

新書「深山」為華裔少年而寫

陳泰倫盼讀者認識中華文化藝術 紓解壓力 重拾自信

●不是所有青少年的情感與興趣都可以用哈利的魔杖一揮而去，但有時時候，與一個人的相遇，可以讓你知道人生中有許多美好的事等著你去發掘，現在的廣告，也比較可以忍受。

華裔作家陳泰倫(Terence Cheng)的新書「深山」(Deep in the Mountains)就描寫了這樣的一場相會。朱明士的華裔少年Tony，是班上唯一的華人，又是瘦弱個子，老是被人嘲弄欺負。他一氣之下，在學校樓上塗鴉，畫了一幅學校大樓裏的漫畫像，還把一個嘲笑他的老師的新車也畫成一輛花車。

Tony開闢藝術的父母不知如何跟他學習認識人生不能事事皆隨心，只是在暑假中把他送到上海，在舅舅的餐館打工。Tony在上海認識了著名的山水畫家朱紀德，從他身上看到對藝術的熱愛。

陳泰倫和這畫的寫作過程，這不是陳泰倫第一次拿回靈變的中國近代史上的大動亂為寫作題材。他的處女作「天之子」(Sons of Heaven)是以次安門事變做背景，正在進行中的作品則是以南京大屠殺為背景。陳泰倫說他雖然在台灣的出生，但是因為在美國長大，對於中國的歷史並不想了解，直到進了研究所才開始

他的執著，可以作為亂世裏的定心石，Tony也學會如何將自己的憤怒轉為藝術上的靈感。

朱紀德是畫界名人，「深止」也是他的一幅畫的名稱，不過Tony這個角色和兩人之間的故事，則是虛構的。這是Warson-Gospel出版社的「藝術相連」(Art Do-cuments)系列中的一本。陳泰倫說，這個系列是以應用小說的題材，把歷史上著名藝術家的人生事蹟，介紹給年輕的讀者。

陳泰倫說，畫時出版就只要求他以亞倫藝術界為對象，並沒有指名與誰。他選擇了朱九章，首先是教他的畫外吸引，同時他本身經歷過文化大革命，因為他學的是傳統山水，承受折磨，但他不想重演了這段痛苦的日子，而且藝術的生涯還要更加艱辛，給了他活到1996年才以104歲的高齡過世，給了陳泰倫和這畫的寫作題材。

這不但是陳泰倫第一次拿回靈變的中國近代史上的大動亂為寫作題材。他的處女作「天之子」(Sons of Heaven)是以次安門事變做背景，正在進行中的作品則是以南京大屠殺為背景。陳泰倫說他雖然在台灣的出生，但是因為在美國長大，對於中國的歷史並不想了解，直到進了研究所才開始



↑「深山」的封面。



→陳泰倫。

據中國歷史，因此他特別重視高古，甚至可能消化吸收，並將之轉化成藝術作品。

他說中國的近代史大書，對親身經過的人來說，是痛苦的記憶。他們之所以來到美國，也是為了忘記那會去消繪。但是作為下一代華人，他可以比較冷靜地看待，把應該變成自己族群的文化。他很擔心，如果下一代的年輕華人不知道自己父母或祖父母的過去，這樣歷史就會永遠被遺忘。

為了了解中國的人生經驗和對藝術的語言，陳泰倫做了很多研究，他特別感謝紐約的中國藝術畫師文長夫婦(Leon & Karen Wexler)，他們是比他大20年的老朋友，對他的藝術有很深的了解。

至於Tony的故事，他指出有一部分是他自己成長的經驗，在書裏承受巨大的成功壓力，在外祖國被人感謝就負，避免覺得做中國人特別辛苦。不過因為他從小就喜歡藝術，

給了他一個窗口，這也成為Tom成長的重要契機。

「深山」的預告是青少年，陳泰倫說這是一段最難熬的時光，如果能遇到好的人，給予好的影響，自己的情緒又有好的出口，就會過得比較順利。透過對中華文化歷史的了解，Tom變得更有自信，這是他親身的體會，他也希望能夠帶給美國的華裔孩子，以身為華人為榮。

(文：謝朝宗圖：陳泰倫提供)

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New Book “Deep in The Mountains”

Written for young readers, by Terrence Cheng

He wishes that readers will learn and appreciate Chinese culture, civilization and art, and release pressure through self-realization. Consequently, regain self-confidence.

Not all the anger and dilemmas of a teenager can be waved away by the magic wand of Harry Potter. Yet, an encounter can make you realize that there are many beautiful things that await you to enjoy and explore. It makes the pain in the present life bearable.

