

**READING THE TRAVEL PAINTINGS OF
CHENG HAW CHIEN**

NGAN CHEW PEI

**CULTURAL CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

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Matric No: RGB150001

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READING THE TRAVEL PAINTINGS OF CHENG HAW CHIEN

ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, academic research on Chinese ink brush painting is relatively uncommon and it is significantly rare to see a research on Chinese ink brush painting artist who possesses the three perfections—poem, calligraphy and painting—like Cheng Haw Chien. There has been a decline of artists in practicing the three arts of poetry, calligraphy and painting in the modern China due to their social system. In Malaysia, access to relevant resources on the three arts no doubt not comparable to the China. However, Cheng has successfully acquired the skills of producing the three arts through years of practice and persistent.

Traditional Chinese ink brush painting has such a long history and that it is never easy to breakaway from what is so stagnant in term of its style and its techniques, and to be able to create something fresh and unique. This research intended to examine the new techniques and the style Cheng Haw Chien has showcased in his travel paintings as well as to interpret the poetry inscribed in his travel paintings so to allow readers or viewers to appreciate his artworks. These travel paintings capture Cheng's travel experiences like a journal—a record of subjective experiences, reflections, and with profusion of literati tradition.

The new techniques and style Cheng has developed is based from his strong understanding of the traditional ink brush techniques and with years of practices and experimenting on ink, colour and different types of paper. Visual analysis of Cheng's travel paintings is performed by references to the literati painting theory and Lingnan painting theory. Interpretation of poetry inscribed and its meaning in relation to the travel paintings are perform based on the approach by Jonathan Chaves. It is this poetic inscription—capturing one's subjective experiences—that has shaped Cheng's travelling experiences and register his experience as a traveler.

Through this analysis of Cheng Haw Chien's travel painting, we can see that Cheng is able to capture and to present to the viewer his collective travelling experiences and his life as an artist, in both visual and verbal images, allowing viewers to appreciate his travel ink brush paintings in a whole new experience.

Keywords: Chinese ink brush painting, travel painting, Cheng Haw Chien

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MEMBACA LUKISAN PERJALANAN CHENG HAW CHIEN

ABSTRAK

Di Malaysia, penyelidikan akademik mengenai lukisan berus dakwat Cina agak jarang dan terutamanya penyelidikan mengenai artis lukisan berus dakwat Cina yang mempunyai tiga kesempurnaan—puisi, kaligrafi dan lukisan—seperti Cheng Haw Chien. Pada zaman moden ini, artis China yang mengamalkan tiga seni ini—puisi, kaligrafi dan lukisan—sudah menurun disebabkan oleh sistem sosial di China. Di Malaysia, akses kepada sumber-sumber yang berkaitan dengan ketiga-tiga kesenian ini tidak setanding dengan yang ada di China. Walau bagaimanapun, Cheng Haw Chien telah berjaya memperolehi kemahiran menghasilkan ketiga-tiga seni ini melalui bertahun-tahun amalan.

Lukisan berus dakwat tradisional Cina mempunyai sejarah yang panjang dan ia tidak mudah dipisahkan daripada apa yang sudah begitu stagnan dari segi gaya dan tekniknya, dan mencipta sesuatu yang baru dan unik. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji teknik-teknik baru dan gaya Cheng Haw Chien dalam mempamerkan lukisan perjalanan beliau serta untuk mentafsirkan puisi yang ditulis berkaitan dengan lukisan perjalanannya supaya membolehkan pembaca atau penonton menikmati karya seninya. Lukisan perjalanan ini menawan pengalaman perjalanan Cheng seperti jurnal-rekod pengalaman subjektif, refleksi dan kaya dengan tradisi literati.

Teknik dan gaya baru yang Cheng pameran adalah berdasarkan pemahamannya terhadap teknik berus dakwat tradisional dan dengan bertahun-tahun amalan dan bereksperimen dengan dakwat, warna dan pelbagai jenis kertas. Analisis visual lukisan perjalanan Cheng dilakukan dengan merujuk kepada teori lukisan literati dan teori lukisan Lingnan. Tafsiran puisi yang tertulis dan maknanya berhubung dengan lukisan perjalanan dilakukan berdasarkan pendekatan oleh Jonathan Chaves. Ia adalah inskripsi puisi—

menangkap pengalaman subjektif seseorang—yang telah membentuk pengalaman perjalanan Cheng and merakamkan pengalamannya sebagai pengembara.

Melalui analisis lukisan perjalanan Cheng Haw Chien ini, kita dapat melihat bahawa Cheng telah menangkap dan membentangkan kepada penonton pengalaman perjalanan kolektifnya dan kehidupannya sebagai seorang artis melalui imej visual and lisan, ini membolehkan penonton menghargai lukisan berus dakwat dalam pengalaman baru.

