

# Teacher, Artist, and Politician: Chen Cheng-po's Vocations as Hinted in His Notebooks

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## Introduction

### A. Chen Cheng-po's lifetime and his three notebooks

In the collection of Chen Cheng-po Cultural Foundation (the Foundation),<sup>2</sup> there exist three notebooks. The first notebook, labeled *A Collection of Essays* (the *Collection*), was started on January 1, 1915 when Chen was a student at the Taiwan Governor-General's Office National Language School (National Language School) in Taihoku (today's Taipei). The second notebook, labeled "Philosophy" on its cover, was started on April 27, 1926 when Chen was a third-year student at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. The third notebook consisted mainly of a long essay and was labeled "Review (Society and Art)" (*Review Notebook*) and dated September 9, 1945. Whereas the first two notebooks were written in Japanese, the third was in Chinese.

These are the rare records that have remained until today to tell us what Chen Cheng-po wrote, apart from what he drew, in his school days and afterwards.

Throughout his life, Chen Cheng-po had pursued the three ambitions of becoming a teacher, an artist, and a politician. In an interview, his eldest son Chen Tsung-kuang told IZAO Tomio and his students from Japan that his father had accomplished the first two ambitions with much success, but the last ambition was a complete catastrophe that ended in his being summarily executed during the 228 Incident (see Section 4C).

The above-mentioned three notebooks were respectively written during times he was preparing to face new challenges of life.

Encouraged by Chen Tsung-kuang's son Chen Li-po and other members of the Foundation, we have worked since March 2016 to find out what were written in Japanese in his notebooks, and

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<sup>2</sup> Most items in the collection are accessible on the [Foundation's website](#), and their reference numbers are adopted in this article. Pages of related books and magazines are posted [only](#) on the [website](#) of the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica.

we wish to share our discoveries. Our investigation has been supplemented by studying texts written on loose sheets of paper, on sketchbooks, or in the margin of his books.

### B. Chen Cheng-po's Japanese handwriting

Before entering the public school in Chiayi at the age of 13, Chen Cheng-po studied Chinese classics in a private school. At the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, the characters in his calligraphy exercises were so well balanced and neatly written that there was little correction from his teacher. Though Chen's calligraphy skill might have been passed down from his father, who died in 1909, the handwriting in his notebooks is hard to decipher because of the cursive style he employed.

Some characters are illegible because they are fragmentary, or because the paper on which they were written has been torn. If we could get hold of the original texts from which Chen Cheng-po had copied, we could rebuild these characters, but only a few of the originals could be found.

In the second notebook which Chen Cheng-po used for his philosophy and education classes, the handwriting is even more difficult to decipher. This is so probably because he had to jot down sentences which were only spoken but not written on the blackboard. Also, as Chen Cheng-po had to keep pace with the spoken words of his teachers, he had wrongly written many characters in Chinese which had the same Japanese pronunciations. He might have particular difficulties in writing down the names of western scholars when they were written in alphabets of English, German, Latin, or even Greek.

An abundance of mixed use of different forms of characters could be found in the first notebook, examples include 歸／帰／归 and 氣／気／气. Whereas 歸 and 氣 are in the formal style similar to present-day traditional Chinese characters, 帰 and 気 are the popular versions which are mostly similar to the kanji used in Japanese writings nowadays, while 归 and 气 are abridged versions not unlike the simplified Chinese characters of today. The authors have mostly retained the different versions used in the original script and have made no attempts to unify the character types. If there are characters that are obviously wrongly written or mistaken, however, the authors will provide the correct ones within parentheses and underline them.

### C. Difficulty of literary Japanese

In Chen Cheng-po's days, written Japanese was far more difficult to master than its spoken form than today, especially in the classical style and in verses.

Let us take an example from a Japanese song that Chen Tsung-kuang chose to sing with us on our request when we visited his home in Chiayi in March 2016. The title of the song was *Umiyukaba* 海行かば (*If I Go Away to the Sea*), being an extract from a long poem to praise

the emperor for the discovery of gold in the north. The poem was written by Ōtomo no Yakamochi (ca. 718-785, 大伴家持), the learned poet-administrator who compiled the first songbook of Japan, *Man-yōshū* (萬葉集). In the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Chen Cheng-po was asked to practice calligraphy on poems of his choice from this songbook. All the nine poems he had chosen were the love poems exchanged between the poet and a lady named Ki no Iratsume (紀女郎, See Fig. 1). The song *Umiyukaba* was composed in 1937, and was also inserted in the middle of the energetic song *Warship March*.<sup>3</sup>

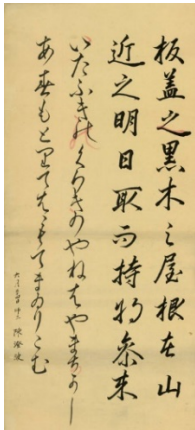


Fig. 1: Chen Cheng-po's calligraphy class work on June 24, 1926 in Chinese and hiragana characters (*Man-yōshū* Vol 4 No. 779 by Ōtomo no Yakamochi).

Japanese children including Taiwanese and Korean ones during the Japanese colonial era were made to sing this song at schools, but most of them misunderstood the lyrics.<sup>4</sup> Ankei Yuji's mother Fumiko was 18 years old in 1937 when she first heard *Umiyukaba* as if it were the second national anthem. She wondered why this song mentioned about four hippopotami. This explains why:

Original lyrics:

*Umi yukaba mizuku kabane; Yama yukaba kusamusu kabane; Ōkimi no he ni koso shiname; Kaerimi wa seji* (If I go away to the sea, I shall be a corpse washed up / If I go to the mountain, I shall be a corpse in the grass / But if I die for the Emperor, it will not be a regret.)

Sung by children as:

<sup>3</sup> During the 228 Incident, on March 2 and 3, 1947, Professor Kokubu Naoichi (國分直一) heard this *Warship March* broadcast from Taichung Radio Station, followed by a message in Japanese to exhort listeners to stand up, "Have we forgotten the Japanese spirit? We have been given 50 years of Japanese education. Let us stand up now, six millions of compatriots of the whole island! Stand up youngsters! Stand up, compatriots that have returned from abroad!" Quoted from Ankei Yuji & Ankei Takako, *Following on the footprints of Professor Kokubu Naoichi* (3): Encounter with 228 Incident as recorded in his field note. *Yōjubunka* 榕樹文化 64-65: 36 (2019). <http://ankei.jp/yuji/?n=2383>

<sup>4</sup> Kasagi Tōru (笠木透), *The Piglet Born Yesterday: Wartime Songs of Children*, a CD book. Ongaku Center (昨日生まれた豚の子が：戦争中の子供の歌, 音楽センター) (1995)

*Umi ni kaba mimizuku bakane; Yama ni kaba kusamusu kaba ne; Ō! Kimi no he ni koso shiname* (Hippos are in the ocean, owls are fools aren't they? Hippos in the hills are hippos smelling bad aren't they? Oh, I am determined to die from your fart!)

Fumiko also remembered another song that celebrates the birth of the prince baby on December 24, 1933—*Hitsugi no miko wa aremashinu* (The Prince to Succeed the Sun Dynasty is Just Born 日嗣の御子は生まれましぬ)—but was understood by children as *Hitsugi no miko wa aremaa shinu* (Alas, the baby in the coffin is dying! 棺の御子はアレマー死ぬ).

## 1. A Collection of Essays (1915-)

### A. Outline

This notebook Nb01 contains 148 pages. There are many short texts of several lines only, but there are also sporadic lengthy ones covering several pages. On the cover, we can find four lines from right to left that read 1) *A Collection of Essays*, 2) New Year's Day, Taishō 4 (=1915), 3) Chen Cheng-po in Chinese characters, and 4) Tân in alphabets, which is Chen's surname in Taiwanese pronunciation.

Chen Cheng-po was born on February 2, 1895, two months earlier than the start of Japanese colonization of Taiwan. He was 20 years and 11 months old when he began writing this notebook. He was in his second year at the National Language School. It was the school that trained young Taiwanese for four years to be teachers in public schools where Taiwanese children could learn a variety of subjects in Japanese. Chen himself was a graduate of one such school—Chiayi Public School (LE2\_001, Fig. 2) on March 28, 1913.



Fig. 2: Chiayi Public School, as shown on a postcard sent to Chen Cheng-po in Taihoku by a former classmate or teacher from Chiayi (1915).

Although Chen numbered the texts/essays consecutively from #1 to #132, #26 and #120, #67 and 103, #68 and 100, as well as #69 and 104 are the pairs having the same contents but copied down on different occasions. Further, #18 and #21 contain combinations of two essays each written by a different author. There are two texts having the same number 47, so they are redesignated as #47 and #47bis. The essay in #109 was not copied in full before being replaced

by another. Thus, in total, Chen copied 136 passages/essays, of which there are four pairs of identical ones.

After having transcribed the texts, we tried to identify the original essays in the hope of correcting dubious characters or filling in missing ones. There was no anthology of Japanese essays among his books. For many of the essays, notes on difficult words were given in the margin. While most of these notes came from the books Chen was copying, a small number of them were in a different color of ink, indicating that he composed them himself. Some advices on appreciation or composition were also frequently found at the end of the essays. He might have copied these from textbooks on written Japanese he had read. In those days, such textbooks were common, and he could easily get hold of them in his school (Fig. 3. See also Fig. 5).

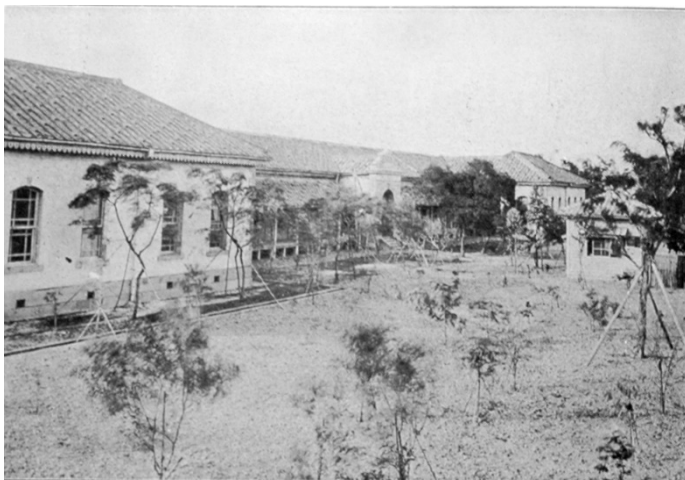


Fig. 3: The National Language School as shown in a book published by the Governor-General's Office of Taiwan in 1908.

Learning a language entails understanding the related culture and traditions as well. Early Japanese literature is replete with the elements of Chinese language and civilization. It is therefore not surprising that Chinese influence is found almost everywhere in the *Collection*. #1 is on Li Bai (李白), #3 on crabapple flower (海棠), #4 on plum (梅), #7 on peony (牡丹), #8 on chrysanthemum (菊), and so on to the very last one, #132, which pays homage to Mencius' "the three delights of a superior man" (孟子·君子的三樂). Quotations from classical Chinese literature are often covertly embedded in the essays. In such cases, readers will have much difficulty in comprehension if they lack a basic knowledge of Chinese and Japanese classics that span centuries or more. This might pose a challenge to his fellow students, but Chen Cheng-po had already learnt Chinese classics in a private school until he was 13, so he might have found the background of the essays as something familiar.

There are, of course, essays or texts that need no knowledge of Chinese classics: #46-48 are letters between close friends or classmates, or formal letters needed in daily life. In particular, #47bis is an advertisement for a new merchandise, #56 is a letter of apology for having broken a promise, #71 is a marriage notification, #74 is a mourning essay, etc. In the latter half of the

*Collection*, there appear essays in conversational style such as #72 (Mothers of Great Men All Lived in Rural Areas), #94 (Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi), etc.

Chen Cheng-po did not only copied sample texts that might be useful for his future life; he thought wider. #57-58 were seasonal greetings by women, which he might have prepared in case he should teach girls.

More than half of the essays pertain to the description of nature, using language instead of charcoal or paints. There are end-notes that expound on the relationship between drawings and the texts. Making sketches with words was an invention by a pioneer of modern haiku and tanka, Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902, 正岡子規), and a sketch of his short trip is given in #94. The styles of these essays, however, are quite diverse: some are short and impressionistic like sketches in charcoal or watercolor, others are full of rich colors like oil paintings or even a movie (#2). Some of the end-notes read as follows:

The author described the sceneries of the territories he had trodden on with a pen more convincingly than with a drawing (#70).

In less than 400 characters the scenery of a village on the hillside, and the changes from early to late autumn were described as if you can see them with your eyes. By reading this repeatedly, we should be able to master how to economize our words and phrases (#82).

An essay like a model picture drawn with color pencils (#85).

Words in this article, flowing so elegantly, remind us of a drawing of summer rural scenery (#69, #104).

A passenger, sitting by the window on a train, has a sheet of paper and a pencil. Is he writing a Japanese song, a Chinese poem or sketching? (#96 by Ōwada Takeki)

## B. Essays

### **Importance of lifelong learning**

#1. Advice for Setting One's Heart on Academic Studies or Art Learning (Miura Baien 三浦梅園, Fig. 4)

People today may set their heart on academic studies or art learning. Once they have made the decision, they may apply themselves day and night. But only after a fortnight or two, they will start getting lazy. They would not admit to not working hard enough, and claim that it is all human nature.



Fig. 4: Miura Baien (Wikicommons)

A horse may be able to run fast, but if it runs only a short while in the morning, how can it be a rival for a cow walking slowly but all the day? A smooth stone in a valley or a frame of a well having no angles is not achievable in one day. Those who do not stop today, and those who do not stop tomorrow, will eventually be able to see some results. Even if a person applies themselves throughout their life, it is not easy to fathom the depth of knowledge. How can one compare the work of a month or two, or even a year or two, with the lifelong accomplishments of others?

### **Live sketches with words**

#### **#2. Dawn at Mt. Fuji (Chizuka Reisui 遲塚麗水)**

In a short moment, out of the faint haze, a multi-color light appeared. It progressively became brighter, glittering, and at last turned scarlet. Emerging out of it was something egg yolk in color which quickly turned the color of melted copper. The man of the stone hut said, "This is the Sun". Then the color of the sun changed to that of glowing copper surrounded by a ring of gold, and at last turned the color of white-hot iron. As if suddenly hit by a heavy hammer, thousands of golden arrows shot into the sky, followed by blood-red beams rising upward into the shady dawn. At this point, with the rising of the morning sun, the whole world became clear and bright.

The above description is just like the mixing of different colors of paints by the brush of an artist. Although it has been argued that the rising sun and Mount Fuji were major symbols of imperialism in Japanese fine art especially during wartime<sup>5</sup>, the content of this passage, at least the part copied in the notebook, seems to have no hidden intention as a propaganda of imperialism.

#### **#5. Peach Tree (Kōda Rohan 幸田露伴)**

A peach tree is like an uneducated yokel who has grown old and lost any worldly ambitions, who can get drunk with a bowl or two of the local brew, and who would burst into laughter just by talking about trivial matters. It has a strong rural flavor mingled with bit of down-to-earthness. It pleases us in that it has no intention of being pretentious or showy. Sometimes, across a river, one may be in full bloom at the back of a village shrouded in mist; sometimes one may be blooming around a small house at the bottom of a cliff where a spring breeze gently sprawls. These are all sceneries replete with refined tastes. Someone has once criticized it as being too unsophisticated. Maybe he is just like a boy despising his parents as illiterate after learning a few words. How can people be so uncultured? Absurd!

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<sup>5</sup> Li Su-chu, *Expressing 'Something' of an Era: An Analysis of Chen Cheng-po's Paintings*, Taipei: ARTouch Family, 2012. 李淑珠《表現出時代的「Something」—陳澄波繪畫考》臺北：典藏藝術家庭，2012。

#34. Dry Leaves in an Old Temple (Anonymous)

**Original**

It was probably time for evening service. When a bell rang, priests started to walk towards the temple from their scattered quarters. Vivid were the colors of their robes that glowed in the setting sunshine. The saying “more than the flowers of February” should justly apply to such a scenery. While I was reciting poems about landscapes such as “Reining it in on the peak of letters”, an evening mist and a sudden shower arrived and scattered dry leaves on the ground, which were then quickly swept away by the wind. I felt as if I was “Mooring a boat off the sea of words”. For this, I cannot help but let out a sigh...