Chinese author Terrence Cheng has created such a youth named Tony in his new book “Deep in The Mountains.” Living in the Bronx in NYC, Tony is short, fat and the only Chinese in his junior high school class. Often laughed at by his schoolmates, out of anger and frustration, he spray paints the school walls and a teacher’s car because the teacher also embarrasses him in class.

Tony’s parents own and work hard at their Chinese restaurant. They try to make Tony understand that life is not a rose garden. While getting nowhere with Tony’s rebellious attitude, his parents decide to send him to Shanghai during his summer vacation to work at his uncle’s restaurant where he meets Chinese painter Zhu Qizhan. Mr. Zhu lived through twentieth century China’s painful historical events. Zhu never let the tormenting pain destroy his love and passion for painting. Zhu’s attachment and love for painting pulled him through the turbulent times of the twentieth century China. Through Zhu’s example of determination, Tony learns how to turn anger into inspiration, art, and strength.

Zhu Qizhan was a real person. “Deep in The Mountains” is the title of one of his paintings. But, Tony and his story is fictional. Publisher Watson Guptill has a series of Art Encounters books. “Deep in The Mountains” is one of them. Terrence Cheng said that these books are written in a fictional style introducing lifetime stories of artists with historical background for young readers.

Cheng said that the publisher didn’t appoint him to write about any artist in particular. It was up to him to pick his historical figure. Cheng chose Zhu Qizhan not only because he was attracted by Zhu’s paintings but was also amazed by his century long career and life experience. Zhu passed away in 1996 at the age of 104. Zhu Qizhan’s talent and traditional way of scenery painting had made him a target during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. He had suffered tremendously as an artist and a fundamentalist as far as Chinese culture is concerned. His passion to paint enabled him to survive all the torture and hardship. His spirit was never defeated despite his physical torment. His legendary lifetime story gave Cheng abundant writing material.

This is not the first time Cheng has written a novel with Chinese history as the background. His first book “Sons of Heaven” was set during the 1989 Tiananmen Square event.

He is working on the finishing his next and third novel set during the Nanjing Massacre (Rape of Nanking). Cheng said that even though he was born in Taiwan, he grew up and was educated in the United States with

little understanding of Chinese history and cultural origins. Not until graduate school did he begin to study Chinese history. Now he says, the more he learns about China and Chinese history, the more he wants to learn, so he can understand Chinese history and Chinese culture and potentially use it in his writing.

Cheng says that modern Chinese history is filled with wars, suffering, misery and separation of blood ties. The generation that lived through these painful times is filled with scarred memories. Many of them came to the United States to forget those days. They don't want to look back, or even talk about them. Yet, to the children of that scarred generation they are historical stories. They should be able to calmly understand, analyze, and let the world know and the history to record what had happened to hurt so many Chinese so deeply for so long. If we Chinese people cannot bear to look back and discuss our bleeding wounds how can we expect the American Society and the world to know or understand what we have been through? Cheng is worried that if the younger generation of Chinese don't know what their parents and grandparents have gone through, these sections of modern Chinese history will be forever forgotten and buried.

Cheng has done extensive research about Zhu Qizhan's life and his artistic way of thinking. He gives special thanks go to New York City Chinese art and painting dealer Mr. and Mrs. Leon & Karen Wender. They had become great friends with Zhu Qizhan for over 20 years before Mr. Zhu's passing in 1996. The Wenders have great respect and admiration for Zhu and his work as well as warm memories.

As for the fictional story of Tony, Cheng said that a good part of it is a portrayal of his own home and growing up experience. At home, Tony feels the pressure to become a successful person. In the outside world, he has to endure discrimination and peer pressure. He cannot help to feel that it is hard to be a successful Chinese American in the American Society. Fortunately, his love of art opens a window for him to view the sky and breathe in fresh air. This love of art becomes a turning point in Tony's seemingly hopeless life.

"Deep in The Mountains" is written mainly for young readers, especially teenagers looking for a direction in the vast world. Cheng says that it is difficult to find balance in a teenage life, a difficult time to endure and grow. If a young person can have good people in his life giving him guidance and good influence, plus a good outlet for his growing pains, his teenage days will pass smoothly. As for Tony, he gains his self-confidence through the understanding of Chinese history and culture. This is Cheng's personal experience as well. The message Terrence Cheng would like to convey through Tony to all the American Chinese youngsters is, 'Be proud as a Chinese.'