was revolutionary. Some newspapers occasionally launch polemics over various political stances. *Huaxian Xinbao* published a commentary on 13 April 1929, entitled “To Journalists of *Zhonghua Minbao* Who Question the Central Committee.” It was a response to *Zhonghua*

Minbao's doubtfulness about the appointment of representatives by the Kuomintang (KMT) Central Committee for its Third Congress. In response, *Huaxian Xinbao* refuted that the KMT implemented a democratic centralization system and that it was irrational to prioritize democracy while neglecting centralization. Furthermore, it reminded *Zhonghua Minbao* that political decisions stemmed from the prevailing circumstances and may not always meet everyone's expectations. The only thing journalists should know was that they should steadfastly adhere to the decisions made by the central government and upheld its authority (To Journalists of *Zhonghua Minbao* Who Question the Central Committee, *Huxian Xinbao*, April 13 1929).

Undoubtedly, *Huaxian Xinbao*, founded by KMT veteran Xiao Focheng, staunchly supported the governance of the KMT and became the mouthpiece of KMT in the Chinese community. In fact, *Zhonghua Minbao* also upheld KMT's governance philosophy. In August 1926, the newspaper serialized an article written by He Yingqin, the most senior generals of KMT during Nationalist China, titled "How Should Our Nation Be Liberated Under the Iron Heel of Warlords?" The article emphasized that the solution to warlordism was to promote Sun Yat-sen's philosophy of "promoting equality in China's international and economic status and ensuring China's perpetual existence in the world" (How Should Our Nation Be Liberated Under the Iron Heel of Warlords, *Zhonghua Minbao*, August 1926). Another article, "The Nationalist Government will Definitely Unify China," referenced favorable comments about the Nationalist Government from a Japanese journal. It concluded by urging the public to continue striving, stating that the revolution had not yet achieved its goals (The National Government will Definitely Unify China, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 20 August 1926).

The primary distinction between the political stances of *Zhonghua Minbao* and *Huaxian Xinbao* was their respective endorsement of the

revolution and empathy for the proletariat. Commencing on 19 January, 1923, *Zhonghua Minbao* serially published Chinese revolutionary socialist Chen Duxiu's article "My Opinion on the Current Political Issues in China." The essay did not only introduce the notion of class struggle to the Chinese community but also advocated for the consolidation of national democratic strengths, the formation of a formidable political party, the overthrow of warlordism internally, and the resistance against foreign imperialism externally. Only in this way can China achieve peace, freedom, and independence. The essay had a clear socialist tone, as it emphasized that only by this particular means can the Chinese bourgeoisie have the chance to completely flourish and simultaneously liberate the proletariat, enabling them to transit from a state of immaturity to one of strength (My Opinion on the Current Political Issues in China, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 19 January 1923).

Nevertheless, the introduction of socialist ideas into the Chinese community in Siam triggered repercussions, resulting in the emergence of socialist ideological discourse within the community. With the introduction of new notions, including the proletariat, class struggle, and workers' movements, the Siamese Chinese demonstrated their support and empathy for the working class and their promotion of class conflict through their newspaper discourse. "My View on Worker's Movement" urged capitalists to follow the world trend and care for the livelihoods of workers (My View on Worker's Movement, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 17 February 1923). "Tides" urged all Chinese compatriots to mobilize and provide assistance to back up the student, worker, and business movements (Tides, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 28 February 1923). In 1926, the column "New Life" specifically marked the words "talk less about doctrines and explore more about problems," showcasing its practical approach and attitude. It published a commentary on 26 August 1926, calling for all the oppressed to break the concept of nationality to unite and fight against the bourgeoisie (Guangzhou Workers

Support the British Workers' Movement, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 26 August 1926). The serial essay "Resolutely Safeguard the Interests of Farmers" emphasized the crucial linkage between protecting the interests of peasants and the future of class struggle (Resolutely Safeguard the Interests of Farmers, *Zhonghua Minbao*, 25 August 1926).