**With comments on the embedded classics and translation of *tanka* in verse**

It was probably time for evening service. When a bell rang, priests started to walk towards the temple from their scattered quarters. Vivid were the colors of their robes that glowed in the setting sunshine. The saying “redder than the flowers of February” should justly apply to such a scenery. [This was borrowed from a line in the poem *Mountain Trip* 山行 by Du Mu 杜牧: The color of leaves touched by the frost is redder than flowers of February]. While I was reciting poems about landscapes such as “Reining it in on the peak of letters, the flash of a white colt” [From the poem *Autumn Has Not Yet Left the Realm of Poetry* 秋未出詩境 by Ōe no Mochitoki 大江以言, 955-1010], an evening mist and a sudden shower arrived and scattered dry leaves on the ground, which were then quickly swept away by the wind. I felt as if I was “Mooring a boat off the sea of words, the sound of red leaves<sup>6</sup>” For this, I cannot help but let out a sigh.

Maple leaves of colors shall be pale,  
Resembling human lives of daily toil,  
Soon blown away by storm and gale,  
Fall and wither, returning to dust and soil.  
(A *tanka* translated as rhyme having 5 meters)

Deeply moved was I because of the circumstances.

#112. A Summer Morning (Ōwada Takeki 大和田建樹, see Fig. 5 for one of his textbooks.)

My child is working barefoot with our maid to change the water of the goldfish pond. The sounds of washing a melon with water and slicing it came from the kitchen. Preparation for the morning is quite stirring. As I have just ended comparing, since dawn, different

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<sup>6</sup> The translation of 文峰案響白駒景，詞海艤舟紅葉聲 is from Steininger, Brian, *Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan: Poetics and Practice*, Harvard East Asian Monographs, 401. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017.



versions of an essay, I will begin airing my books. The wind is still cool, and the sun has not risen over the foliage.

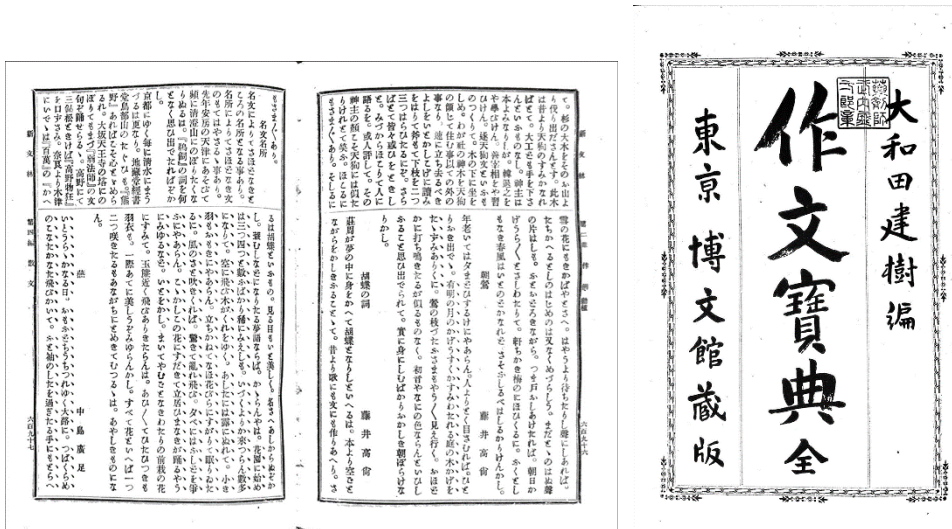


Fig. 5: A composition textbook by Ōwada Takeki published in 1897 by Hakubunkan. The original of the essay #14 with the title “Words About Butterflies (胡蝶の詞) and the front page of the textbook (right).

### Plants and animals familiar to common people in Japan

The subjects of the sketches Chen Cheng-po copied as examples of plants and animals familiar to the average Japanese are quite varied. For example, a toad jumping at willow sprigs as a man with an umbrella is watching is quite well-known because it has been the picture on one of the Japanese playing cards *Hanafuda* since the mid-Meiji era until today (Fig. 6). *Hanafuda* or “flower cards” are traditionally used for gambling by the common people of Japan. We are not sure whether Chen Cheng-po had ever played with these cards because he was so concentrated in drawing and other studies when he was in Tokyo, and had refrained from drinking alcohol, smoking, or gambling during his lifetime.

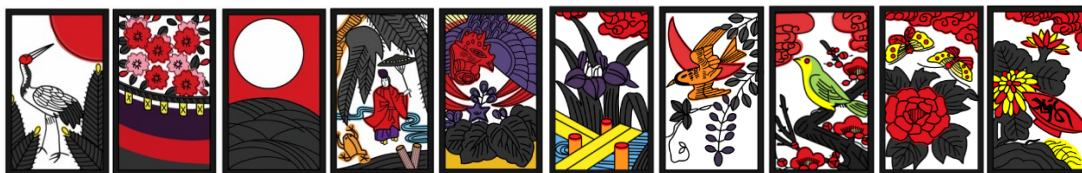


Fig. 6: Ten of the 48 *Hanafuda* playing cards. The fourth from the left corresponds to the episode of a toad and calligrapher Ono no Michikaze described in Essay No. 1.

We cannot fully explain all the sketches in the *Collection*. Let us examine the plants and animals that appear in *Hanafuda* as examples of living things familiar to the Japanese, so that we know the extent in which they appear in the notebook.

Table 1: Plants and animals in the *Collection* featured in *Hanafuda* (花札)

January	pine tree (松) #17, 19, 24, 29, 36, 40, 48, 49, 52, 70, 78, 88, 96, 126; crane (鶴) #1.
February	plum (梅) #51, 55, 69, 104, 126; nightingale (鶯) #48, 50, 55, 70, 96, 131.
March	cherry blossom (櫻) #6, 47, 51, 52, 55, 69, 86, 104, 108, 126, 131.

April	wisteria (藤) #69, 104, 126; cuckoo (杜鵑、郭公) #76, 106.
May	iris (菖蒲) #104.
June	peony (牡丹) #6, 7, 126; butterfly (蝶) #14, 48, 85, 96.
July	bush clover (萩) #82; wild pig (猪) absent.
August	pampas grass (芒) #11; wild goose (雁) #32, 79, 114.
September	chrysanthemum (菊) #3, 6, 8, 76, 85, 110, 113, 122, 126.
October	crimson foliage (紅葉) Nos. 33, 34, 47, 76, 81, 85, 102, 126; deer (鹿) #76.
November	willow (柳) #1, 9, 12, 21, 25, 43, 55, 69, 96, 104, 126; frog (蟾) #1, 108.
December	paulownia (桐) #110, 126; phoenix (鳳凰) absent.

### Debt and poverty

There are two essays having the same #47. Perhaps there was a long interval after Chen Cheng-po had copied the first one. From then onwards, his interest was enlarged to cover human societies, history, economy, and politics rather than focusing on the pursuit of natural beauty.

All of a sudden, in #61 and #62, the contents are business writings: an IOU written by a money borrower and by his joint surety. This could be the underlying reason: Chen Cheng-po's mother died when he was very young, and when his father passed away in 1909, he had begun living with his grandmother. Pursuing a four-year course of study in Taipei for which tuition fee was exempted, he already knew the taste of poverty. It was natural of him to make copies of such business writings as part of his training in writing correct Japanese.

He also copied an essay giving advice for asking a debt, written as a humorous short story (#92) although the author, Tokutomi Sohō, was a journalist-historian. In the story, a young gentleman living in a city was receiving a visitor. He was irritated by the long conversation about trivial matters. Totally exhausted after several hours, he nevertheless pretended to listen. Suddenly, he was awakened when the visitor said "I'd like to ask you a favor" and realized that the visitor came to ask him for a loan. The author concluded that serious business talks should be straightforward, and never masked by pleasantries.

As mentioned in Section A, Chen Cheng-po had copied four articles twice and gave them different numbers, showing that these were articles of his concern even after certain intervals. The first three pairs are short articles, and the last pair—#67 and #103—was written by Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉, the founder of Keio Gijuku University whose image is currently on the Japanese ¥10,000 bill.

#67 (=103) Being Well-fed and Well-clothed is Not Enough by Fukuzawa Yukichi, an abstract of which is given as follows.

The most persistent and harsh human desire is to acquire money. Even an old man or woman of 80 will cling to their money presumably because of five reasons: 1) for the welfare of their offspring; 2) not to reduce the inherited riches, if any, from their ancestors; 3) to be known to the world even after one's death; 4) to enjoy authority and honor over others, such as learned men or political leaders; and 5) to challenge the difficulty of competing with other rich people. Although such reasons may sound vulgar and childish from the viewpoint of a philosopher, raising capital is useful and necessary for any kind of industrial enterprise. Thus, the greed of capitalists will end up benefiting common people in the end.

In “Causes of Poverty” (#93), Tsubouchi Shōyō, one of the earliest novelists of the Meiji Era, insisted that people fall into poverty mainly because of a lack of will and perseverance. Comparing their small income with that of the rich, poor people would complain and participate in social movements with only a shallow understanding of them. In the end, they become more and more estranged from their community and become poorer. Kuga Katsunan, a journalist, wished that leaders who were pillars of Japanese society would be like English gentlemen: gifted with special talents, high ideas, keen wisdom and learning, and also enough property (On Human Characters, #97). There are articles that deal with the right ways of borrowing money (#61, #62, #92), and give a contrast of the rich and the poor. Since Chen Cheng-po's family were not well off when he studied at the National Language School, he might have much interest in this problem, and it was natural if he dreamt of becoming a rich gentleman after his graduation. The texts chosen by Chen Cheng-po, however, seem to push him towards more puritan attitudes with no fear of poverty or persecution in pursuit of justice.

### **Social and political justice**

There are essays collected by Chen Cheng-po that could have pushed him towards taking actions in social and political justice rather than calmly sketching natural beauty or being bothered by earning money. The following essay encouraged him to pay no attention to judgment from contemporary rulers and people.

#107. On Reward and Punishment, and Praise and Censure (an abstract), by Nakamura Masanao  
中村正直

Since extraordinary persons are always beyond the understanding and customs of the people of the time, these geniuses will be distrusted, and ruling kings will often persecute them, throw them in prison and even kill them as punishment. But these rulers will fade out with the passage of time, and then the honor of those masters and geniuses once

expelled and persecuted would be restored and will last forever. Western people called this phenomenon the “revenge of history.” So, I tell you youngsters to be ambitious and study hard so that you master a science or art subject depending on your talent and benefit the whole world. Even if you are unknown and get no appraisal from your contemporaries, heaven will justly reward you.

The author then gave the names of Confucius, Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037-1101), and Martin Luther as examples, and we may now add Chen Cheng-po in this list of great men whose stature in history has been revived (see the Conclusions section).

#89. Advice for Students (an abstract), by Katsu Kaishū 勝海舟

Fearing to die in difficulties is of course to be despised, but regarding quick death as pleasant should not be esteemed either. Since those warriors who brought about the imperial restoration of Meiji have all gone, it will be upon you students to manage the government and to make Japan great in the ten years to come. Mastering one or two subjects will not be enough. Do not be content with sciences dying in small sections. Jump into distress, and polish your real talent between life and death.

#77. You and Me: A Message to Mr. Chōfū, by Takayama Chogyū

An open letter written by Takayama Chogyū/Takayama Rinjirō (樗牛・高山林次郎, 1871-1902) to Chōfū/Anesaki Masaharu (嘲風・姉崎正治, 1873-1949). Chogyū was an eminent opinion leader in literature and fine arts at the end of the Meiji era. He was the earliest introducer of German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) to Japan, and was the most-read writer of his time for a wide range of humanity topics. When the author died at the age of 31, Chōfū took up the task of editing and publishing Chogyū's corpus twice. Later in Tokyo, Chen Cheng-po bought the first volume of Chogyū's corpus titled “*Aesthetics and History of Art*”, and carefully read it through as explained later in Section 4. The open letter was published in the journal *Taiyō* (太陽) edited by Chogyū in 1901, a year before he passed away (Fig. 7).

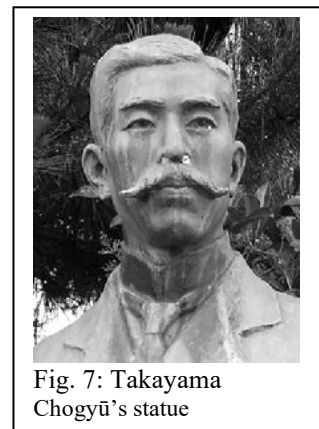


Fig. 7: Takayama Chogyū's statue

Between you and me, we don't have to mention what has happened recently. Based on our self-awareness, we have the duty to construct our own world. But, as you understand, this world is difficult to bring about. At least in our own country, we would not be easily understood. It is only true that, where there is a will, there is a real existence. So long as you and I are in this world, nothing can obstruct our cause. So, we should have confidence in each other. No matter how hard *vairambhaka* is blowing, our persistence shall prevail simply because we are guided by the light of our belief. What kind of kings

can threaten our independence? Sharing this realization, I sincerely hope that together we can settle in the place where life leads us.

Near the end of the *Collection*, in essay #128, Chogyū encourages his students to make the best of their summer vacation to throw themselves into the natural environment and absorb the source of vitality for their future. This convinces readers to expand the observation of nature from regarding it as a hobby or mere scientific description to the empowerment for youngsters. We can see a photo in which Chen Cheng-po was instructing his public school pupils happily seated on the grass for live sketches (PH1\_014). Later in 1935, after his return from Alishan, he even declared Nature as his first atelier, one which is inspiring and free of charge (NC2-037).

### **Pleasure of learning and teaching**

#128 Students During Summer Vacation (an abstract), by Takayama Chogyū

During summer vacation, students should go out to make friends with nature. Meet with the grandeur of nature. Nature creates and liberates humanity. It is nature that brings humans and their societies back to the basics. Nature has always been the motivation and the standard for progress.

On the very end of the *Collection*, comes an essay on teaching as a profession. This essay, as extracted below, concludes that a life of a teacher engaging in primary or secondary education of a rural area will be personally the most rewarding. And such a career choice is very important for the nation. This seems to have fitted in very well with the next life stage of Chen Cheng-po after graduation from the National Language School at Taihoku. In April, 1917, he became a teacher of the public school for Taiwanese children in Chiayi, his hometown.

#132. The Pleasure of Educating (an excerpt), Anonymous

Teaching talents nationwide is a supreme pleasure. Even educating less gifted children is a great pleasure. Watching how children grow naturally is a pleasure. And if I can see their progress and development thanks to my strength, it is a great pleasure. I am in charge of the education of this region. If I am aware that I am the person to bring people to goodness and open their wisdom, what else should I feel but pleasure? Education is about working for the welfare of others and is the noblest profession. And I am in charge of educating people. How joyous I shall be! ...Higher education is mostly concerned with teaching the sciences and the arts, whereas the major focus of primary and secondary education is to influence personal formation. Hence, the essence of education exists in primary and secondary schooling. ...No matter how rural your location is, you will enjoy

the pleasure of educating. Life of a teacher is a life filled with pleasure. (Discussion on teachers)

### List of authors

We can count as many as 56 authors named for the essays beside dozens of anonymous writers. Among the authors, the most often copied one was Ōwada Takeki (1857-1910, 大和田建樹), a poet whose name is almost forgotten now except for the lyrics of the “railway songs” (鐵道唱歌). He appears 12 times in the *Collection*. He has written 150 books, and played an important role in promoting teaching composition in schools<sup>7</sup>, and translated many Western songs using his self-taught language abilities. Chen Cheng-po may have consulted some of Ōwada’s textbooks. Figure 5 shows a page in which the text of 14 is printed in one of his books for training composition. The next frequent quoted author, appearing 10 times, was the bestseller novelist Tokutomi Roka (1868-1927). He was the younger brother of Tokutomi Sohō, who wrote essay #92 as mentioned above, and was famous for his ability in nature sketching.