Kata kunci: Lukisan dakwat China, lukisan perjalanan, Cheng Haw Chien

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

This research stems from my interest in Chinese ink brush painting and in particular ink brush painting with poetry inscribed by the same artist who has produced the painting. This research is to study the travel paintings of Mr. Cheng Haw Chien—artist who produced painting and inscribed on the painting the poetry he composed himself. Mr. Cheng who is the proponent of Lingnan School of Painting. His travel paintings contributed as the highest number in comparison to the other genre such as birds, flora, fruits or human figures. In these travel paintings, we will see how he enriched the content of his artworks by selectively depicting what he saw and expressing how he feels in the poetry during his travelling journey. Also, how his in-depth knowledge in the Chinese literature—the classical poems—influenced and shaped his travelling experience as well as his creation of these travel paintings. Cheng’s selection of styles and techniques on the travel paintings were critically examined to see how his styles and techniques are different from that of the Literati and Lingnan counter parts. The poetry inscribed on the travel paintings were analyzed to provide an understanding of the poetry contents and how the poetry meaning influence the painting as a whole.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

This research investigates Cheng’s approaches toward a series of travel ink brush paintings, of how the poetic inscriptions provide additional implicit meaning in his artwork and how the literati tradition has indirectly influenced and shaped Cheng’s travelling experiences in the contemporary times.

To achieve these aims, this research is guided by the following questions: -

1. What are the distinct styles and techniques Cheng Haw Chien uses in his travel paintings?

2. How does the poetic inscriptions—as a way of registering one’s subjective experiences, shapes Cheng’s travelling experience?
3. How does the travelling experience in turn helps him to reformulate the Chinese ink brush painting tradition?

1.3 Scope of Research

1.3.1 Delimitation

The travel paintings selected in this research for analysis are focusing primarily on the mountain series, the waterfall series and the animal series. These series are about 82 pieces of artworks from a total of approximately 160 travel paintings. These travel paintings are selected for Cheng has specifically inscribed or mentioned¹ the name of the country or place he visited. The paintings are selected from the 1980s to 2000s because during this period Cheng began to actively produce travel paintings and created an innovative style in ink brush painting that was distinct from the Literati and Lingnan tradition. Before this period, Cheng’s paintings of landscape and animals were not directly related to travel. I suggest that the paintings produced after the 1980s used travelling as a thematic device that significantly changes his approach to the ink brush painting, subsequently producing a contemporary composite style of ink brush painting.

This research did not discuss the calligraphy and the technical aspect such as prosody and poetry composition in composing a poem. This research only explores in depth into the meaning of poetry and its contribution to the overall artistic value of the painting.

¹ Some of the selected animal series painting were not inscribed with the name of a place. The place of these paintings was confirmed by Cheng in personal interview.

1.3.2 Limitation

Some technical and expressive terms used in describing the travel paintings in Chinese, specifically the terms used in the poetry, may not have equivalent terms in English and therefore need to be translated with additional explanation for the poetry presented or expressed in the related footnote.

1.4 Significance of Research

In Malaysia, academic research on Chinese ink brush painting is relatively uncommon. It is significantly rare to see a research on Chinese ink brush painting artists who possess the three perfections—poem, calligraphy and painting—like Cheng Haw Chien. Painting and calligraphy—the twin art², are ‘an expression of the highest levels of scholarship, sensibility and taste’ (Sullivan 1974, 17). The poem or colophon inscribed in the painting is ‘as a living body, an accretion of qualities, imaginative, literary, historical, personal, that grows with time, putting on an ever-richer dress of meaning, commentary and association with the years’ (Sullivan 1974, 20). The poetry inscribed in the painting became an essential part of the total work of art when literati painters started to produce paintings that are expressive rather than to capture the visual experiences (Sullivan 1974, 46). When a painting is inscribed with poems, they reinforce each other and elevates the meaning of the painting far beyond the visual and verbal images (Sullivan 1974, 48).

“The subtle and profound marriage of ideas and forms, words and images, was a reflection of Chinese traditional culture in its maturity, when the scholar class has turned in on itself, employing a language, in art as in the written world, that was difficult, full of allusions, accessible only to members of the tiny aristocracy of letters at the apex of the Chinese social pyramid. Today in China their social and intellectual attitudes are naturally branded as

² It is called twin art as both art uses the same tool and medium—the brush and ink.

reactionary and elitist, those of a discredited class of ‘feudal oppressors’. We would be pardoned for thinking that, under the People’s Republic, the aristocratic union of the three arts of painting, poetry and calligraphy would have been an early and inevitable victim of the egalitarian, anti-intellectual mood of the times, to say nothing of the effect of Socialist Realism on the art of painting itself.” (Sullivan 1974, 55-56)

As Michael Sullivan has highlighted, there was a decline of artists in practicing the three arts of poetry, calligraphy and painting in the modern China, not to mention artists in Malaysia. Cheng Haw Chien, however, successfully acquired the skills of producing the three arts through years of practice.