Discussion

Evidently, Chinese nationalism emerged as a reaction to China's interactions with the Western world during the Opium War in the 1840s. Prior to this significant juncture, China resembled more of an empire comprised only of the Han ethnic group than a nation-state, and even farther from a society consisting of many ethnicities in the modern sense (Cabestan, 2005, p. 28). Thereby, many Sinologists assert that there was a strong connection culturalism and Chinese nationalism. In the early twentieth century, China witnessed the emergence of modern nationalism and the introduction of new concepts and terminology associated with history, such as feudalism, self-consciousness, superstition, and revolution. The introduction of these new language resources, including words and narratives, played a crucial role in building the nation as the central focus of historical events (Duara, 1995, p. 15).

The fragmentation of the nation and the widespread adoption of a military philosophy resulted in the emergence of warlordism under Yuan Shih-k'ai's presidency of the Republic of China (1912-1916) (Young, 1980, p. 208). The May Fourth Movement, characterized by its advocacy against imperialism and feudalism, facilitated the shift from culturalism to nationalism in China by arousing the national consciousness of the populace and introducing Western ideologies (Bai, 2019).

As long-distance nationalism cultivates a feeling of affiliation among persons living in different regions of the world to their own country (Anderson,

1992; Anderson, 1998), it was apparent the domestic political and economic climate dominates the specifics of nationalist actions (Schiller, 2005, p. 570). Evaluating the influence of Chinese-language newspapers on Siamese Chinese is thereby challenging, and the continuous flow of Chinese remittances demonstrates their effectiveness in inspiring Chinese patriotism and mobilizing Chinese participation in national redemption (Xu, 2008, p. 82).

Conclusion

In the process of constructing the nationalist discourse system, Chinese-language newspapers plays a crucial role as an essential political resource and discourse channel. They provide a platform for nationalist discourse to penetrate the vision of Siamese Chinese, establish a system, and shape public opinion. Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century endeavored to expound the nationalist discourse of “The Three People’s Principles,” the essence of the May Fourth Movement and the New Culture Movement, in pursuit of their political objectives of anti-imperialism, anti-feudalism, and national redemption. The Chinese elite in Siam, who used newspapers, expressed these nationalist discourse in three ways. They engaged in theoretical discussions, disseminated their views to the public, and critiqued traditional Chinese culture. Specifically, the Chinese community in Siam conducted a comprehensive theoretical study on Chinese and foreign history, political ideologies, and social trends with the aim of discovering the way towards national redemption. On one hand, they extensively examined the political, economic, scientific, cultural, and societal factors attributing to the country’s plight and the imminent danger it faces. On the other hand, they analyzed potential approaches to rescuing the nation.

In the May Fourth Movement, the elite of the Chinese community in Siam emphasized the criticism of traditional Chinese culture as their

compatriots in China, especially the criticism of Confucian traditional thoughts. Despite their exile and sometimes differing political positions, the elite of the Chinese community in Siam remained staunch nationalists, and their inclusion in the imagined Chinese community remained unaffected. Newspapers expressed compassion for the suffering of their homeland and the struggles of their fellow compatriots, becoming a propaganda front for the expression of nationalism and patriotism of the Chinese community in Siam.

In the 1910s, the turmoil of warlordism closely tied the nationalist discourse of the Chinese in Siam. *Tianhan Gongbao*, while voicing anti-dictatorship and anti-authoritarian sentiments, fiercely denounced the atrocities of warlords and expressed sympathy for the common people. Meanwhile, it exposed social problems and explored ways to improve people's livelihoods. And it is arguable The Chinese's understanding of the nation and society deepened gradually. During the 1920s, with the widespread dissemination of "The Three Principles of the People," the New Culture Movement, and communism, the nationalist discourse of the Chinese community became diverse and competitive. Newspapers, represented by *Huaxian Newspaper* and *Zhonghua Minbao*, spared no effort in spreading a series of concepts such as social evolution, revolution, class, and struggle in the political domain. In the cultural field, the Chinese community re-examined traditional culture, targeting the old Confucian ethics and morality, proactively introducing new culture, and trying to comprehensively reshape the fields of literature, art, education, religion, and other aspects of Chinese culture, helping to construct a nationalist discourse system for the Chinese community in Siam.

To sum up, during the 1910s to 1920s, the Siamese Chinese elites, acting as long-distance nationalists in the face of China's internal and external turbulence, established Chinese-language newspapers through

information transmission, political mobilization, and emotional expression. These newspapers became an important means for the Chinese to recognize their identity, maintain national emotions, and participate in transnational politics, characterized by three fundamental modes of expression: daily expression, literary expression, and era expression.

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