Table 2. Author Names and Profiles in order of their Dates of Death with the Corresponding Essay Numbers in the *Collection*

Author	No.
<b>Authors of the 13th century or before</b>	
Sei Shōnagon (清少納言) 966-1025; writer, poet	11
Zhou Dun-yi (周敦頤) 1017-1073; Confucian scholar	6
Kamo no Chōmei (鴨長明) 1155-1216; poet, essayist	76
<b>Authors of the 18th century</b>	
Enomoto Kikaku (榎本其角) 1661-1707; poet of Haiku	78
Kaibara Ekiken (貝原益軒) 1630-1714; herbal doctor, Confucian scholar	28, 64, 65, 98, 121, 123,
Yanagisawa Kien (柳澤淇園) 1703-1758; literary artist, Chinese poet	66, 68, 99, 100
Miura Baien (三浦梅園) 1723-1789; philosopher, doctor	1
<b>Authors of the 19th century</b>	
Shibano Ritsuzan (柴野栗山) 1736-1807; Confucian scholar, writer	44
Fujii Takanao (藤井高尚) 1764-1840; Japanese classics scholar, poet	14
Hayashi Jyussai (林述齋) 1768-1841; Confucian scholar	105
Takizawa Bakin (滝沢馬琴) 1767-1848; novelist	79,106
Shinozaki Shōchiku (篠崎小竹) 1781-1851; Confucian scholar, calligrapher	42
Nakajima Hirotari (中島廣足) 1792-1864; Japanese classics scholar, poet	25
Inoue Fumio (井上文雄) 1800-1871; poet, Japanese classics scholar	10
Naka Michitaka (那珂通高) 1827-1879; Confucian scholar	119

<sup>7</sup> Oka Toshimichi, Takeki OWADA’s View on Teaching Composition, *Hiroshima Bunkyo Kyōiku*, 10:1-16 (1996) <http://harp.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/h-bunkyo/metadata/2824>

Nakamura Masanao (中村正直) 1832-1891; educator, philosopher	107
Kitamura Tōkoku (北村透谷) 1868-1894; critic, poet	75
Higuchi Ichiyō (樋口一葉) 1872-1896; novelist	90
Katsu Kaishū (勝海舟) 1823-1899; samurai, politician	89
Nakayama Shisei n.d. (中山子西) Meiji era Japanese classics scholar	39
Makita Gyōu (牧田暁雨) n.d. Meiji era writer	18
<b>Authors of 20th Century</b>	
Ōhashi Otowa (大橋乙羽) 1869-1901; novelist, editor	80
Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤諭吉) 1835-1901; Dutch scholar, writer, educator	67, 94, 103
Takayama Chogyū (高山樗牛) 1871-1902; literary critic, philosopher	41, 77, 128
Masaoka Shiki (正岡子規) 1867-1902; poet, sketch writer	122
Ozaki Kōyō (尾崎紅葉) 1868-1903; novelist	83
Ochiai Naobumi (落合直文) 1861-1903; poet, Japanese classics scholar	43
Kuga Katsunan (陸羯南) 1857-1907; political critic, president of a newspaper company	97
Yoda Gakkai (依田學海) 1834-1909; Chinese scholar, literary critic, novelist, playwright	32
Ōwada Takeki (大和田建樹) 1857-1910; poet, lyricist, Japanese classics scholar	21a, 45, 69, 96, 104, 112, 113, 117, 124, 125, 127, 131
Nakamura Shūkō (中村秋香) 1841-1910; Japanese classics scholar, poet	29, 30
Fujioka Sakutarō (藤岡作太郎) 1870-1910; Japanese classics scholar	48
Yamada Bimyō (山田美妙) 1868-1910; novelist, poet, critic	71
Nagatsuka Takashi (長塚節) 1879-1915; poet, novelist	84
Tsukahara Ryōshū (塚原蓼洲) 1848-1917; novelist	81
Takatsu Kuwasaburō (高津楸三郎) 1864-1921; educator, Japanese classics scholar	74
Ikebe Yoshikata (池邊義象) 1861-1923; Japanese classics scholar, poet	129
Ōmachi Keigetsu (大町桂月) 1869-1925; poet, essayist	40
Oguri Fūyō (小栗風葉) 1875-1926; novelist	19, 70
Tokutomi Roka (徳富蘆花) 1868-1927; novelist	21b, 26, 85, 87, 95, 108, 110, 111, 120, 130
Haga Yaichi (芳賀矢一) 1867-1927; Japanese classics scholar	126
Shinpo Banji (新保磐次) 1856-1932; historian, geographer	118
Emi Suiin (江見水蔭) 1869-1934; novelist, editor, adventurer	38
Tsubouchi Shōyō (坪内逍遙) 1859-1935; novelist, critic, translator	23, 24, 36, 93
Shimoda Utako (下田歌子) 1854-1936; educator, poet	72

Chizuka Reisui (遲塚麗水) 1867-1942; newspaper reporter, writer	2
Shimazaki Tōson (島崎藤村) 1872-1943; poet, novelist	91
Kanamori Tsūrin (金森通倫) 1857-1945; religious and pastor	109
Tomoda Nobutake (友田宜剛) 1868-1946; teacher in military school	22, 37
Kōda Rohan (幸田露伴) 1867-1947; novelist	4, 5
Kojima Usui (小島烏水) 1873-1948; mountain climber, essayist, literary critic	88
Tokutomi Sohō (徳富蘇峰) 1863-1957; journalist, philosopher, critic, historian	27, 35, 92
Arai Munirō (新井無二郎) 1875-1959; Japanese classics scholar of Yamaguchi	114
Nishiyama Chikuhin (西山筑濱) n.d.; writer at the end of the Meiji era	73
Horiuchi Shinsen (堀内新泉) 1873-n.d.; novelist, poet, newspaper reporter	17
Hasebe Aiji (長谷部愛治) n.d.; Taisho era writer	18
Anonymous authors	7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, 33, 34, 46, 47, 47bis, 49-63, 82, 101, 102, 115, 116, 132

### C. Related materials

#### Language fluency during Japanese rule

Four years after Chen Cheng-po had started his *Collection Notebook*, a prominent Buddhist abbot, Ōtani Kōzui (1876-1948), who worked both for Sun Wen (aka Sun Yat-sen) and for the Governor-General's Office of Taiwan, and whose villa has been recently restored in Kaohsiung, pointed out that no Japanese was actually spoken by Taiwan islanders, and warned of it as a peril for the Japanese Empire.

Nowhere in Taiwan, after 20 years of its colonization, can we communicate in Japanese. Even in Taihoku, Japanese is heard spoken only by those from the mainland, to say nothing of other regions. We should be really astonished to see how idle the administrations have been since the beginning of the colonization of Taiwan. However you may rejoice yourself by calling it an imperial territory or insisting on the self-sufficiency of the new land, who would know that a fierce fire is burning at our feet?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ōtani Kōzui (大谷光瑞), Chapter 27: Ruling Taiwan (臺灣の統治), in *The Perils of the Empire*, (帝國の危機), 135 pages, Min-yūsha (民友社) (1919).



Later, in the last days of WWII, Japanese was quite well spoken by the Taiwanese, who used it in combination with various local languages. The following is an example of the experience of the family of Lee Tze-Fan 李澤藩 (1907-1989), one of the artists mentored by Ishikawa Kinichirō. They had fled the US-China joint bombardment of Shinchu and evacuated to the eastern hillside. There, they shared a farm house with other people for months until the war and colonization were over.

...Everyone seemed friendly to each other. Although the Liu farmers were Hakka people, they also spoke fluent Fukienese (our family's native language). The city farmer's family was Fukienese, but they spoke Hakka language quite well also. So there was no problem in communication. Of course, as Japanese was the official language of the land at that time, we could also communicate in Japanese.<sup>9</sup>

### **Financial Situation of Chen Cheng-po**

An outline of Chen Cheng-po's education and work can be deduced from the numerous documents archived by the Foundation (these documents are identified by codes beginning with the two capital letters ID). On March 28, 1913, upon his graduation from Chiayi Public School, Chen Cheng-po was awarded second prize for diligence. He also received a special award from the National Language School on March 25, 1917 for attending all classes during his four years' study. It is apparent that he was both healthy and hardworking during his school days in Taiwan.

When Chen Cheng-po successfully became an instructor (訓導) in Chiayi Public School, his starting monthly salary in April 1917 was 17 yen, which was gradually increased to 22 yen by January 1920 when he was promoted to be a tutor (教諭). His salary was suddenly doubled to 52 yen in April 1921 and, in April 1922, it was raised to 54 yen. At the end of December every year, he would receive a bonus for diligence from the Governor General's Office of Taiwan. The sum was 15 yen in 1917, 23 yen in 1918, and 30 yen in 1919. From 1920 onward, the bonus was awarded in the name of Tainan Province; 74 yen in 1920, 80 yen in 1921 and 1922, 73 yen in 1923, and 110 yen on March 11, 1924. The last bonus was given when he resigned from his post. Thus, his annual remuneration package started from 195 yen in 1917 to 902 yen in 1923, when he decided to resign and embark on his second ambition in Tokyo.

Since Chen Cheng-po's annual income as a public school teacher had been augmented by as much as 4.6 times in only six years, he could expect his income to grow steadily if only he continued to work with diligence and devotion.

Drawing in oil paint indeed needed a lot of money in those days. This is demonstrated by an invoice to Chen Cheng-po from a stationery shop in Tokyo, dated December 1921. He smeared

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<sup>9</sup> Lee Yuan-chuan (李遠川), My wartime experience: Life during the evacuation from Shinchu (戦争中の経験：新竹からの疎開生活) *Yōjubunka* (榕樹文化) Nos. 75-76 (to be published in 2022).

each of the 15 colors of imported oil paints he bought on this invoice. A tube of oil paint costed between 25 sen (a quarter yen) and 65 sen, and a three-legged stool for sitting outdoors costed 2.45 yen. A total of 9.30 yen including postage, amounted to about 17% of his monthly salary at that time.<sup>10</sup> He could afford the cost, but he could no longer enjoy “the pleasure of teaching [in rural areas]” a phrase in the very last essay (#132) he copied in the *Collection*.

Although we do not precisely know how Chen Cheng-po managed to sustain both his new life as a student in Tokyo and that of his family left in Chiayi with his income, apparently he and his wife had decided to tighten their belts for a new stage of Chen Cheng-po’s education. It was important for Chen Cheng-po that school fees were exempted for Taiwanese both in the National Language School and in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.

In 1928 or 1929, a newspaper in Taiwan reported the news of Chen Cheng-po in China. It revealed that he was far from being well off.

Mr. Chen Cheng-po, leading oil-painter from Chiayi, intended to visit Beijing with what little money he has. When he reached Shanghai, however, he came down with diphtheria. Luckily, with the help of his painter friends, he was rescued and hospitalized. But, within days, his meager funds were further depleted...(NC2\_015)

His wife managed to send him money while he was in Tokyo and in his early days in Shanghai. He wrote in a postcard dated October 22, 1929 from Tokyo to his eldest daughter at home, who still needed hiragana to help her out with reading difficult Chinese characters.

Daddy has again been successfully selected for the Teiten [Imperial Exhibition of Fine Arts or Imperial Exhibition for short] with the painting I drew at West Lake. It is now on exhibit at the Ueno Museum where many people come to visit every day. Let’s talk other things! Tell Mommy that the money she remitted to Shanghai and Tokyo has been received. See you again. (LE2\_017)

Chen Cheng-po held a solo exhibition in Chiayi Municipal Hall during July 8-10, 1927, in which he exhibited his works including the first painting ever selected from Taiwan for the Imperial Exhibition held a year before (a circular LE2\_022 dated July 6, 1927 showed a list of some 60 of his paintings).

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<sup>10</sup> The paints were valuable to Chen Cheng-po from the beginning. This could be the underlying reason for his resisting the contemporary trend of drawing on bigger and bigger canvasses with no stronger impact than drawing carefully on small ones (January 1935, a newspaper interview on the recollection of the painting circles in Taiwan, NC5\_005-001). Later, on June 1, 1940, Chen Cheng-po published an essay titled “I am Oil Paint.” This was a narrative of a paint to explain how it survived processing and quality check, and asked viewers to bear in mind its untold hardships until a painting could enjoy widespread acclaim (*Taiwan Art* No 4: p.20, BC3\_24-0012).

In 1930, Chen Cheng-po drew an oil painting on a request from former Governor-General, Kamiyama Mitsunoshin (上山滿之進), who was forced to leave his office after an inquiry for an unsuccessful assassination of an imperial family member during a visit to Taichung. It is noteworthy that, while Kamiyama was in office as the 14th Governor-General (July 1926-June 1928), he inaugurated the Taiwan Arts Exhibition on October 30, 1927. Out of the 13,000 yen raised from all over Taiwan for his retirement, he decided to use 1,000 yen for an oil painting by Chen Cheng-po as his personal souvenir of the beautiful island and its peoples he so much loved. For Chen Cheng-po, 1,000 yen was a fortune, a sum greater than the annual salary and bonus he received as a public school teacher for the last time in 1923-24. Kamiyama donated the remaining 12,000 yen to the newly created Taihoku Imperial University for studying the languages and genealogy of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan. But that is another story.<sup>11</sup>

On February 18, 1932, *Tainan New Post* 臺南新報 reported his safe evacuation from the 128 Incident in Shanghai. His family, having returned earlier, sent him money to cover the cost of his return to Taiwan.

The painter Chen Cheng-po, whose accidental death has been reported, is safe. He has found refuge with his acquaintance in the French Concession. Having received 200 yen sent to him for his travel, he will be back in Taiwan soon.

Even with occasional incomes from selling his paintings, Chen Cheng-po seemed to remain poor after his return to Taiwan (see Section 4C for his son's reminiscence). In a postcard he sent to his eldest daughter from Tokyo dated November 18, 1936, he wrote,

I don't have enough money to cover my stay, so I may return earlier. Send me some quickly if you have any. (LE2\_071)

#### D. The Relation between the *Collection* and Chen Cheng-po's life

We might now raise the following questions:

- 1) What made him copy the essays in the *Collection*?
- 2) Did someone order or advise him to do so?
- 3) On what criteria were the essays chosen and arranged in the order shown?
- 4) When did he copy essay #132, the last one in the notebook?
- 5) Were the contents somehow related to his lifetime ambitions?

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<sup>11</sup> Izaō Tomio, Yoshinaga Nobuyuki, & Ankei Yuji, Kamiyama Mitsunoshin and Chen Cheng-po: Towards a friendship between Yamaguchi and Taiwan, *Yamaguchi Prefectural University* (2017). Accessible on <https://www.yamaguchi-ebooks.jp/?bookinfo=kendaicoc7taiwan>

Answers:

- 1) Chen Cheng-po was eager to master the skills of reading and writing elegant Japanese. It might have begun on his own initiative as many people like to start a diary on the first day of the year. But, unlike those whose passion lasts for only three days, he continued it for more than a year following the advice of essay #1.
- 2) Compiling such a notebook did not seem to constitute part of his homework. Most of the essays are descriptions of nature, and it is most probable that Ishikawa Kinichirō, Chen Cheng-po's lifetime mentor, suggested him to do so as a part of his training to observe carefully and illustrate with words before drawing something.
- 3) Most of the essays are literal depiction of nature, and the choices might be suggestions from a teacher. But gradually, Chen Cheng-po had selected essays based on his own preference, such as a model IOU, which would never be recommended by a school teacher no matter how poor a student might be.<sup>12</sup> In the latter half of the *Collection*, there appear more and more essays that underline the social and political responsibilities of students who would become future leaders of the country. Since they are not directly related to language learning or fine arts training, we can assume that they are his own selections too. From these, we can deduce Chen Cheng-po's preoccupations when he studied at the National Language School.
- 4) Although there is a date on the cover of the *Collection*, we suspect that Chen Cheng-po had kept working on it for longer than a year. He would not have copied the same essay a second time if he had remembered that he had copied it before. Thus, it can be deduced that he had been maintaining this notebook for such a long time that he had forgotten what he had copied down previously.
- 5) The many examples of fine Japanese writings had definitely enhanced Chen Cheng-po's skill of observation before drawing. Meanwhile, as examined in detail in Section 2B above, his knowledge in Chinese classics had also helped improve his proficiency in written Japanese. This notebook hinted about a tireless learner of art (#1) growing to be a teacher happily working in rural elementary education (#132). We cannot overlook the few essays probably selected by Chen Cheng-po himself that insist on social and political justice at the cost of money, reputation, or even life. These essays look as if they have predicted his execution in the 228 Incident, and the current restoration and reappraisal of his reputation through a "revenge of history" (#107).

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<sup>12</sup> Professor Takasaka Tomotake (高坂知武), who remained at National Taiwan University after the war, made it a rule to help his students in all ways possible, including providing rooms for them to live in his house, keeping them warm with an electric heater he invented, and, if necessary, lending them money without charging interest or setting a repayment time (recollection of Prof. Lee Yuan-chuan 李遠川).