Cheng Haw Chien is a Lingnan proponent and he is also trained under the traditional ink brush painting techniques, in this research through his travel paintings, we can see that he reformulated his ink brush painting through novel techniques as well as on subject matter selection. His contribution to the ink brush painting is significant specifically when it comes to selection of subject matters. Some of the subject matters he has selected are for instance The Himalayas, Niagara Falls, Penguins, Kangaroos. These are new subject matters that are not within the traditional painting genre. The combination use of techniques—traditional techniques or Lingnan’s techniques or new techniques—are the emphasis of the Lingnan School of Painting for creating a contemporary Chinese ink brush painting. The subject matter selected needs to be always move with the times and suitable to the contemporary situation.

This research is aimed to be a significant study of Cheng’s style and techniques in his travel paintings and in understanding of his new composite style is different from that of the Literati and Lingnan traditional style of painting. His objective observation and subjective experiences in which he recorded both in the painting and in the poetry during

his travelling journey is studied as well. This collective travelling experiences which Cheng gathered like a journal in the form of poetry and inscribed on the ink brush painting, allowed viewers to see the subtle relationship between the painting and the poetry and the characteristics that has shaped his travelling experiences. Cheng's travel motive and practice of the three arts—poetry, calligraphy and painting, has enabled him to produce this innovative travel paintings. These travel paintings present to the viewers his collective travelling experiences and his life as an artist in both visual and verbal images, allowing viewers to appreciate the ink brush painting in a whole new experience.

1.5 Literature Review

The long history of ink brush painting can be traced back to the 4th century AD³ in China. Since then, many scholars and writers had published research papers, articles and books on ink-brush painting. However, publications presented in English are much limited but the Chinese publications are no doubt huge.

In Malaysia, the Chinese ink brush painting activities can be traced back to 1929. Through the years, documentation on Chinese ink brush painting development and its practitioners remains very much limited. Non-scholarly articles on ink-brush painting and the respective artists can be seen at times in newspaper, magazine or exhibition catalogues.⁴ Scholarly articles, research papers or books on ink-brush painting in Malaysia are however seems to be insufficient. Research on Cheng Haw Chien is practically non-exist. This literature review is therefore conducted in considering the scholarly articles published particularly in China and exclusively on prefaces or articles

³ As only during this period, painters started to speak of their own works and paintings of this period are still extant. The most famous painter at that time and still being discussed was Gu Kai Zhi (c.344-406AD).

⁴ Such as Nanyang Siang Pau (南洋商报), Guang Hua Yit Poh (光华日报), The Star and a few others.

written for the publication of Cheng's art collections, poetry collections and also those relevant texts found in exhibition catalogues.

The literature review is split into two main parts: (1) The Three Perfections – Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting, (2) Poetic Inscription on Painting.

1.5.1 The Three Perfections – Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting

An artist who possesses the three skills: skilled at painting, good at calligraphy, and capable of composing poem is characterized as a three perfections artist. In an exhibition catalogue, Chen Chuan Xi⁵ stated that Cheng Haw Chien possesses these three skills, he is therefore recognized as a three perfections artist. Chen continued to highlight in the catalogue that the brushstrokes in Cheng's painting comply closely with the basis of calligraphy brushwork⁶ in variances in his painting complemented with little traces of Western painting method (Chen 2013a), and his composed poems were of fine classical poems. Yu (2013) discussed the aesthetic perspective of Cheng's use of ink and brush as well as his artistic conception (*yi jing* 意境) and creation. In his paper, he has focused on Cheng's *Cun* techniques (*cun fa* 皴法) – specifically the brushstroke like raindrop (*yu dian cun* 雨点皴) and the use of ink and colour.

In an article by Dr. Daphne Rosenweig, she suggested four distinct paths a modern Chinese painter often follows. The Chinese painters either firstly, change to a completely Western style of art, or secondly, incorporate elements of Western art into traditional Chinese art framework. Thirdly, they ignore the contemporary events and concentrate only the traditional. Finally, in the last path artists rejuvenate the traditional Chinese art,

⁵ Chen Chuan Xi, art historian and professor of Renmin University of China.

⁶ Basis of calligraphy strokes as explained by Sakanishi (1957, 89): "4 aspects of brushwork - muscle, flesh, bones, spirit. Short and interrupted strokes are called muscle. Those that rise and fall, forming inner reality, are called flesh. Those strokes which are firm and straight both in life and death are called bones, while lines which are undefeatable are called spirit."

using modern concepts and approaches. She cited Cheng as belonging to this fourth category. Rosenzweig pointed out that the modernizing of Chinese traditional ink brush painting was in fact the artists' response to "the demands of contemporary life by drawing from the inner life of ancient painting and calligraphy" (1980, 58). She continued to comment briefly that Cheng's painting was perfect in terms of colour, balance and mood and that Cheng has placed the calligraphic passages in the painting giving a good balance to the artwork as a whole. This is noticeable in painting such as "*Plum Blossom*" of 1978 (Rosenzweig 1980, 52).