## 2. Philosophy and Education Notebook (1926-1927)

### A. Outline

This notebook (Nb02) is a compilation of the notes Chen Cheng-po jotted down in classes when he was a student in the (art) teacher training program at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts beginning in April 1924. Upon his graduation after three years, he studied two more years as a graduate student until March 1929.

On the cover of this notebook, he wrote in four lines “Second Semester / Philosophy / Teacher 3 / Chen”. “Teacher 3” meant that he was in his third year in the undergraduate program. The 112 pages of notes cover the following five subjects: 1) philosophy, 41 pages; 2) pedagogy, 31 pages; 3) characteristics of Buddhist paintings, 2 pages; 4) list of Japanese paint names, 2 pages, and lastly, 5) educational psychology, 31 pages.

At the beginning of the notes on philosophy and pedagogy, Chen Cheng-po wrote the name of the lecturer, Takeda Shin-ichi, (1896-1964, 武田信一) on the respective pages. The names of Takeda Shin-ichi and other teachers can be found in the list of classes and their staff as of April 1926 (see Table 3 in Section C below).

Odd enough, according to Table 3, philosophy was not part of the curriculum for art teacher training. The table shows that Takeda Shin-ichi was in charge of two hours of Morals, and four hours of Pedagogy & Psychology. Although the curriculum looked as if Takeda gave a total of six hour of classes per week, these classes were evenly distributed to three semesters in the year as will be explained in Section B. Thus, we can assume that Chen Cheng-po attended a class of philosophy (1st of the five subjects mentioned above) given under the name of “Morals”, a class of pedagogy (2nd subject), and a class of educational psychology (5th subject), of which the latter two belonged to the “Pedagogy & Psychology” course.

Likewise, “characteristics of Buddhist paintings” (3rd subject) might have belonged to the class of the “History of Oriental Art” given by associate professor Tanabe Kōji, and the list of Japanese paint names (4th subject) was probably related to the “Japanese Painting” class for which professor Hirata Eiji was in charge. The short notes of two pages for each of these two subjects may cover only a part of the lectures, whereas the three classes taught by Takeda Shin-ichi seemed to be fully covered in Chen Cheng-po’s notes.

Takeda Shin-ichi was a lecturer at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts from January 11, 1926 to March 31, 1929. Before him, it was Sugawara Kyōzō (1881-1967, 菅原教造) who taught Morals, Pedagogy, and Esthetics in the art teacher training program. Since his retirement on July 4, 1918, these three courses were not offered until Chen Cheng-po and his classmates became the third year students, when Takeda Shin-ichi, a post-graduate student of philosophy

studying at the Imperial University of Tokyo, joined the Tokyo School of Fine Arts as a part-time lecturer.<sup>13</sup>

Chen Cheng-po was apparently eager to write down every word as spoken on the podium by the lecturer. Nevertheless, hastiness resulted in errors and confused homonyms, which are a headache to us who are desperately trying to figure out what Takeda Shin-ichi originally meant. Although Chen Cheng-po had been training himself in writing good Japanese as evidenced in the *Collection*, names and terms involving the alphabets of English, German, French, Latin, and even Greek were often too difficult for him.

Chen Cheng-po had written down nine dates in this notebook. The earliest was April 27, 1926 (Tuesday) for notes on “Personality” starting on page 52, followed by June 21 (Monday) for notes on “Purposes of Education” starting on page 72. Both of these topics were covered in the Pedagogy class that was given in the first semester. The other seven dates were all Wednesdays beginning with September 29, 1926 and ending on December 8 which was written on the last line of page 41, where Chen Cheng-po marked “the end of the second semester.” It looks like that the page order has been muddled so that notes for the second semester were put in front to those for the first semester. It should also be noted that the contents of pages 79-84 are related to “Educational Psychology” rather than “Pedagogy”, and are recognized as such. Most probably the Educational Psychology class was held in the third semester of Chen’s third year beginning in January 1927 although no date had been given on the pages concerned.

## B. Scope

Lectures on philosophy were given in the Morals class, and could roughly be divided into four sections: 1) the origin of philosophy, 2) the relationship between philosophy and religion, 3) the relationship between philosophy and nature, and 4) the relationship between art and philosophy. The fourth section comprised 18 pages out of the total of 41 pages of notes on philosophy. The dates show that as many as four out of the eight lectures given dealt with the relationship between art and philosophy.

As for the first three sections, the notebook was filled with the names of ancient Greek poets and philosophers: Hesiodos, Thales, Socrates, Platon, Aristoteles, etc. They were followed by introductions to French and German philosophers who laid the foundations of classical and modern philosophy: René Descartes (1596-1650), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915), Henri Bergson (1859-1941), Karl Joel (1864-1934), etc. Thus, Chen Cheng-po had been

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<sup>13</sup> Takeda later taught ancient and medieval philosophy at Taisho University, the University of Tokyo, and Hokkaido University.

introduced to the beginning of philosophy in Greece, the fundamentals of philosophical thinking, and many of the basic notions in European philosophical traditions.

In the fourth section, beginning on page 28, Takeda explained the theory of “ideas” based on his study of Greek philosophy as a post-graduate student at the Imperial University of Tokyo, and he taught the class the concept of beauty based on the Esthetics of Platonism.

How was it possible to teach Greek philosophy in a Morals class? The official record shows that Takeda Shin-ichi had ordered a textbook for his class, the “Outline of Ethics” by Kuwaki Gen-yoku (1874-1946, 桑木巖翼著・倫理學概説), but apparently said nothing on that during his lectures.

Contrary to such flexible teaching in the Morals class, Takeda’s Pedagogy and Psychology class followed a more rigid scope determined by the curriculum of the school: it imposed that the class must include Theory and Application of Education and Psychology, History of Education, and School Hygiene.

According to this philosophy notebook, Takeda had taught the fundamental significance of pedagogy, the theory of evolution, the development of intelligence, deviation values in statistics, and gender differences. Many graphs and examples were given. In spite of this, Takeda could insert his speciality into the explanation of the fundamental significance of pedagogy: he had given a contrast between Socrates and Sophists, followed by Kant's explanation of personality. Even though his lecture was based on the theory of Kant’s pedagogy, these 10-page section can be read to mean both: an overview of the history of philosophy and that of pedagogy. It seemed that Takeda was already beginning his lectures to be given on the second semester of that year.

From page 57, there were lectures on the history of modern philosophy as the main theories of pedagogy as Takeda introduced the works of Descartes, Kant, Locke, Schopenhauer, and Rousseau, etc. Apart from his speciality, however, Takeda also taught the theory of Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) on innate crimes as well as eugenics by Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), a cousin of Charles Darwin, and on the possible development of personality and intelligence through education.

Chen Cheng-po’s notes on the characteristics of Buddhist paintings and the names of Japanese paints, consisting of only two pages each, had no connection with previous and subsequent pages. Here is an extract from page 77: the arts of the Tendai (天臺) school of Buddhism have been developed to have the following characteristics: esthetic, decorative, delicate, expensive, noble, and fantastic. The list of paints for Japanese glue painting contained more than 30 names sorted into color and materials groups including gold and red corals. They were probably written in this notebook simply because he did not have on hand the notebook for his History

of Oriental Arts and Japanese Painting class. To these days, these are the rare evidences that he had seriously studied Japanese and Oriental art although his main interest was Western painting.

### **Contents of the Philosophy and Education Notebook**

The following are the contents in this notebook. The number in parentheses after each topic denotes their page numbers (front cover counted as the page zero).

#### 1) Philosophy

**Introduction to philosophy** (1-5): Surprise at the world (1), Relationship between self and the world (3), A consistent description of the world (4).

**Ancient Greece** (5-21): Ancient Greek culture (5), Philosophy of nature (8), The concept of cause (9), Difference between mythological explanation and cause (10), Difference between natural philosophy and “philosophy” (10), Definition of philosophy (11), Differences between philosophy and religion (12), Self-consciousness that prescribes the world (13), Unifying function of consciousness (15), Pure thought (16), Essence of religion (18), Basic backgrounds of religion and philosophy (21).

**Medieval philosophy** (22-23): Relationship between god and nature (23).

**Art and philosophy** (24-45): Relationship between art and philosophy (29), Problem setting of art (30), Contrast between art and natural science (31), Objectivity of art and “idea” (32), Relationship between painting and idea (33), Applying the aesthetics of Kant (34), Differences between painting and photography (34), Differences between idea in philosophy and idea in art (35), Explanation of Platonism’s essence (36), Explanation of idea (37), Recognizing idea (39), Idea of beauty (40), Rationality of art (42), Art and love (43), Philosophy of art (44), What artists should do (45).

#### 2) Pedagogy

**Fundamental significance of education and an introduction to pedagogy** (46-56): Definition of education (46), Education and questioning (46), Socrates as a questioner (46), Knowing ignorance (47), Significance of questioning (47), Personality (48), Developing personality (49), Meaning of "education" (49), Purpose of education (50), Distinction between person and personality (51), Free will and autonomy (52), Four methods of education (55), Three elements of education (56).

**Relationship between pedagogy and other disciplines** (57-70): Relationship between education and art (57), Relationship between education and ethics (58), Education and scientific explanations (58), Difference between norms and nature (60), Comparison of Kant and Locke (61), Explanation of recognition from the function of reasoning and understanding (62), Rousseau's explanation of education (63), Natural selection and education (65), Genetics and



education (66), Schopenhauer's theory of education (67), Genetic eugenics (68), Physiognomy (69), Scientific education and genetics (70).

**Purposes of education (71-76):** Purposes of education (71), Cultivating personality (71), Two standpoints of education (72), Education for improving society (73), Society as others (75), Education for harmony between individuals and others (76), Non-nationalistic education (76).

3) Characteristics of Buddhist paintings (77-79): Fujiwara era (77), Outline of Buddhism (78), Outline of esoteric Buddhism 密教 (79)

4) List of paint names for Japanese glue painting (85-86)

5) Educational psychology (87-104, 79-84):

**Educational methodology (87):** Three methods for education (88).

**Significance and nature of intelligence (89-111):** Intelligence as a comprehensive ability (90), Intelligence as creativity (90), Intelligence as a response capability (91), Intelligence as a general ability (92), Measuring intelligence (93), Measuring intelligence according to age (94), Examples of intelligence tests (95), problems in intelligence tests (99), difference in intelligence between men and women (104).

**About intelligence (79-84):** Low intelligence (79), Difficulty in defining low intelligence and definition from each standpoint (80), Intelligence test (81), Mental age (83).

Table 3: Classes and Staff in Art Teacher Training Course (April 1928)

Class 擔任學科目	hours per week 每週時 間數	Title 官職名	Name 姓名	Remarks 備考
Painting (Japanese Painting) 繪畫 (日本畫)	49	Professor 教授	Hirata Eiji 平田榮二	Department Chief (主任)
		Assistant Professor 助教授	Tanabe Itaru 田邊至	
		do. 同	Matsuda Yoshiyuki 松田義之	Administrator of art teacher training course 圖畫師範科事務
		do. 同	Takahashi Yoshio 高橋吉雄	do. 同
Handicraft 手工	3	Professor 教授	Mizutani Tetsuya 水谷鐵也	
Handicraft Teaching Method	3	Assistant Professor	Matsuda Yoshiyuki 松田義之	

手工教授法		助教授		
Handicraft 手工	9	do. 同	Takahashi Yoshio 高橋吉雄	
		do. 同	Matsuda Yoshiyuki 松田義之	
Teaching method & teaching practice 教授法、教授練習	6	do. 同	Takahashi Yoshio 高橋吉雄	
do. 同	2	do. 同	Matsuda Yoshiyuki 松田義之	
Instrument drawing method 用器畫法	4	Assistant Professor 助教授	do. 同	
		Lecturer 講師	Suzukawa Shin-ichi 鈴木信一	
do. 同	2	Lecturer 講師	Suzukawa Shin-ichi 鈴木信一	
Calligraphy 習字	9	do. 同	Okada Kisaku 岡田起作	
Morals 修身	2	do. 同	Takeda Shin-ichi 武田信一	
Pedagogy and Psychology 教育學及心理學	4	do. 同	do. 同	
History of Oriental Art 東洋美術史	2	Assistant Professor 助教授	Tanabe Kōji 田邊孝次	
History of Western Art 西洋美術史	2	Professor 教授	Yashiro Yukio 矢代幸雄	
Esthetics 美學	2	Lecturer 講師	Murata Ryōsaku 村田良策	
Color studies 色彩學	2	do. 同	do. 同	
Design method 圖案法	2	Professor 教授	Shimada Kaoru 島田佳矣	
English 英語	4	Assistant Professor 助教授	Morita Kamenosuke 森田龜之助	

## C. Related Materials

Table 3 summarizes the information obtained from pages 378-379 in Volume 2 of the *One Hundred Years of the Tokyo University of Fine Arts*, which is accessible from <https://gacma.geidai.ac.jp/y100/>. From this table, we can have an idea of what Chen Cheng-po learnt in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.

### Extracts from a dictionary of philosophy in the 1930s

There are several pieces of paper on which Chen Cheng-po had written down some philosophy terms and their explanations: *noema*, *noesis*, *monade* [monad in English], connotation, extension, etc (BC4\_67-006~8). The explanations were, in large part, copied from the *Iwanami Small Dictionary of Philosophy* (岩波哲學小辭典), first published in 1930 (Fig. 8).<sup>14</sup> This explains Chen Cheng-po's continued interest in philosophy after his graduation from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1929, and may explain why he preferred to keep this notebook on philosophy.

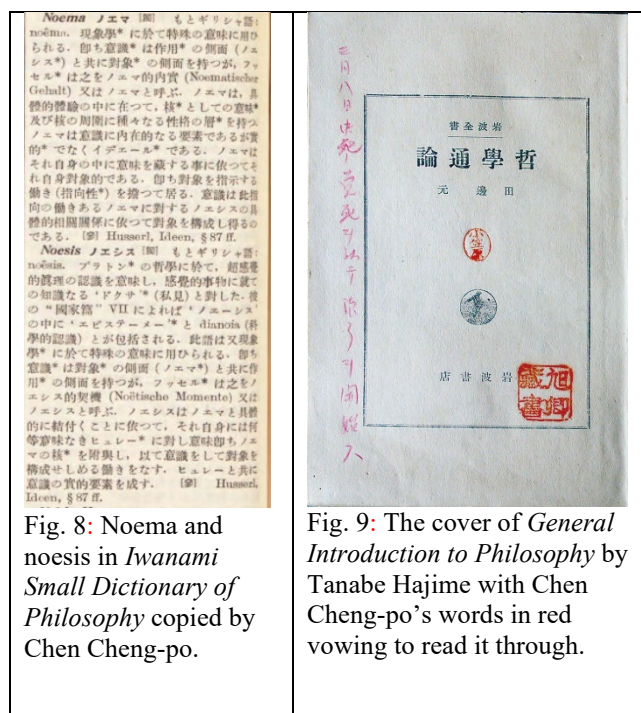


Fig. 8: Noema and noesis in *Iwanami Small Dictionary of Philosophy* copied by Chen Cheng-po.

Fig. 9: The cover of *General Introduction to Philosophy* by Tanabe Hajime with Chen Cheng-po's words in red vowing to read it through.

Fig. 8 shows a pair of Greek terms, *noema* and *noesis*, in the dictionary. To be very concise, *noema* is the content of what is conceived, and *noesis* is the act of conceiving. In copying from this dictionary, Chen Cheng-po might have looked for terms in Husserl's phenomenology in addition to Platonism esthetics for an alternative understanding of his ways of creation.

<sup>14</sup> Downloadable from <https://www.dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1914642>

### **A book of philosophy read after 1942**

Figure 9 is the cover of a book BC4\_67 titled *General Introduction to Philosophy* written by the Japanese philosopher Tanabe Hajime (1885-1962, 田邊元著・哲學通論), published by Iwanami Shoten in 1933.<sup>15</sup> Chen Cheng-po had obtained it second-hand, and a former owner of the copy wrote at the end of the book “Purchased at Kinbundō Bookshop (金文堂) in Fukuoka City on March 13, Year 2602 of the Imperial Era, Year 17 of Showa (1942)”. So, Chen Cheng-po must have acquired this book during wartime or afterward. With a red pencil, he wrote on the cover, “Eighth of March. Begin reading through with do-or-die determination” (三月八日必死ノ覚死(悟)ヲ以テ讀了ヲ開始ス). He read the book with such a zeal that he almost underlined half of the texts and summarized the contents on the margins of numerous pages. Out of a total of 230 pages, up to 170 pages have been highlighted.