Cheng's painting is equipped with the Lingnan School style, showing the traits of traditional Chinese painting as well as Western painting techniques (Liu 1983). However, in a recent exhibition catalogue, Chen Chuan Xi suggests Cheng's painting has little traces of Western painting (Chen 2013a). For this particular text, Chen may have focused on Cheng's traditional category of paintings instead of his Lingnan style painting. This is obvious that Cheng's waterfall series travel painting had implemented the single perspective view point which is a Western painting technique. Art critic, Chen Xue Feng highlighted that the artworks of Cheng in the 1980s and 1990s pursued the aesthetics of the Lingnan School. From these artworks, Cheng devotes himself to the expressive mode of traditional ink brush painting as well as integrating the Western painting technique in his paintings (Chen 2008, 231).

1.5.2 Poetic Inscription on Painting

In two publications related to Cheng's poetry collection, the authors of these publications perceived Cheng's poem mainly from two different views. One group of authors regarded Cheng's poetry as a standalone piece of work - a literature while the other group deliberated the poems in the presence of painting as a whole artwork.

Both Sim (2002) and Lim (n.d) mentioned in the preface of the first publication, that Cheng's poetry complied strictly to the technicality of composing a classical poem. The subject matters and the contents are however fresh and contemporary. The subject matters are often down to local flavours such as tropical fruits (durian, rambutan) and local heritage sites in Penang and Melaka. Other subject matters that Cheng had put in his poetry are the inspirations sourced from his vast and far travelling – the Himalaya, River Kwai Thailand, Tahiti and many more. In the second publication of Cheng's poetry collection, the first preface, Wong Dong Hai (2013) shared a similar view with Sim Mow Yu (2002) on the subject matters in Cheng's poem. He presented a few selected poetries by Cheng on the local scenery (Penang) and tropical fruits (durian). He perceived the poetry of these themes a breakthrough in the realm of poem creation for the subject matters absolutely of local flavours. In another preface of the same publication, Chen Wei De (2013b) depicted the meaning of a few poetries of Cheng based on his own interpretation. His depiction was purely on the content of the poetry without considering the inclination of the poetry towards the artistic value of the painting. He concluded that if one was to meticulously read and interpret Cheng's poetry, whether on its content or on its artistic conception, one should be able to deeply appreciate the beauty of the poems. In the article by Kerk Vern Ho (2007, 223), the calligraphic form of the poetic inscription in Cheng's painting was highly appreciated as an elegant and sturdy regular grass style (*xing cao* 行草) representing melodious lines that add in artistic effects to the grass, rocks, trees and woods in the painting. This calligraphic poetic inscription gives a strong enhancement to the beauty of the painting. Chen Xue Feng stated that the poetry inscribed in Cheng's splash-ink artworks accentuated his skillful composition which may elevate and broaden the imagination of the viewers (2008, 231). On the other hand, Shen (n.d), provided an overarching view of the content of Cheng's poem in seeing them as having

a touch of melancholy. It should be mentioned here that the discussion up to this point of writing is purely around Cheng's poetry and the poetry in Cheng's painting.

Many have observed that Cheng stresses on traditional ink brush method with application of the western painting technique into his artworks. However, these articles did not discuss the style and techniques that Cheng has introduced in his series of travel paintings and the poetic inscription—as a way of recording subjective experiences—that has shaped Cheng's travel experiences as well as register Cheng's experience as a traveler. Cheng's concept of travelling as an approach helps him to fuse all things together—combine of techniques, composite of styles. And one of the innovative way is through the use of poetry in expressing his subjective experience as a traveler which cannot be expressed through painting. It is this approach that differentiates his paintings from his contemporaries. Therefore, this research is aimed to analyze Cheng's travel painting together with his poetry inscription in reflecting Cheng Haw Chien attitude towards his travelling experiences.

1.6 Research Methodology

The main research methodology for this research is interviews and with art historical analysis. Data were collected mainly from multiple face-to-face interviews with Cheng Haw Chien. Both structured and semi-structured interview, were used as primary source of reference when performing an analysis on Cheng's travel painting. Secondary sources such as prefaces, articles, artworks and poetry presented in this research were sourced from various publications on Cheng's art collections and poetry collections. Books, newspaper articles, encyclopedias and journals were other additional sources of references.

Analysis and discussion on the styles and techniques of the artworks were conducted via close referencing to the literati painting theory and Lingnan painting theory on the basis that Cheng Haw Chien's travel painting is a combination of these styles and techniques. Interpretation and discussion on Cheng's poems and its relationship to the travel painting were based on the approach by Jonathan Chaves⁷. The following sections present the details of the related art theories and the approaches by Jonathan Chaves adopted in this research.