These materials, along with the Chogyū’s book on esthetics, are evidences for Chen Cheng-po’s lasting interest in philosophy and esthetics during and after his study in Tokyo, probably continuing until the end of his life.

### **Note on a seminar on the world history of nude art in May 1925**

Chen Cheng-po owned a book BC1\_31 written by Ishikawa Kinichirō titled *European Painting Masters 8: Constable* (Nihon Bijutsu Gakuin, 1921).<sup>16</sup> On a blank page at the back of this book, Chen Cheng-po jotted down some notes on a seminar given by the artist Ōta Samurō (1884-1969, 太田三郎). It was marked the evening of May 15, 1925. Since it was given in the evening of a Friday, the venue seemed to be out of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, most probably in Hongō Painting Institute, where Chen Cheng-po practiced painting in most evenings. The topic of the seminar was history of human nude as fine art. In the seminar, Ōta gave many examples of the nude as fine art in world history. Though the talk involved many place names in Europe and elsewhere which were particularly difficult for Chen Cheng-po to take note correctly, he did not abandon taking notes—even making rough sketches of two nude statues.

Ōta Samurō’s oil painting of a nude woman was selected for the Imperial Exhibition in 1926, one year after Chen Cheng-po attended the seminar. Ōta edited in 1931 six volumes of the *Collection of Nude Arts of the World*, and published his own book in 1934 under the title of *Folklore of Nude and its Art* (the publisher was Heibonsha in both cases). Consulting the latter book, we can conjecture that the word “Korobi” in the phrase “sculptures from the natives of Korobi of South America” in Chen Cheng-po’s note might have been “Columbia” or “Pre-Columbian.” This is a rare substantiation of Chen Cheng-po’s note on the history of art. It tells

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<sup>15</sup> Downloadable from <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1216521>

<sup>16</sup> Downloadable from <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/968018>

us how zealous he was in absorbing new knowledge, even though he had to deal with many unfamiliar terms.

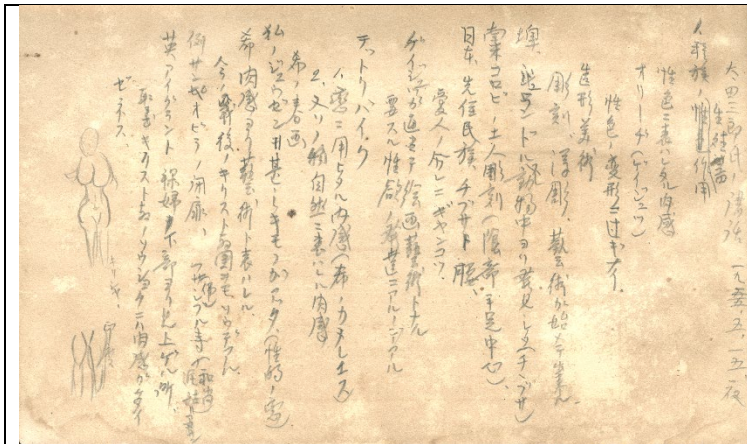


Fig. 10: Note of a seminar on nude art by Ōta Samurō written on a blank page of a book (BC1\_31-005). Place names were written based on Ōta’s French pronunciation.

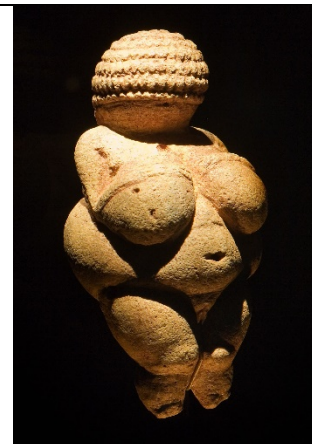


Fig. 11: *Willendorf Venus* from Austria, the first example in the seminar (Wikicommons)

### Ishikawa Kinichirō as Chen Cheng-po’s lifetime mentor

In the preface of the book BC1\_31, in which Chen Cheng-po jotted down notes on a seminar on the world history of nude art, the author Ishikawa Kinichirō wrote about John Constable, the great British pioneer in landscape painting. “Constable was aware of the lack of his technical talent, nevertheless he concentrated on his study of art. This proves that you do not have to be disappointed even if you are unskillful, and ardent endeavors will bring about amazing results...” This message echoes the essay #1 in the *Collection* in Section 1), making us believe that Chen Cheng-po had faithfully followed his mentor’s advice to always work hard to be a great master of art someday.

#### D. Relationship with Chen Cheng-po’s life

What can we read from this notebook?

Chen Cheng-po explained his attitude towards the creation of his art in an interview article in the *Taiwan Xin Min Bao* in 1932 under the heading “Studio Tours (10) Depicting Nude Women / Chen Cheng-po.”

During the summer vacation I came back to Taiwan, and took up the kind offer of Mr. Yang Ying Wu 楊英梧 to use his sitting room as a temporary studio. As you see, every day, I can paint as much as I want and in whatever way I see fit. What I’ve been trying hard to express is the existence of Nature and the images of objects, which is the first point. I also want to deliberate on the scenes which have been projected into my mind, then, after distilling out the essence of these scenes, I’ll capture those fleeting glimpses which are worthy of painting. That is my second point. The third point is to make sure

that my works will always have "something" in them. The above are my attitudes towards painting. (NC2\_024)

These thoughts are quite similar to what was written on pages 31-33 of the Philosophy and Education notebook, the section explaining what artists create.

Artists draw objects as living things: namely, we capture the life of objects in our mind, and to capture the life of objects is to capture their types. What is a type? A type is a common quality among all of its kind that has the same content, and a type should be regarded as having a distinctive characteristic different from other types of beauty. So, to typify means to capture the essential reality of an object. Therefore, it entails deleting impurities, and we will naturally practice certain ways of selecting in order to delete impurities. The act of selecting must include an essence of purpose. Thus, the types work on an artist as nothing but "ideas." It must be essential whether or not an artist is conscious of one's own self as a creator and thereby arrive at a real creation...The "ideas" recognized in such a situation emerge themselves through the sensitivity of a creator. Humankind is nothing but the materialization of "ideas." In short, "ideas" are not drawn by artists; instead "ideas" draw themselves through a painter. (Nb02-033)

Here, we can recognize a similarity between what Chen Cheng-po called "something" and the notion of "ideas" in Platonism philosophy. We may suppose that Chen Cheng-po's attitude to painting had been nurtured by the approach of esthetics and philosophy he had learnt in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.

Chen Cheng-po's Philosophy and Education notebook along with his notes on the margins of books, and the notes written on pieces of paper as introduced at the beginning of Section 2C above, are persuading proofs for his persistent interest in philosophy and esthetics.

### **3. Manuscripts in Sketchbooks (1934-)**

#### **A. Outline**

Apart from two notebooks as described above, Chen Cheng-po occasionally wrote manuscripts in his sketchbooks. The longest is a manuscript reviewing the 15th Imperial Exhibition held in October 1934. As will be explained in Section C below, his mentor Ishikawa Kinichirō praised his persisting efforts that resulted in his success in that exhibition, and advised him to be confident in the way he pursued his studies. So, we may examine his manuscripts for which the published texts remain only in part (Nos. 2 and 3, NC1\_001-002), and it is unknown in which journal or newspaper they were published. We will also introduce some of his published

articles, together with the letters and postcards showing how Chen Cheng-po's style of learning and teaching was developed and maintained.

Writing vertically from right to left lines has been the standard way of writing Japanese. Even today, the majority of Japanese texts are published in this format. Chen Cheng-po exceptionally wrote horizontally in his Philosophy and Education notebook probably because he was copying from the blackboard on which characters were written horizontally for the convenience of writing alphabets. He, however, often wrote vertically from left to right in his sketchbooks. It may seem a bit queer at first glance, but seeing that he might have used the same soft pencils for drawing on sketchbooks, we may understand that it was simply his usual precaution of trying to avoid rubbing the parts he had just written or drawn with his right hand which was holding the pencil.

Anyway, we hope that the texts in sketchbooks and the few examples of his opinions published in a variety of media will give us clues about his thoughts after his graduation from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. We can also be acquainted with the way he taught in Shanghai, and the way he guided his younger friends after he returned to Taiwan in 1933. It is striking that even after his graduation, he continued to study very hard as if he was still in school. The result was amazing: as his mentor Ishikawa Kinichirō wrote to him in 1934, things in the world never happen by mere chance.

## B. Texts

### **How he taught in Shanghai schools**

While Chen Cheng-po was in Shanghai, he once wrote a memorandum in Chinese. It seemed to be a list of advice he had given to each of the watercolor paintings drawn by his students there. Random quotes from this memorandum reveal that the points he made were more or less identical to his comments on the paintings of the 15th Imperial Exhibition as explained later. His advice to beginners was that things should look as they are, before any techniques or designing come into play.

The colors are very good. The composition is not good (the sky and the earth should be even). The lines are too thick.

The tone here is too weak. A little more robust tone is needed. The brushwork is not good.

Remote mountains are painted too close, though the middle ground is good. The places that are not close should be farther away.

Brushwork of grasses is a little messy.

Pay attention to each brush. The reflections in water don't correspond to the things. Be careful of near and far shadows. The colors are too simple.

The staffage figures in human form do not look like humans. Be careful with the drawing of human figures.

You need to be careful when you watch what is the state of nature you see.

The colors are too strong. The scenery is not so simple. If it rains, it has to look like raining.

The clouds are not well painted. Depiction of the blowing wind is acceptable. Spring needs to look like spring. It's the same for winter and summer. The place where the clouds and the mountain summits meet are not well presented.

There is a lack of connection between the top and bottom parts. Colors are not harmonious. Too strong. Be careful with determining viewpoint.

Where is the focus? Think carefully and make a decision before you start painting.

Leave out the bright areas of the watercolor painting first. Gradually add in the dark areas.

The color of the rising sun is wrong.

Sunset needs to look like a sunset. Watercolor paints need not be thick, just apply the paints gently.

Too much red. Cyan is too strong. The color of the sky is too loud; should be lighter.

Watch and determine the right color before painting.

The colors are too bad. The painting of the stones is not bad. The pond water looks like a stone.

What do you want to present? There can't be no central theme. The heaven, the earth and the people in between must be distinct from each other.

Pond, river, and sea water need to be that way.

High altitude area. Plains should have the appearance of plains. Hills should look like hills.

Flowers and trees need to look like flowers and trees. Peony, plum, and miscellaneous flowers need to be different.

Fruits should look like fruits. Pay attention to the nature and weightiness of the bowl. Don't add any non-essential items.

Whether it is a pencil drawing or a pen drawing, think of simple and correct ways of drawing.

How do you take the view of the still life, reflections and other items on the table?



(Extracted from his comments in Chinese MA04-001~003)

### **Comments on the oil paintings in the 15th Imperial Exhibition (1934)**

For paintings he found unsatisfactory, he would write rather straightforward comments somewhat resembling his advice for his students in Shanghai. His manuscript begins this way:

Writing a critique of the Imperial Exhibition forces me a wry smile. Have I not visited it for 2-3 years? Today, I am invited to visit the exhibition earlier than the general public. Needless to say, the Imperial Exhibition and the most popular non-government exhibitions are going quite separate ways. The Imperial Exhibition, generally recognized as the pantheon of fine art, is still working hard to maintain its status, and the venue is filled with the fruits of endeavors of each artist. I will give my impressions here in the order of the exhibition rooms. (SB13-112)

His words of praise were few and directed towards individual artists, whereas he was highly critical of the general lack of studies on the part of the artists. We will quote some of his harsh comments here and omit the names of the artists involved.

### **Examples of bitter criticisms against the lack of study**

#1 *Snow Mountain*: In deep mountains, the snow would be deep. The snow in the foreground should look somewhat transparent. The snow on the trees looks like concrete.

#13 *Mandarin Ducks*: The painting of snow looks unpracticed, and the ducks look flat.

#14 *Airplane*: The separation of colors looks as if color tapes are pasted on.

#18 *Early Summer Window-side*: The human body looks too flat and has no feeling of weightiness, the left hand looks like a woodcarving.

#26 *Sitting in Black Clothes*: Different from his former drawing, the clothes are pressed tight against the body, which looks flat and two-dimensional.

#70 *Cliff*: Rocks should show the hardness of rocks.

#73 *Lakeside of Shikotsu*: Trees in the paddy fields are too close to those in the background or to the mountains. In other words, because there is not enough separation between the trees and the mountain, the painting appears flat.

#148 *Nude Women*: The drawing of the lying figure appears sketchy.

#227 *Chief*: Aboriginal faces should be drawn as such.

#246 *Scenery*: Flat. The roof appears to be flying off anytime.

#254 *Stonemason*: The clouds under the moon look like flying bullets.

### Examples of favorable remarks for drawings including his own

#87 *Early Autumn (Summer) Morning* by Mr. Suzuki Chikuma: Mr. Suzuki first studied Cézanne and Vlaminck, then Picasso until today. Now he has developed his unique style. Seemingly simple, but is so complex that it gives a feeling of greatness.

#89 *Upstairs* by Mr. Nakano Kazutaka: Messrs. Nakano and Suzuki are of comparable caliber, but Mr. Suzuki's work is closer to my feeling.

#252 *Spring at West Lake* by Mr. Chen Cheng-po: The characteristics of fresh green vegetation is well portrayed. His drawing has become more stylish than before. (SB13-117)

### He regarded his own drawing had become more “high collar” and gentler

Here, we cannot overlook the fact that he put the title “Mr.” to his own name. It is possible that he first planned to publish this article by a pseudonym or anonymously, but it turned out that the article had his name as the author when published. Unfortunately, #252 in printed form is missing, so, as of now, we are not sure of the published form of the article in which Chen Cheng-po commented on his own drawing. What we are sure is that he regarded the merit of his own painting was the success of portraying fresh green vegetation, and he had also shed light on a change in his painting style. He first wrote “*yasashiku natta*” or “became gentler,” and then he erased and replaced the phrase with “*haikara ni natta*”, a term originally meaning “high collar”, or westernized like a gentleman dressed in the Western fashion of the late 19th century. If it referred to the Chinese style he adopted during his days in Shanghai, *haikara* should not be mechanically translated as “westernized.” Although the term *yasashiku* was replaced, there is not much change in meaning. So he might have regarded his previous paintings as less *haikara*. Thus, *haikara* can be understood as the opposite of “wild” or “untamed” if not so much as “savage.” Hence, the best equivalent for *haikara* in this context should be “civilized” or “stylish” as contrast to wild or naive.

In an open letter dated February 3, 1931, he wrote to the alumni of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts from Shanghai about his recent change in his painting style.<sup>17</sup> He wrote,

Recently, I completed a size 50 painting of my family. In contrast to my previous esthetic style, this is a painting with much *shizumi*.

This Japanese term *shizumi* 沈み is a noun, referring to “sinking.” It is seldom used alone. *Shizumi gachi* (prone to *shizumi*) refers to a calm, silent, or somewhat melancholic sentiment. When Chen Cheng-po contrasted this term with the word for beautiful (*utsukushī* 美しい), he was saying that the painting in question had something more profound than the colorful and joyous mood of his previous ones. Three years later, he described his change in style as gentler, more civilized or stylish, as explained above. Thus, his efforts to develop a new style might

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<sup>17</sup> *Monthly News* of the Association of Alumni of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, 19 (8): 18-19 (March 1931).

have begun early in his days in Shanghai, and he was probably influenced by classical Chinese paintings he was studying there.

We may add the contrast of “mature vs immature” to “*shizumi vs utsukushi*”. In 1932, during an interview for the article “Studio Tour (10) Depicting Nude Women / Chen Cheng-po” in *Taiwan Xin Min Bao*, Chen Cheng-po even said that he regretted that he had become famous when he was still immature and needed more in-depth studies to develop his own style.

As to my being selected for the Imperial Exhibition, even I myself think that I am famous too early and am a bit regretful for that. It would be perfect if I could extend my learning stage longer so that maybe I can break away from the situation I am now in. (NC2\_024)

### **Need of private exhibitions and institutes in Taiwan**

In the manuscript SB13, Chen Cheng-po proceeded to remark on Taiwan’s need for basic research in fine arts. This was his heartfelt opinion on how to raise the standard of painting in Taiwan, and it would take the form of a public proposal (LE1\_019, see Section 4B) when the Empire was replaced by a republic.