1.6.1 Literati Painting Theory

Literati painting theory is the spin-off of the traditional ink brush painting. Chinese art historian, Teng Ku, defined literati painting and painters in a broader context with three characteristics: "first, artists who are scholar-officials are distinguished from the artisan painter; second, art is seen as an expressive outlet for scholars in their spare time; third, the style of scholar-artists is different from that of academicians⁸" (Bush 2012, 1). The second and third characteristics evolved through the passage of time. Artists of different periods (or centuries) may have followed different literati theory. For this research, only certain literati painting theory discussed by James Cahill and Susan Bush⁹ are used for the analysis of Cheng's travel painting. The selection criteria were based on the information captured from a few interviews with Cheng Haw Chien and relevant to the selected travel paintings for this research. This includes five characteristics as below:

- a) Vibrant and resonant (*qi yun sheng dong* 气韵生动)

⁷ Jonathan Chaves, PhD Columbia University, 1971, Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The approaches are from Jonathan Chaves's essay titled "Meaning beyond the Painting: The Chinese Painter as Poet" in "Words and Images: Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting" edited by Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong.

⁸ Academic painters' art focuses highly on details, realistic representation of things and use of bright colour. Literati painters' (or scholar artist) art on the other hand emphasis on capturing the idea of things, focus on ink play and brushwork.

⁹ James Cahill (1926 – 2014), art historian. Refer to his publication titled "The Theory of Literati Painting in China (Section of Doctoral Dissertation). Susah Bush's book titled "The Chinese Literati on Painting"

- b) Good brushwork with a sound structure (*gu fa yong bi* 骨法用笔)
- c) Expressiveness of art
- d) “To sketch idea’ (*xie yi* 写意)
- e) Symbolism

The two fundamental principles emphasized in the traditional ink brush painting that still remain of importance in the literati painting is as mentioned in (a) and (b) above, that is to be vibrant and resonant (*qi yun sheng dong* 气韵生动) (Lai 1992, 6), which literally means “a cosmic harmony, energy or rhythm, whose reverberation produces the movement of life” (Sullivan n.d, 33). And a painting must have a good brushwork that gives a sound structure (*gu fa yong bi*) and have a life of its own (Lai 1992, 6). Michael Sullivan interpreted this principle as ‘bone-means’, referring to the ‘strength and vitality of the brushstroke itself, through which the awareness of the *chi-yun* (*qi-yun*) is conveyed and a sense of structure expressed’ (Sullivan n.d, 33). This means subtle, vigorous, rapid brushwork, moist and dry brushwork. It should be mentioned that effective handling of ink and water are of the importance in the traditional painting.

In addition to those principles, literati painting is an expressive outlet for the literati artist to lodge his feeling of the moment when he paints (refers to (c)). That is, to lodge feeling, emotion, one’s conception, or more relevant by lodging the expression or mood of the scene according to the artist’s intent and mood (Cahill 2011, 27-44).

“To sketch idea’ (*xie yi* 写意) (refers to (d)) is another literati theory emphasizing on not seeking formal likeness¹⁰. ‘Not seeking formal likeness’ in painting however shall

¹⁰ This statement of “not seeking formal likeness” evolved from Shu Shih’s original statement in describing painting from a literati perspective: “If anyone discusses painting in terms of formal likeness, his understanding is nearly that of a child” which shows his expressive function of art. This quote is often referred by various artists and art critics in the later development of literati painting - *lun hua yi xing shi, jian yu er tong lin* (论画以形式, 见与儿童邻) (Bush 2012, 32).

follow the guiding principle of natural order, *Li* (理) which to the beholder an inherent “rightness and naturalness” (Bush 2012, 119-123, Cahill 2011, 52-57) . This idea or conception (*yi* 意) denotes “any object of the mind existing in a thought or a formulated thought” and also “the idea (significance) of the brushwork” (Cahill 2011, 52-53). Or when combined form the dictum of “conception precedes the brush” (*yi zai bi xian* 意在笔先). This means before the artist put his brush down on the paper, in his mind, he must have already captured the essence of the object as well as the composition of the overall image to be painted.

For the literati artist, moral symbolism comes with the choice of subject (refers to (e)). For them painting is an ink play and the use of subdued colours to express the artist’s mood or emotion. It is a common practice for the literati artist to inscribe poems and colophons on his/her painting (Bush 2012, 185).

1.6.2 Lingnan Painting Theory

The Lingnan theory of art used in this research is strongly based on Gao Jian Fu’s (高剑父) theory of painting.¹¹ This theory emphasizes on inheriting only the “good properties” of the traditional painting. Gao Jian Fu’s underlying principle was that one should be selective and flexible in adopting traditional painting method. He highlighted two traditional painting principles that may be applied to modern ink brush painting i.e. the two fundamental principles: *qi yun sheng dong* and *gu fa yong bi* as mentioned in the above section.

Gao Jian Fu’s painting theory is also inclusive of new methods which are not originated from Chinese thought and philosophy. These include approaches of Western

¹¹ Refer to an essay by Wong Shiu Hon titled “Kao Chien-Fu’s Theory of Painting” (Wong 1972) and Ralph Croizier’s “Art and Revolution in Modern China, The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting 1906 – 1951” (Croizier 1988).

painting based on Western humanist representations of three-dimensional form such as fixed perspectives and chiaroscuro, as well as an expansive selection of subject matter that reflects modern life and that the subject matter selected must ‘move with the time and suitable to the contemporary situation’ (Croizier 1988, 110); and the composition of painting should not have fixed rules, that is, it is not necessary to be compliant with the traditional composition such as having a host¹² and guest (*bin zhu* 宾主), or objects must be arranged in a loose and dense (*shu mi* 疏密) manner. Instead, one should depend on the form used and decide of a suitable composition.

1.6.3 Approaches used by Jonathan Chaves

In Jonathan’s approach, it is first to translate Cheng Haw Chien’s poetry in the painting into English. Then make a comparison between what is described in the poem with what is visually depicted in the painting. This includes the objects, the subject matter, the place, and the time period (season and time of the day). Finally provide a suggestive conclusion of the poem-painting relationship to see how ‘the poem adds images to the total visual structure of the experience’ (Chaves 1991, 444).

1.7 Chapter Outline

This dissertation is organized into five chapters (this chapter included) to examine the travel paintings of Cheng Haw Chien. This chapter identifies the gap and scope of the research, providing the significance of this research. Chapter Two focuses on this historical background and the development of the Chinese ink brush painting in Malaysia and the Lingnan School of Painting. A subsection has been dedicated to the travel writing and its evolvement into travel painting since analysis of the travel painting is the main focus of this research. Chapter Three presents Cheng Haw Chien’s biography and his

¹² Host is the primary subject, and guest is the secondary object.

roles as an artist and poet and his motive to travel, as part of the attempt to understand why he travels. Chapter Four examines Cheng Haw Chien's travel paintings, these paintings are categorized into three main categories: the Mountain Series, the Waterfall Series and the Animal Series. The Mountain Series painting includes analysis of the Himalayas painting, Mount Lu and Huangshan painting. The Waterfall Series and Animal Series painting comprises of the Iguazu Falls in Brazil, Niagara Falls in Canada, and Victoria Falls in Africa, Penguins and Kangaroos during his trip to Australia. This fourth chapter analyzed and discussed the new techniques implemented by Cheng Haw Chien in his travel paintings and interpretation is given towards the poem inscribed on these travel paintings to see how the additional images and metaphor identified in the poems contribute additional meaning to the travel paintings as a whole. And it is in his travel paintings and his poems that he recorded his travelling experiences and his life as an artist like a journal and the characteristics that has uniquely shaped his travelling experiences. Chapter Five is the summary and conclusion. Finally, for romanization of Chinese in this research, Pinyin system is adopted.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHINESE INK BRUSH PAINTING AND TRAVEL PAINTING

2.1 Brief History of the development of ink brush painting in Malaysia

The earliest notable event of Chinese ink brush painting recorded in Malaya¹³ was the Huangshan Style (*Huangshan Hua Pai* 黄山画派) Chinese Landscape Painting Exhibition held in Singapore and Penang in 1934 (Wong 1987). According to Chung (2010, 599), in the 1920s, students enrolled in the art institutes such as Hua Qiao Art School¹⁴ (*Hua Qiao Mei Shu Xue Xiao* 华侨美术学校) had selected western art subject instead of Chinese art¹⁵ because ink brush painting activities at that moment of time was mainly as for contributing to one's inner tranquility rather than for making a living.

In a recent book published by Tan (2016, 161), he stated that the local ink brush painting started in the early 20th century here in Malaysia when a group of Chinese artists from China migrated to Malaya, and they were mainly from the southern part of China. These Chinese artists were mostly influenced by the Shanghai Style (*Hai Shang Hua Pai* 海上画派) and they were actively promoting the Chinese art in Malaysia. By the end of 1920s, local calligrapher Au Yang Xue Feng from Kuala Lumpur established *Nanyang Shu Hua She* (南洋书画社) with a group of people from the art circle, for promoting the Chinese art (Tan 2016, 161). This was the first officially registered local art group (Chung 2010, 589). It was also stated in an article by Wong Nai Chin¹⁶ that the establishment of Nanyang Calligraphy and Painting Society¹⁷ in 1929 purported to signify Chinese Art

¹³ The Federation of Malaya gained independence on 31 Aug 1957 and on 16 Sept 1963 Malaysia was formed.

¹⁴ Hua Qiao Art School was established in Oct 1922 and ceased operation in 1924. See Chung (1999, 34).

¹⁵ Chinese art here refers to ink brush painting as well as calligraphy.

¹⁶ Wong Nai Chin was a painter who graduated from Nanyang Academic of Fine Art, and taught in both Malaysia Institute of Art and Central Academy of Art.

¹⁷ Nanyang Calligraphy and Painting Society was a translation by Teoh Kian Hoon which refers to *Nanyang Shu Hua She* (南洋书画社).

Society began during this time in this region (Wong 1987). However, this art group survived just a short period of time (Tan 2016, 161).