After watching the Imperial Exhibition, we can discern two groups of artists: those who paint from a rational viewpoint and those who make paintings out of their emotions. This difference is nothing but a reflection of two distinctive starting points from which to capture the essence of objects. Some may take a realistic approach to draw things with honesty and sincerity, and then proceed to be audacious through running brush strokes. Both are ways of studying, but if they change what they are studying from year to year, they will be at a loss and their studies will lead to nowhere. (SB13-129)

We, living in local regions, do not have much choice. We can prepare our works only for the Taiwan Exhibition, and to study other artists by going after their solo exhibitions. This is the only thing we can do at the local level because there is no basic research. I hope that there will be more privately run exhibitions other than the Taiwan Exhibition, and that there will be more institutes locally. This way, there will be basic research and a variety of exhibitions to serve as reference examples. Furthermore, using books for in-depth studies would be of help to a certain extent. If our artists can go to Tokyo occasionally, they may gain a certain degree of assurance and will not be easily confused. (SB13-128)

### **A brave woman joined his battle line for fine arts in Taiwan**

On July 15, 1932, *Taiwan Daily News* reported that Chen Cheng-po had opened a Western painting course in Taichung. This tells us that he was relocating his oil painting class to Taiwan from Shanghai, where the conditions for teaching fine arts was becoming more and more difficult. His Taichung course seemed to have brought him a happy find.

In September 1932, during an interview for the article “Studio Tour (10) Drawing Nude Women” in *Taiwan Xin Min Bao*, Chen Cheng-po expressed his wish to establish oil painting as an Oriental art, or at least to transmit his message to future generations if his contemporary Taiwanese could not understand its importance. A voluntary woman in Taichung, probably one of the amateurs who had attended his course there, offered to be a nude model for his paintings. Overjoyed, Chen Cheng-po even described the offer as “our battle line,” regarding this woman as a comrade in his fight for the studying and teaching of fine arts in Taiwan and the enlightenment of its peoples.

As far as painting tendency is concerned, though we are using painting materials from abroad, the subject matters of paintings, or rather, the paintings themselves must be Oriental. Though the center of culture is in Moscow, we should still offer our humble efforts towards culture in the Orient. Even if we die in the course of accomplishing this purpose, it is necessary for us to pass this spirit to future generations ... Paintings? I have hitherto finished three: *Sunset at Song Village* (size 15), *Before a Shower* (size 20), and *A Park* (size 15). I am now painting *Nude Woman*. This was an unexpected present for my return to Taiwan: a Taiwanese female in Taichung volunteered to be a model for my paintings, proving that Taiwan females have awakened to and approved of fine arts. As to whether or not I will submit this painting to the Taiwan Exhibition, that is still to be undecided. (NC2\_024)

### **Look well from inside before you draw**

In 1934-35, Chen Cheng-po wrote in his sketchbook a systematic piece of advice for beginners. We know that his main complaints about the paintings of the 15th Imperial Exhibition and other exhibitions were based on these criteria. The comments he gave to his students in Shanghai were essentially the same. The gist of his advice was to examine an object thoroughly to identify important characteristics for painting, though he himself would aim at “something” more profound.

...Suppose you are going to draw apples now. First, you have to decide how best to arrange the apples from a composition standpoint. How about colors? It does not help at all if we wrote “red” in letters simply because the skin of the apples are red. Before we apply any color, we have to think about the nature of our object, consider its usage, and what feelings it evokes in us. We begin by examining the appearance. First, there is a thin peel, under which is the flesh of the fruit. In inside the flesh there is juice and there are pits in the center. So, we should go after the inherent properties. This way, we will have the feeling that the apples are delicious fruits and we want to eat them. Then, with saliva filling our mouth naturally, we can start the task of painting.

...Even if I cannot attain the status of being the “glory of the art circle”, I firmly believe that the art that I revered will continue to provide me with pleasures in which I am increasingly engrossed. This may sound abstract, but we should not forget catering to everyday worldly matters, I think it would not hurt if we take care of these matters properly and study them well. (SB17-22 and 24)

### **Need of human warmth in paintings**

The following short remarks are extracted from Chen Cheng-po’s essay titled “Casual Thoughts on Creation” (製作隨感) published in *Taiwan Literature and Art* 2 (7) on July 1, 1935, after his return from Shanghai. It explains the importance of personal feeling after the stage of intellectual viewing of objects, and tells us the way how he learnt and how he taught his way of painting.

I believe what we need most is to carry out self-reflection, study oneself, know one's strengths and weaknesses, and then work diligently along the way one believes to be right. Never should we be too much influenced by great masters. Always fill ourselves with a youthful spirit, we should tirelessly endeavor to open up new frontiers...

...A picture lacks human warmth if it is drawn from a descriptive or rational viewpoint. It will be lacking charm and will not attract people no matter how good the skill is. For the sake of results, it is best to faithfully follow the running brush and paint freely with a sincere heart. At least I think so. (AR001)

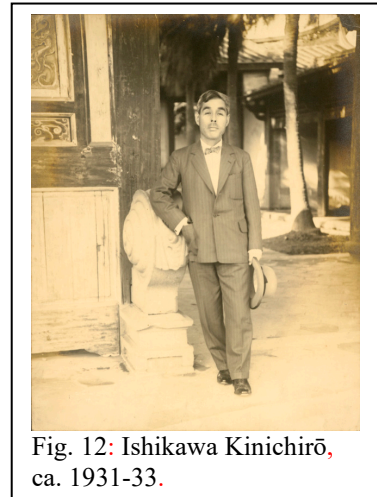


Fig. 12: Ishikawa Kinichirō, ca. 1931-33.

This may echo Ishikawa Kinichirō’s complaints, as quoted in Section C below, for the lack of delightfulness in Japanese oil paintings of those days.

### **C. Related materials**

#### **Do’s and don’ts of Ishikawa Kinichirō**

In 1914, when Chen Cheng-po was a first-year student at the National Language School, Ishikawa Kinichirō’s book *A New Theory of Sketching* was published by Japan Art Institute. He laid down the following 11 rules to be heeded by future artists. Except the first one, all others are “don’ts.” For his pupils who were only beginners in the art teachers’ course at the National Language School, he might not have taught all of these rules which were born from his experiences.

- 1) Do develop your strengths relentlessly.
- 2) Don't sketch and practice to the neglect of studying true painting.
- 3) Don't pursue too strong a contrast of colors.
- 4) Don't be single-minded, widen the scope and style of your painting.
- 5) Don't be too eager to show your works to the public, nor paint too many at the cost of quality.
- 6) Don't be easily influenced by what you haven't directly experienced.
- 7) Don't ever feel at ease, even temporarily, with any of your works.
- 8) Don't judge nature subjectively when painting.
- 9) Don't be arrogant with others who don't share your views although having your own views is okay.
- 10) Don't apply too thin a paint; that will spoil the picture.
- 11) Don't be afraid of making the picture look disorderly while portraying.

### **Asking a journalist to criticize his drawing (1929)**

On November 12, 1929, Chen Cheng-po sent a postcard from Shanghai to Wei Ching-de (1887-1964 魏清德) a journalist, who was also a graduate of the National Language School. Of course, he expected a favorable article on his newly selected painting from Shanghai in Taiwan's leading newspaper, but he humbly asked him to criticize (請批評!) instead of asking for publicity (宣傳廣告).

Mr. Wei! Thank you for your unfailing help to publicize my paintings. Has Taiwan Exhibition been opened yet? To my regret, again I cannot return to see it because of school affairs. Kindly write me about the exhibition. The picture of this postcard is my painting *Early Spring at West Lake*, which has been selected for the Imperial Exhibition. Please criticize it! Say hello to members of your newspaper *Taiwan Daily News* (臺灣日日新報). See you again!! (LE2\_147)

### **Learning was more important than managing Shanghai schools**

Chen Cheng-po always tried hard to continue studying. Teaching was his vocation, but he confessed that school administration work bothered him for taking up his time. The following paragraph is extracted from one of his letters from Shanghai. He had decided to move there after his graduation from Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1929. He followed the advice from his lifetime mentor, Ishikawa Kinichirō. In a letter dated August 15, 1934, Ishikawa wrote him to refrain from trying to pursue his studies in Paris because of the unfavorable currency exchange rate. Instead, he should go to India and China to absorb the rich traditions of oriental fine arts.

Chen Cheng-po's letter from Shanghai in 1931 tells us that he was eager to study French in the hope of studying in Paris in future.

I am planning to quit the post of Chief of Western Painting Division at Xinhua Art College beginning this semester because I want to pursue my studies. I am also negotiating with Chang Ming Art School to withdraw from the post of Chief of Teacher Training Division. I have found that I don't have enough time to take up such high responsibility and engaging work, and have determined that, if possible, I'll try to be an ordinary teacher so that I have enough time to study. Please continue to give me your guidance in every aspect... Since I brought my family here last summer, I have been having a hard time teaching in schools in the day and working as a home tutor at night. I cannot find enough time to study French... February 3.<sup>18</sup>

### “Things in the world never happen by mere chance”

Ishikawa Kinichirō sent a letter to Chen Cheng-po on November 11, 1933 to encourage his efforts in establishing the Tai Yang Art Association (臺陽美術協會), and complained about the lack of delightfulness in Japan's oil paintings in the 14th Imperial Exhibition.

In this year's Taiwan Exhibition, I rejoice about the fact that your art has been recognized. As for the Imperial Exhibition this year, all the western paintings are boring: they are so devoid of contents that I could not derive any pleasure watching them. This should be reflected. I am quite sad at the present status of western paintings in Japan. I wonder why more cheerful and delightful paintings cannot be made. (LE1\_012)

Two months before the 15th Imperial Exhibition began, Ishikawa Kinichirō wrote in a letter dated August 15, 1934, to Chen Cheng-po in Chiayi. He seemed a bit anxious whether Chen Cheng-po's attempt at adopting a new style would be welcomed by the jury of the Imperial Exhibition, although it was he himself who advised him to go to China to learn more from Chinese old paintings instead of trying to go to France when currency exchange rate was so absurd. But the mentor always encouraged him enthusiastically to think big.

...Please do your best; art is a lifetime pursuit. ...Why don't you continue, as before, the kind of paintings that reveal your genuine personality instead of flaunting skills? Target major exhibitions in Tokyo like the Imperial Exhibition, and success in others such as the Taiwan Exhibition will follow. (LE1\_007)

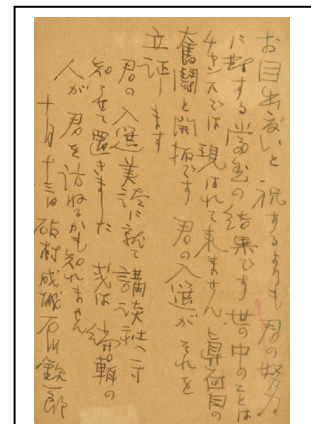


Fig. 13: A postcard of congratulation from Ishikawa Kinichirō on October 13, 1934 (LE2\_039)

<sup>18</sup> *Tokyo School of Fine Arts Alumni Association Monthly*, Vol. 29 No. 8, pp. 18-19, March 1931. 《東京美術學校校友會月報》第29卷第8號，頁18-19，1931.3，東京：東京美術學校。

We can read a postcard treasured by Chen Cheng-po in which Ishikawa Kinichirō congratulated his success in the 15th Imperial Exhibition. In this postcard dated October 13, 1934, he wrote to Chen Cheng-po staying in Hongō, Tokyo:

Rather than congratulating you, I'd like to point out that this is a result that give justice to your efforts. Things in the world never happen by mere chance. Success takes serious commitment and innovation and your being selected is the best proof. I have already informed Kōdansha of your inspiring story behind this selection. Maybe their editing personnel will visit you. (LE2\_039).

Since they first met in the National Language School, 20 years had already passed, and Ishikawa precisely knew his mentee's capability and the fruits of such capability all these years. Detailed advice from the mentor continued to arrive. Only three months later, on January 23, 1935, Ishikawa Kinichirō wrote a postcard to him.

I saw your painting in the Spring Exhibition of Taiwan. Not bad as a whole, but let us think bigger: I wish you could arrive at a deeper state of reflection. The painting feels somewhat ruined and dusty, and that might have resulted from the monotonous coloring of the shadows. You can consider adding a hue of violet there. And perhaps you can add some thought-provoking elements in the execution. I expect the painting can show an ambience of softness and charm, and is filled with the feeling of love of nature and love of work, just like your painting of the Hyōkeikan in Ueno [Congratulatory Gallery]. Mr. Li Mei-shu's work is extraordinarily large, but it failed because the execution was inconsistent throughout. (LE2\_053)

### **Quoting without references (regarded as “plagiarism” today)**

Although Chen Cheng-po had not left behind many published articles, the ones extant today are pleasantly written and easily read. Nevertheless, Chen Cheng-po had a habit of using other authors' words without giving them credit. It had been a Chinese and Japanese tradition to embed classics in one's text as did the author of the essay #34 in the *Collection*. Anyway, it was quite customary to do so before modern copyright laws were introduced in Japan in 1899. Since the three authors of this paper are all university teachers, we would reject some of his articles if they were presented by our students. We will show two examples from the writings of Chen Cheng-po that would be considered plagiarism by today's standards.

The beginning two sentences of Chen Cheng-po's manuscript for his review of the 15th Imperial Exhibition were word-for-word copy of the text published by the artist Migishi Setsuko in Issue No. 357 (1934) of *Mizue*, a fine arts journal.<sup>19</sup> Her opinion expressed was a

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<sup>19</sup> This issue of *Mizue* is available in Chen Cheng-po's collection except for its front cover represented here. CCP\_09\_09028\_BC3\_11 in <http://tais.ith.sinica.edu.tw/sinicafrsFront/browsing.jsp>



complete denial of the whole oil paintings in the exhibition except a few works by established masters. So, readers who had already read Mizue could smile wryly and took it as a parody when they read Chen Cheng-po's article beginning in the same words as Migishi Setsuko, but arriving at different, rather positive, conclusions on the exhibition.

Chen Cheng-po's article on Taiwan Exhibition of Fine Arts published in the *Taiwan Xin Min Bao* (臺灣新民報) in January 1935 (NC1\_005) was worse. The main body of Chen Cheng-po's article expounding on the evils of drawing on larger and larger canvas was all taken without reference from the article of Masuda Yoshinobu in the same issue of Mizue as above. Chen Cheng-po usually warned artists of copying the painting styles of great masters (see the end of Section 3B, for example), but his copying the texts from others' published articles was not a concern to him. Further studies on this is warranted.

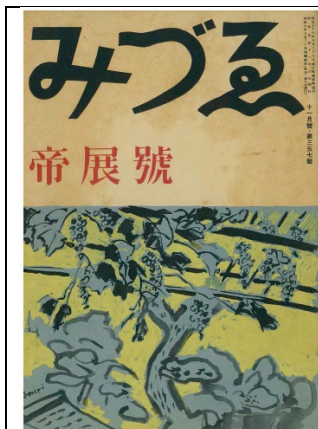


Fig. 14: Front cover of a fine arts journal of, Mizue, No. 357.

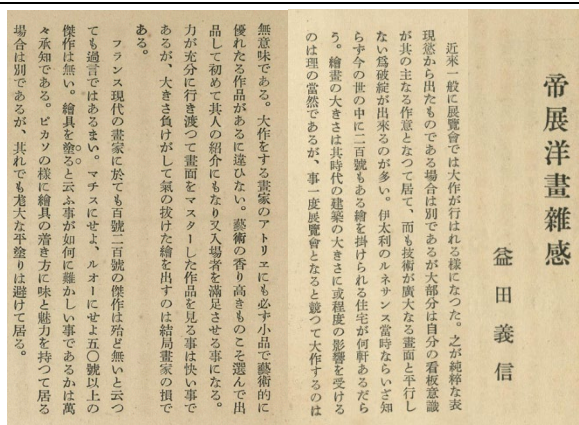


Fig. 15: Original article by Masuda Yoshinobu

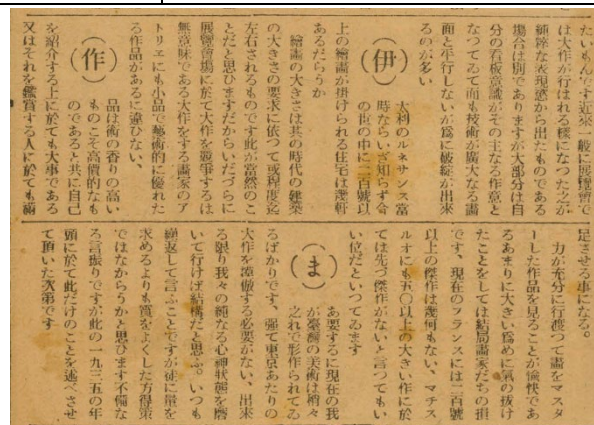


Fig. 16: Chen Cheng-po's article in 1935 with complete sentences taken from Masuda Yoshinobu's article in Mizue 357 (1934)

#### D. Relationship with Chen Cheng-po's life

What seem to us the most important change in Chen Cheng-po is his acceptance of reviews and constructive criticisms on his own paintings before and after his graduation from the Tokyo

School of Fine Arts. At first, he was remembered to be rather inflexible about his way of painting in class.