The early development of Chinese ink brush painting in Malaysia was influenced by the Chinese migrants graduated from fine art institutions in China. They came to Malaya either to exhibit their artworks or to settle down for good. Apart from Huangshan Style exhibition recorded as mentioned above, other Chinese art activities in this region can be attributed to the Salon Art Society (renamed later as Singapore Chinese Fine Arts Society) in Singapore formed in 1935 by a group of painters who were mostly alumni from Shanghai School of Fine Art, the Shanghai School of Art and the Shanghai Art University (Wong 1987). Members of this art society are such as Chen Chong Swee, Lim Hak Tai, See Hiang Tuo, Huang Pao Fong, Chen Wen Hsi, Liu Sien The and Wu Tsai Yen. They frequently exhibited their artworks.

The founding of Nanyang Academic of Fine Arts (NAFA) by Lim Hak Tai in 1938 was considered as another milestone for the development of Chinese ink brush painting (Wong 1987). Chung (1999, 99) stated that Chinese ink brush painting started to show significant growth during the 1940s and 50s with the Chinese migrants to Malaya. Among these Chinese migrants, some were brilliant ink brush painting artists, such as Chen Wen Hsi, Cheong Soo Pieng etc. The setting up of Chinese ink brush painting class in NAFA and the active involvement of these artists in promoting Chinese ink brush painting in the art arena is pushing the ink brush painting to further heights.

The first-generation ink brush artists in Malaysia such as Lim Hak Tai, Chen Wen Hsi, Chen Chong Swee, Cheong Soo Pieng and others had set a profound based for the artists of subsequent generations. For instance, the open minded Chen Wen Hsi had strongly inspired his students and to freely present their individual personality in their respective artworks (Wong 1987). Chen Wen Hsi emphasized on observing the nature inspiration

(*guan cha zhi ran* 观察自然) to produce artworks with one's own unique style and creation (Chung 2010, 600). Chung Yu agreed that Chen Wen Hsi has assimilated the realistic approach of the Lingnan techniques (1999, 103). In depicting his subject matters, Chen Wen Hsi studied his subjects it with sympathy, insight and child-like enthusiasm. He imparted life to the subjects, and abstracting what are essentials in the subject nature (Lu n.d).

The establishment of Malaysia Institute of Art in 1967 by Chung Chen Sun, the Kuala Lumpur College of Art by Cheah Yew Saik in 1968, continue to elevate and foster the Chinese art activities in Malaysia. Both academies are offering ink brush painting courses in their fine art programme. Similarly, Central Academy of Art¹⁸ founded by Cheng Haw Chien in 1983 was also offering the ink brush painting course in its fine art programme.

The implementation of National Cultural Policy in the 1970s may have impacted the development of ink brush painting in this region (Tan 2016).¹⁹ Despite that, many local ink brush painting artists of different generations such as reverend Zhu Mo, Zhung Jin Xiu, Cheah Thien Soong, Kwok Vern Ho and others continue to support and promote aggressively the ink brush painting culture.

As of today, there are quite a number of contemporary Chinese art associations continue to promote the Chinese art, such as the Oriental Art and Cultural Association, Modian Cultural Centre, Calligrapher Association of Malaysia, Chinese Ink Painting Society Malaysia etc. These associations are actively organizing ink brush painting classes, ink brush painting exhibitions and special theme activities related to ink brush painting. These activities/event have positively motivated ink brush painting enthusiasts

¹⁸ Central Academy of Art has ceased operation.

¹⁹ This paper has no intention to discuss the impact of National Cultural Policy towards Chinese art activities.

to move forward and no doubt has formed new forces to the development of local ink brush painting. The establishment of Central Academy of Art Research Centre by Cheng in 1998 and the recent establishment of Clarity Art Centre²⁰ is in fact encouraging. Cheng Haw Chien remains active and is continuing to contribute to the positive development and promotion of ink brush painting through his many artworks in Malaysia.

The development of ink brush painting in Malaysia may not be as flourished as others modes of representation such as Western oil painting or watercolour arts. However, it continues to develop throughout the years since its inception in Malaysia in the 1920s. Exhibitions and activities related to ink brush painting are to be seen quite frequently in big cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor Bahru, Kuching.²¹ Ink brush painting classes conducted privately by individual enthusiast can somehow be found in smaller town and were unrecorded.

Different genesis of school, apart from the Shanghai Style, can be found within the context of Chinese ink brush painting locally. For instance, a school of painting that has been practiced commonly locally is the Lingnan School of Painting.

2.2 Brief Development of Lingnan School of Painting

The Lingnan School has shown to have great influence and achievements in the development of the Chinese art in modern and contemporary China (Xu 2006). The Lingnan School of Painting emerged during the early 20th century, and its well-known proponents are Gao Jian Fu, Gao Qi Feng (高奇峰) and Chen Shu Ren (陈树人). They were educated in Japan between the period of 1905 and 1911. Both Gao Jian Fu and Gao

²⁰ Clarity Art Centre (<http://www.clarityartcentre.com/>) was officially opened in January 2017. The first group exhibition was held on 28 Feb 2017 titled 'Sparkling a Discourse on the Art Scene'.