### **A student rejecting his instructor's modifications**

One of Chen Cheng-po's classmates in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Nakahori Aisaku, witnessed that their painting instructor once advised Chen Cheng-po to revise his sketch, but Chen did not heed the advice, and in the end he was allowed to draw as he wished.

...I remember once, Instructor Tanabe Itaru wanted to modify his sketches. But Cheng-po did not agree with the changes and reversed it back after a while. Because his paintings always demonstrated his strong personality, the instructor relented and let Cheng-po express his own ideas freely. This way, Cheng-po insisted on expressing his strong personality in every painting...<sup>20</sup>

### **Like a student, but welcoming reviews and criticisms**

After returning to Taiwan, Chen Cheng-po continued to learn with the same ardent with which he had studied and worked as a student in Tokyo. We can also know from the following essay that his undiminished activities were maintained by his determination, rather than by his physical health. What is most important is for us to know his way of learning. In the last line, he described to us the process with which his paintings were brought to their final forms. He felt that peer review would help him revise and retouch his paintings to completion.

The trip to Tokyo was an impromptu decision. It was October 14, 1936... At the long awaited moment of departure, after breaking off the paper streamers at Keelung, I set sail for Eastern Capital [Tokyo]. Because of the season, the journey was rather rough. It was a catastrophe for me as I have a weak stomach. It was no wonder because I was travelling on Mizuho [a smaller boat].

On arriving at Tokyo on the night of October 27, I directly went to the home of Li Shi-qiao (李石樵), who came to the pier to welcome me.

From that night, I drew up a variety of programs according to my length of stay in Tokyo. Unlike my previous visits, this time, apart from browsing fine arts, the aim of my trip is to take up the spirit of a student again to study in depth and make as many paintings as possible. Therefore, I decided to enter a certain private painting school, and, choosing appropriate occasions, I will go sketching autumn leaves and other sceneries in the prefecture. In order to evaluate the extent to which my capability in observation has improved, it is necessary to enter a painting school. In other words, after applying into

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<sup>20</sup> Recounted by Chang Yi-hsiung and written down by Chen Tsung-kuang, "Chen Cheng-po and I", *Lion Art Magazine*, No. 100, p. 126, 1979. Quoted from p.12 of *Chen Cheng-po Corpus* Vol. 2.

actions what I have seen with my eyes, I'll bring the results for reviewing. This will definitely turn into a realistic creative experience.

Witnessing (inspection) - practical application - review (criticism) - correction and revision – final work (finish) (to be continued) (BC3\_46-001~002)

### Examples of correction and revision

In spite of his change of mind in welcoming reviews and criticism from his peers to improve his paintings, discovering such examples of amendment is rather difficult unless the original version had been photographed. Li Su-chu (李淑珠) compared his oil painting and postcard (PH4\_017) both titled *Celebration Day* (慶祝日) and found that he added the national flag of the Republic of China after the postcard was printed. In her Ph D. dissertation, Li explains the political background under which Chen Cheng-po decided to revise his drawing.<sup>21</sup>

The second example is an oil painting titled *East Taiwan Coastal Road* (東台灣臨海道路)” recently rediscovered in Hofu City, Yamaguchi, Japan. This is the painting Kamiyama had commissioned Chen Cheng-po to do when he retired from the post of Governor General (see Section 1C above). Ankei Yuji and Ankei Takako found that the painting was revised after a photo of it was taken and printed as a postcard. The photo was also posted on the Chinese version of *Taiwan Daily News* (漢文臺灣日日新報) dated September 12, 1930.<sup>22</sup> The change appeared on the lower left corner: there, a woman in local clothes was walking on the new Seaside Road that the Governor’s Office had finished constructing during Kamiyama’s term of office. The size of the woman was redrawn distinctively smaller.



Fig. 17: *East Taiwan Coastal Road*, drawn by Chen Cheng-po in 1930, as found in Hofu City, Yamaguchi.



Fig. 18: A photo of *East Taiwan Coastal Road* PH4\_009, as found in Chen Cheng-po's collection. The woman on the lower left corner was much bigger.

<sup>21</sup> Li Su-chu, *Expressing 'Something' of an Era: An Analysis of Chen Cheng-po's Paintings*, Taipei: ARTouch Family, 2012. Figure 61.

<sup>22</sup> Ankei Yuji and Ankei Takako, 2020 Memories of the Late Professor Kodama Shiki, *Yōjubunka* 71-72 (2021). <http://ankei.jp/yuji/?n=2508>

Kamiyama was a learned man having extensive experience as an administrator and politician. During his tenure, he had commissioned a field study of the indigenous people in Taiwan by Taihoku Imperial University (Please refer to Section 1C above). Before the fieldwork began, he proposed to scientists in the study team a long list of scopes for their research. Four years later, when he at last received 6,000 pages of report manuscript for publication, he was so modest as to say nothing on the report, but only expressed his happiness and gratitude and remarked on the global importance of the accomplished work.<sup>23</sup> The study was paid with the retirement fund he received from people from all over Taiwan. With the same fund, he commissioned Chen Cheng-po to make a painting of Taiwan for him, Kamiyama proposed several locations for the painting<sup>24</sup>. If he acted in the same way as in the case of the field study on Taiwan indigenous people, it was unlikely that Kamiyama ordered Chen Cheng-po to revise the drawing after he had received it.

Then, our question is who advised the revision? And when? Chen Cheng-po presented the painting to the selection section of the Taiwan Exhibition although he was entitled to submit three paintings on a review-exemption basis. As a result, it was not selected. In the course of this process, he could have received reviews on the painting from other artists, maybe including the jury of the Taiwan Exhibition. Seeing that he did revise it, we know that his attitude in welcoming review as mentioned above was already in evidence as early as 1930, and so was the process of creation he was practicing: witnessing (inspection)-practical application-review (criticism)-correction and revision-final work (finish).

We can imagine how peer review could have influenced Chen Cheng-po. Some might have told him that the walking figures were drawn too big, so much so that viewers would think that the wide highway was a footpath. Others might have claimed that the large figures would reduce the grandeur of the ocean and the Great Cliff of Shimizu (清水斷崖), where workers struggled badly to construct the road, etc.

In any case, closer studies, including illumination with X-rays, for example, will reveal whether the revision was carried out hastily or carefully. Or we could check Kamiyama's diaries to see if there is anything revealing in the manner by which the request and receipt of this painting were made. Kamiyama's diaries were kept in Santetsu Bunko (三哲文庫) in the Hofu City Library, which was created by Kamiyama's donation in 1938 after his death. These are worthwhile pursuits as the painting is already playing an important role in the promotion of friendship between Chiayi and Hofu citizens.

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<sup>23</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, October 15, 1933. Available on <http://ankei.jp/yuji/?n=2160>.

<sup>24</sup> *Taiwan Daily News in Chinese*, October 16, 1933. Available on <http://ankei.jp/yuji/?n=2160>.

## 4. Chen Cheng-po's messages to his family and to people of Taiwan (1929-47)

### A. Outline

Chen Cheng-po's wife Chang Jie 張捷 had carefully preserved what was left of her husband after his demise. Among the documents there are about a dozen letters and many postcards. In drawing to a close this paper on what he had written, we would like to introduce the letters and postcards he had sent to his family and to representatives of the political administration of Taiwan. From these letters and postcards, we will be able to know what he wished for his children, and what he wished for the people of Taiwan. We may also understand the context of his desires expressed in his last will which was written under extreme pressure and urgency before his execution.

After the defeat of Japan in WWII, there was a jubilant mood among Taiwanese for being freed after 50 years of colonization. But when Chinese soldiers arrived and public servants were replaced, bitter disappointment prevailed.

We will read what Chen Cheng-po wrote during these post-war days until his execution in March 1947. Since his *Review Notebook* in Chinese has been introduced and analyzed in detail by Li Su-chu and other authors, we will quote only a part of it that will explain his hope for the new regime.

His letters to his family after the war will be introduced, then supplemented with narratives of his eldest son Chen Tsung-kuang based on our interviews in Section C. This section will explain how he taught and guided his family and the people of Chiayi and Taiwan until his unexpected death.

### B. Texts

#### **Let us compete to see who is more capable**

On 27 March 1929, just before Chen Cheng-po finally put an end to his five years of studies in Tokyo, he sent a postcard of his painting to his eldest daughter born in 1919 to tell her his recent success in a private exhibition there.

My Little Violet (紫ちゃん), this time I was selected again for an exhibition. A very good painting, said my teacher. I was so happy hearing this. Please feel happy for me too. My Little Violet, do study well and become a wise person. Let us compete to see who is more capable. Say hello to Mommy, Grandma, Uncle, and others. See you. Chen Cheng-po (LE2\_145)

He sent a postcard on November 12, 1934, to his younger children from Taihoku. This postcard tells us that he was a loving and caring father of his children, always wishing that they would stay healthy and study hard.

Daddy is glad that you are all healthy and studying hard. I have just finished my work here in Taipei, and will be back tomorrow. Say hello to your mother and wish you all well. See you. (LE2\_041)

Years later, his “Little Violet” grew up and assumed the roles of an accountant and a tutor for the family. She received information from her father on the only income for her family: it depended on exhibitions in which clients would pay for the paintings. Having a farm in Chiayi might have been one of his remedies to supplement his unstable income from selling paintings (see the end of the second letter to his son below). On May 1, 1934, he wrote her a postcard from Taipei, where the Tai Yang Art Exhibition 臺陽美術展覽會 was held.

The exhibition turned out to be livelier and better attended than expected. I will stay here for 3-4 more days to take care of association affairs and make sketches. Painting in Zhanghua will follow. As of now, none of my paintings has been bought, and the cash I have on hand is a bit tight. I will deal with this problem in Zhanghua. Are Pi-nu and Tsung-kuang studying hard? (LE2\_083)

A year before, in February 1937, a newspaper reported of his engagement in farming, as abstracted below.

A few days ago, Mr. Chen Cheng-po, an oil painter who is the pride of not only Chiayi but also Taiwan, for some reasons began cultivating a community-owned wasteland of about one *jia* (甲, 0.97 ha) in the southern suburb of Chiayi. Every day, in his spare time from painting, he tills with a hoe to experience the fragrance of earth. (NC2\_044)

### **Make Taiwan a model province of art in the Great Republic of China**

As mentioned in the Introduction of this paper, Chen Cheng-po’s third notebook Ma01 contained, among other texts, a long essay written in Chinese under the title “Review (Society and Art)”. The date on its cover was September 9, Minguo 34 (1945) just on the day Japan signed for its surrender in Nanjing. Writing in Chinese was not a problem at all for him because he learned it when young. In 1923, when he was a tutor of Shuikutou Public School Huzinei Annex, he submitted a Chinese article for publication to the Changhua Society for Civil Values Issue 37 and was awarded for ranking sixth (Chronology in the Foundation website). He further polished his writing in Chinese during his stay in Shanghai. Calculations from Showa to Minguo was the only difficulty for which he struggled in the *Review Notebook*.

This essay was revised by Chen Cheng-po and sent as a proposal for the creation of a national school of fine arts in Taiwan to Zhang Bang-jie (張邦傑, 1887-1964) and a related ministry (dated November 15, 1945, LE\_018 and LE\_019. See the Introduction to Corpus Volume 7 for details). This should have been his major motivation to become a council member of Chiayi the next year, we suppose. If it were not related, even slightly, to his ambition of promoting art in Taiwan, he would not have accepted to be an electoral candidate. In Shanghai, he even decided to quit his posts as chief of department in art schools because that demanded too much time and mental energy of him to continue painting as he had planned before. He wrote:

We have to intensify efforts further to build a robust and beautiful new Taiwan. How about establishing a national or provincial school of fine art? We should pay attention to, first, esthetic education in teacher training to produce teachers with esthetic knowledge and skills to help carry out esthetic education for future generations of Taiwan of the great Republic of China. Second, we should nurture art professionals to provide art education. What is the status of the so-called the world's art pantheon—France? It is now impoverished and is in no position to lead the advance of art in the world. In East Asia, militaristic Japan, which brags about being the art country of the world, is now defeated. So now the responsibility rests with the artists in our great China! We should of course conscientiously undertake the task of upgrading the art and culture of our country. To meet this objective, first, we have to strengthen the education of teachers in esthetics under the Three Principles of the People before we can improve esthetic education for Taiwan. Second, we have to provide the right conditions to attract art professionals of the world to come to our great China to contribute to our culture of 5,000 years. As one who was born in the former Qing Dynasty and will die under Han National's rule, this is my lifelong wish.<sup>25</sup>

### **Work harder, become a good scholar even in difficulties (September 1946)**

On September 11, 1946, Chen Cheng-po sent a letter to his eldest son Chen Tsung-kuang, who just began studying in the Normal College in Taipei. The atmosphere of independence and freedom still echoed in this letter to encourage his son to pursue his wish to become a researcher and teacher of history and geography.

...After the restitution of our sovereignty, the spirit [of the people in Taiwan] is high, and it is our world now. Under such a spirit, you have to work harder in your studies. Your chosen subjects of history and geography are good ones! Be a part of the country's research and a part of its spirit. Unite the nation to show that our elite are not inferior! Be disciplined, take care of your health, work harder, and become a good scholar. Would you fail your father who has been struggling hard to succeed even now? ...Enjoy studying

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<sup>25</sup> Chen Cheng-po, "Proposals for the Taiwan Fine Art Sector", November 15, 1945 (LE1\_019).

English, and Chinese literature and language, do more research to prepare to be a great historian in the future. This is your father's earnest hope. (LE1\_015)

But only two weeks later, on September 25, 1946, Chen Cheng-po had to write a letter to his son with bitter disappointment. Orderly daily life was destroyed in Chiayi and everywhere in Taiwan, and the Normal College could no longer maintain the standard it used to have during the time of Japanese rule. In the last lines of this letter, he explained to his son that the harvest of rice from the two farms he owned in Chiayi was successful, and he would be able to afford additional costs needed for moving to a better school if necessary.

Public order in Chiayi has also deeply changed recently. The screw for our tap water pipe was found stolen this morning by a burglar, so water was all over the place. There is no more social order! Watch out for small possessions when you go out. As you close the door when you go out, tell your sister. Keep alert, don't be careless. Watch out for your money. It's a shame and a pity that the standard of the school has dropped. But it's fate. If you can apply to another school, prepare to do so. The Normal College may approve it. If you can't do it now, you can continue your studies at another university after graduation. Maybe you should give more thoughts to what to study. Besides Chinese literature and language, people in Chiayi should also study more English. Tsung-kuang, don't deviate from your intention of continuing your studies. If you can speak English fluently, you don't have to stay in the education sector; you can venture into other fields! So, concentrate your efforts and don't miss any opportunity. This is your father's earnest wish. If you have the academic ability to be a researcher, you will find it useful when you enter society in future...

... Most important of all is family honor: we must maintain it, spread our name, and give honor to our ancestors! ... As the saying goes, Son, "Like father, like son"! Don't be less diligent than your father, and try to attain the scholarship of your grandfather. Your father is sitting in the jury of the current edition of the Imperial Exhibition. Please take care of your health so that you won't miss any chance of fulfilling your ambitions and make a name for the Chen family!

... The harvest in Liu Cuo 劉厝 is two hundred and ten *jin*, and I have already received about one thousand *jin* from Xialutou 下路頭. So, I'm in a position to give you more for school expenses. Let me know immediately when you need it. Goodbye!

Chen Cheng-po, September 29, to son Tsung-kuang (LE1\_016)

### **Last will (March 25, 1947)**

In the following extract from Chen Cheng-po's last will, the following points seem to correspond to what we quoted from his letters to his son. The first lines to his wife contain a



warning to watch out the house. Education for his son meant, in his shortest last words, to glorify the family history of scholars. He wished his eldest son could go to a better school for a better future, and that family members should help each other out in daily life, especially learning to develop their capability.

I wish you longevity and happiness. Do not worry about me while I am in heaven, and do not blame me for my actions. Take care of the household day and night and also take good care of yourself so that I do not have to worry. (WI07\_002)

Serve your mother with all material needs, be friendly with your siblings, and study with diligence to glorify your ancestors. (WI01-001)

Tsung-kuang should help out his brother Chien-min's education, getting into a vocational school or middle school is alright. (WI10-002)

Concerning Taipei School Asset Management Committee: Tsung-kuang should go with Tien-sheng to report on the visit of the chief executive and tell them to assign a replacement. (WI08-001)

Keep my painting *The Broken Bridge on West Lake with Remnant Snow* within the family. (WI08-001)

### C. Related materials

#### **Narratives by Chen Tsung-kuang (March 2016)**

On March 26, 2016, students of Yamaguchi Prefectural University had a chance to interview Chen Tsung-kuang, the eldest son who was 20 years old when Chen Cheng-po was executed in 1947. They had prepared 15 questions to ask him including rather private ones like, "When did you feel that you were the very son of Chen Cheng-po?" Only an extract is translated here.<sup>26</sup> In short, Chen Tsung-kuang explained that the life of his father was a result of his three ambitions: to be a teacher, an artist, and a politician. His opinion was that this last ambition to be a politician was nothing but a catastrophe. The way Chen Cheng-po drew his oil paintings was inserted from his conversation with Ankei Yuji and Ankei Takako during our visit to the exhibition in the municipal hall of Chiayi in 2016.

I remember my days in Shanghai, when I was only 5-6 years old. Everyday, my father would go out either to teach and do sketching, and returned home. He used to bring home 5 to 6 sketches he had drawn quite rapidly in 10 minutes or so each, with which he had taught his students that day. After dinner, we all surrounded him and watched the

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<sup>26</sup> The whole text in Japanese is available on <https://www.yamaguchi-ebooks.jp/?bookinfo=kendaicoc7taiwan> pp. 73-84.

sketches. These were such happy moments for my family that I had them vividly etched in my mind. Half of these sketches have been eaten and destroyed by termites, and only 300 or so remain now.

After our return to Taiwan, he continued to go out to draw in many places, but we could accompany him only in Chiayi. The most frequent place where I accompanied him was Chiayi Park. He would not bring us to remote destinations such as Yunlin, Danshui, Taipei, Taichung, Zhanghua, Tainan, or Kaohsiung etc. Since he was poor, he just traveled to find a place to draw and returned home without doing any other things. He could not afford transportation expenses for his family nor could he work on his painting with total absorption if we were around him.

I remember the way he drew in oil paints. Often, he did not mix the paints on his palette, then he would seize a brush like a sword and hit the canvas with quick movements as if he was stabbing at it.

One of my close classmates once asked my father what was his most favorite of his own paintings. He showed his hand open, and replied, "I cherish all of these five fingers. If injured, any of them will ache equally." So, let us choose the five topics of his preference from among his paintings: 1) the red roofs and paths in Danshui, 2) the hot atmosphere of the summer season of Taiwan, 3) the expression of verdure drawn in one stroke of the brush with rich unmixed paints on it, 4) the religious buildings in Taiwan, and 5) the oil paintings based on his study of Chinese ink-wash paintings. Among this last group, he seemed to be proud of his *Lucid Water* (清流), so much so that he told us in his last will not to sell it but keep it in the family.

As a father, he was quite liberal and open-minded to his children. When I said I preferred to study history and geography in the Normal College of Taipei, he said OK, and never tried to suggest painting or English Language, etc. Instead, he encouraged me to study history and geography in depth so long as I loved these subjects. Every child should do what he or she likes; that was his principle. So, my eldest sister chose to learn handicraft as our mother was good at it. For my second elder sister, it was drawing. She had a keen sense for drawing, and he often brought her to Chiayi Park to sketch together. When her oil painting *Looking at Mountains* (望山) was successfully selected for the Taiwan Exhibition, she was only in her third year in a woman's high school. It was big news because usually only teachers of art or professional painters could be selected. But, she completely abandoned painting after our father was executed...The third daughter, my younger sister, was in her first year of a woman's high school, and had not yet found her vocation, and our youngest brother was still in an elementary school then.

What I really regret is that my father was executed in the 228 Incident at the age of 53. If he survived, we would have witnessed changes in his paintings in the course of his life, probably until 80 years or so. At the age of 50, he survived the war under bombardment, and he was supposed to walk the life of an artist in his 60s and 70s.

After the war was over, most of the Taiwanese rejoiced at the returning of their island back to the homeland. But that joy soon turned into disappointment. For about a year, we observed the political transition from Japan to China, and found that the Chinese government was totally corrupted. Our family could not put up with such corruption. And because of that, Father was persuaded by a lot of people to become a representative of the local council of Chiayi. He was overcome by their persuasion. All of us family members were totally against his acceptance to run as a candidate. During the electoral campaign period, we never asked our neighbors or relatives to vote for him. He made no speech in the streets, nor printed posters or leaflets. He used only a small sum of money for printing his name cards, and his friends distributed them among their relatives. Nevertheless, he was elected because he was quite well-known in Chiayi. Thus, he jumped into the world of politics filled only with his sense of justice, without knowing how corrupt that government was. That caused the horrible incident.

I mostly regret that his participation in politics out of his mere sense of justice resulted in that tragic sacrifice. He was disqualified, really disqualified as a politician, especially to be engaged in the totally corrupted politics of China. Although I am ignorant of Japanese politics, to insist on justice only would not seem to work even in Japan, as you should know. After reading through the biography of Governor Kamiyama written by Professor Kodama Shiki<sup>27</sup>, I felt that Kamiyama pursued justice as a politician throughout his life, and because of that, his policies were seldom adopted by the government.

I jumped up when I received the image sent from you of his oil painting of *East Taiwan Seaside Road* drawn on the request of Governor Kamiyama. We had believed that it was all gone and lost except for a postcard of it in an album. I immediately sent my son Li-po to Hofu City. If I could go and see, it would have made me feel meeting again with my father in person!

#### D. Relationship with Chen Cheng-po's life

Although seldom discussed, the narrative of his son Chen Tsung-kuang in Section C above included, we should add farming as one of his occupations besides teaching, painting, and

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<sup>27</sup> Kodama Shiki and Ankei Yuji, *Thoughts and Actions of Kamiyama Mitsunoshin*, revised and enlarged edition, Kaichosha, 2016. (兒玉識、安溪遊地《上山滿之進の思想と行動》増補改訂版、海鳥社、2016).

engaging in politics. At the end of the first letter to Chen Tsung-kuang in September 1946, he complained of the lower than expected selling price of rice. His farming venture developed from manually reclaiming a wasteland in 1937 to harvesting some 1,200 *jins* of rice from two plots in 1946, probably relying on tenant farmers. One of the authors, Ankei Yuji, and his wife Takako began cultivating vegetables for family consumption in 1990, then progressed to growing rice in 1993, and their son began producing and selling rice and soya in 2012. In trying out organic farming, we had encountered so many natural pests and disasters that the only recourse available was praying. We understand therefore why indigenous peoples practice animistic cosmology. Also, we have experienced that agriculture for self-consumption and for sale in the market are two completely different things. Agriculture was never a subject treated in Chen Cheng-po's three remaining notebooks. Nevertheless, Chen Cheng-po and his family's involvement in farming should be a topic worth studying because it will shed light on the artist's financial situation on one hand, and his attitude towards nature on the other. For example, Chen Cheng-po began his proposition to create a national school of fine arts in Taiwan after independence (LE1\_019) with the following phrase: "In the first place, circulations in the heaven and the earth, and replacement of the old by the new of all living things are the law of nature". We may also add "ethics" to these two topics following Dr. Iso Eikichi, the father of Hōrai/Ponlai rice of Taiwan. Dr. Iso once wrote that farmers are happy members of the nation, daily given lessons by their living crops that always demand faithfulness and refuse any sort of lies whatsoever.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusions

We transcribed, with much difficulty, Chen Cheng-po's study notebooks and some texts in the sketchbooks mostly written in Japanese.

The first was an anthology of written Japanese copied from a variety of textbooks. It was begun on the first day of the year of 1926, when he was a second year student, aged 20, of the National Language School in Taihoku. It contained many essays which are sort of nature sketches in words. These collection of essays could first be considered as basic training in painting, but its scope gradually widened to the problems of economy, society, and politics. The first essay was in a close concordance with what Ishikawa Kinichirō used to teach as a tutor of painting of the school, to advise students to continue learning fine arts throughout their life. Chen Cheng-po's political activism in his 50s demanding social justice from the government that led to his execution seemed to have its roots already appearing in the latter half of this notebook. The last

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<sup>28</sup> Ankei Yuji & Ankei Takako, Iso Eikichi: the father of Hōrai/Ponlai Rice, *Yōjubunka* 73-74: 1-13 (2021), <http://ankei.jp/yuji/?n=2531>. There are also reports that the *Miyako* 都 variety of Hōrai rice most widely planted in Chiayi around 1923 had originally been selected and bred from *Miyako Ine* 都稻 in Chōshū (長州), today's Yamaguchi during the Edo Era.

essay in this notebook was about the pleasure of teaching as a profession, especially teaching in local primary schools. Although its date of copying this essay is unknown, it tied in very well with the beginning of his first job as an instructor in Chiayi Public School, from which he had graduated. In short, apart from some classical Japanese essays, the *Collection*, which he started at the age of 20, bears significance in his later life as a prelude to his three professions as a teacher, an artist, and a politician.

Driven by his ambition to pursue further studies and become an artist, Chen Cheng-po decided to quit his teaching job, one of the best paid for Taiwanese citizens at that time beside practicing medicine. Although his sketches, calligraphies, oil paintings, etc., during his student days in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts have been conserved and studied by many researchers, the outline of his studies other than the practice of fine arts has been only vaguely known. His notebook on philosophy and education was the only one left of his class notes. It was written in his third year in the (art) teacher training course, and contained complete records for three courses given by the lecturer Takeda Shin-ichi: 1) Philosophy, 2) Pedagogy, and 3) Educational Psychology. Our studies revealed that these three courses, one each in a semester, were given under the following two official course titles of 1) Morals, and 2-3) Education & Psychology. Takeda, a post-graduate student from the Imperial University of Tokyo, one year younger than Chen Cheng-po, specialized in Greek philosophy. Hence, it was natural that he taught mainly his speciality during his classes of Philosophy and Pedagogy. Out of eight lectures in Philosophy, four were dedicated to Esthetics. Takeda explained the importance of Platon's view of the "ideas" being the essentials in the objects behind our superficial views of their physical outlook. Although Chen Cheng-po could hardly follow the speed and the details of the lecture, making many spelling errors along the way, he underlined in red in places where he believed were important. Three kinds of evidence show that he continued to keep his interest in philosophy and esthetics throughout his days in Tokyo and after he finished his graduate studies. First, notes in the margins of Takayama Chogyū's *Esthetics and the History of Art* published just before his arrival in Tokyo in 1926. Second, extracts of terminology on sheets of paper from a dictionary of philosophy first published in 1930. Third, Tanabe Hajime's *General Introduction to Philosophy* purchased in 1942 or later, with a lot of margin notes and summaries. Chen Cheng-po wrote on its front page, "8th of March. Begin reading through with do-or-die determination." Anyway, Plato's notion of the "ideas" became a hidden backbone in his art creation, his teaching in Shanghai, and his criticisms of artists of his age. The Philosophy and Education notebook and a short note on a book margin constitute rare fragments about the classes and seminars he attended in Ueno and Hongō: Japanese Painting, History of Oriental Arts, and World History of Nude Arts.

We have relatively few texts about his activities in Shanghai. A piece of advice on making paintings written in Chinese might have been used in his classes. Following Ishikawa

Kinichirō's advice, he studied Chinese ink-wash paintings, and became an exception among the oil painters of his age that longed only to go to Paris. His letter from Shanghai and his son's reminiscence serve as substantiating evidence of his life there.

Back in Chiayi in his forties, Chen Cheng-po began to lead the life of an independent artist. The income from selling paintings was unstable. He worked hard to organize private art associations while also supporting official exhibitions. Organizing artists and promoting their activities were important to him not only for raising art standards in Taiwan, but also to cultivate art lovers on the island so that art creators can get sufficient economic support.

He succeeded in the Imperial Exhibition for the fourth time in 1934, and he was asked to review the paintings. As a forerunner of oil painting in Taiwan, he worked hard to guide younger artists and organize professional associations for them. In spite of the need felt by the artists, the Japanese administration did not agree to establish a school, museum, or institute for fine arts in Taiwan. Even oil paints were not easily available during the war unless an artist was willing to participate in pro-war propaganda.<sup>29</sup>

Like most Taiwanese, it was natural for Chen Cheng-po to expect the new government of China for something better than the Japanese regime. Based on a manuscript in his third notebook, he prepared a proposition in Chinese for a new school of fine arts. Instead of getting a reply, he witnessed inefficiency and corruption in the new government (for example, burglary was increasingly rampant, one had even stolen the screw of his tap water pipe). However angry he was for such social and political injustice, we are not sure if that was enough for him to run for a seat in the local council. As thinking big was his usual approach, he might have had the ambition of establishing a new institute of art in Taiwan by appealing for nationwide political and economic support. He wrote two letters in September 1946 to his son Chen Tsung-kuang, who was beginning to study in Taipei in order to qualify as a teacher of history and geography. Chen Cheng-po's desperate hope to uphold his family's tradition of academic excellence helps us to understand the short messages in his last will of March 25, 1947, scribbled just before he was summarily executed in the public.

After this tragedy, in order to protect his paintings and other possessions from burglary, arson, or other types of damage during the long period of white terrors, his wife and the family never went out together for fear of leaving their house vacant (Chen Li-po, personal communication).

On August 2, 2003, Chen Cheng-po's honor was officially restored by President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁).<sup>30</sup> On March 23, 2017, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) invited Mr. Chen

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<sup>29</sup> Li Su-chu, *Expressing 'Something' of an Era: An Analysis of Chen Cheng-po's Paintings*, Taipei: ARTouch Family, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> CCP\_06\_01\_ID1\_15 on the webpage <http://tais.ith.sinica.edu.tw/sinicafrsFront/browsing.jsp>

Tsung-kuang to her Office, and relay her appreciation of the great pains of his family in securing Chen Cheng-po's invaluable works. She said, "I believe that art and humanity will always survive the history of oppression, and this will serve as an example why this country will always stand mighty. Mr. Chen Cheng-po is the very example for us all."<sup>31</sup>

(Special thanks are due to the late Mr. Chen Tsung-kuang, Mr. Chen Li-po, the members of the Chen Cheng-po Cultural Foundation in Chiayi, Dr. Li Su-chu, and Dr. Chiu Hanni for collaborating with us to prepare this paper. In order to determine what exactly Chen Cheng-po had intended to write in the two Japanese notebooks described in this and other papers, three co-authors collaborated with the help for transcribing by the late Mr. Yamashita Hiroyoshi (山下博由), Ms. Sumiki Hikari (栖來光), and Dr. Ankei Takako (安溪貴子). Two students from Yamaguchi Prefectural University, Ms. Akiyoshi Asuka (秋吉明日香) and Mr. Higashi Taisei (東泰生) prepared the questions for and attended the interview with Mr. Chen Tsung-kuang under the supervision of Izaō Tomio. The late Professor Kodama Shiki (兒玉識) of Ryukoku University and the members of the Association to Learn from Kamiyama Mitsunoshin (上山滿之進に學ぶ會) in Hofu City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan, encouraged and advised us to study the relationship with Kamiyama Mitsunoshin, the 14th Governor General of Taiwan and Chen Cheng-po. Mr. O.K. Lo (盧藹芹) carefully polished earlier versions of our English text. We express our heartfelt thanks to all these people and institutions that made our study and interchange between Taiwan and Yamaguchi so fruitful.)

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.cmmedia.com.tw/home/articles/2877>