²¹ News related to these exhibitions and activities are reported in local newspapers such as Nanyang Siang Pau, Sin Chew Jit Poh, The Star and Utusan Malaysia.

Qi Feng established their private studios with disciples in addition to their institutional teaching positions when they returned to Canton from Shanghai in 1918. It was between 1918 and 1927 that both of them have established their artistic reputation and elevated the Lingnan School of Painting in becoming a popular form of painting in Canton areas (Croizier 1988).

The Lingnan School of Painting later was brought to Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia and other part of the world either through that the Lingnan proponents having an exhibition locally or due to migration. In other countries, Lingnan School of Painting has survived in a different cultural and political climate. In Taiwan, some Lingnan artists has inherited and fully preserved the colourful, dramatic and highly emotional style and heroic spirit of Zhao Shao Ang and Gao Qi Feng such as Ou Haonian (欧豪年), other such as Venerable Xiao Yun in her painting represents the Buddhist side of Gao Jian Fu's Indian influence in his style. In Hong Kong, the Lingnan School was perpetuated with little change and it became more associated with preserving Chinese tradition than with stimulating new discoveries. The younger artists in Hong Kong who are more influenced by contemporary Western art and have injected this foreign inspiration into their own fusion of Chinese tradition (Croizier 1988, 179-186).

The Lingnan approach to ink brush painting was introduced to Malaya through the artworks of Gao Jian Fu who visited Malaya in December 1930 when he held an exhibition in the Nanyang Calligraphy and Painting Society (Tan 2016, 22). According to Yeo Mang Thong (姚梦桐)²², Yang Shan Shen (杨善深), proponent of Lingnan, who came to exhibit his artworks in Singapore in the 1940s was well received by many (Chung 1999, 45). Lingnan proponents have since continue to exhibit artworks locally and they

²² Refer Yeo Mang Thong's Essays on the History of Pre-war Chinese Painting in Singapore. Chung Yu cited this in her book. See in Reference.

were often being invited to showcase their works in the local ink brush painting exhibitions organized by various local art groups. Among the infamous Lingnan's proponents are Wu Gong Hu (吴公虎), Zhao Shao Ang (赵少昂), Guan Shan Yue (关山月) and Yang Shan Shen (Huang 2000, 214).

The Penang based Reverend Zhu Mo (竺摩法师) was well-known for his calligraphy arts (Huang 2000, 213) and he was also a Lingnan exponent. In a personal interview²³ with Cheng Haw Chien, Cheng has highlighted that Reverend Zhu Mo was also well versed in composing poetry, and that Reverend Zhu Mo has picked up ink-brush painting art skills from Gao Jian Fu in Macau²⁴. It is therefore, when Cheng Haw Chien started to learn ink brush painting from Reverend Zhu Mo, he was taught the Lingnan style of painting and naturally he has subsequently become a Lingnan proponent.

The Lingnan School of Painting emphasize on retaining the essence of traditional ink brush painting, i.e. techniques, and injecting essence of Western, Indian or Japanese artistic tradition. And when it comes to subject matters selection, it needs to be always relevant to the modern times. It is also emphasis of Lingnan School of Painting to produce art which its content is recognizable to and appreciated by the masses (Croizier 1988, 110-113).

Active participation of these Lingnan proponents in the local art scenes in the past decades have propelled the Lingnan School of Painting to continue to prosper. Over the years, Cheng himself has been able to develop his own style of ink brush painting through various experiments. And this style of his is seen in his travel paintings in this paper. The

²³ Personal interview on August 2016.

²⁴ Gao Jian Fu was respectful to Reverend Zhu Mo's proficiency in literature such as poetry.

following section looks at the historical travel writing and how it later converges into travel painting.

2.3 Travel Painting and Travel Literature

Travel painting and travel writing are two separate genres. This research is intended to analyse and discuss travel paintings inscribed with poetry, it is therefore important to provide a general background on the development of travel writing and its characteristics before showcasing the analysis on Cheng's travel painting. Travel record (*You Ji* 遊记) is well-known in Chinese literature, from ancient time to the modern period where artists, poets and scholars record their travelling experiences on what they saw, heard and thought during their travelling journeys. In the ancient time, the travel experiences was recorded and presented in the form of Rhapsody (*fu* 賦), Letter (*shu* 书) and Prefaces (*xu* 序) (Mei and Cui 2000, 84). It then evolved and were shown in poems and in prose.

Travel record became a distinctive literary genre during the Tang Dynasty when Liu Zong Yuan (柳宗元 773-819), a poet and a writer, produced numerous writing on his travelling experiences expressed by both 'objective-description' and 'subjective-personal' modes of language. One of which commonly mentioned by scholars was the "Eight Records of Yung Prefecture" (*Yong Zhou Ba Ji* 永州八记) (Hargett 1986, 937, Wang 2008, 27). This travelogue became a popular literary genre during the Sung period when Ou Yang Hsiu (欧阳修 1007-1072), a calligrapher and a poet, was the first literary figure to record his diplomatic account to the Liao empire in the 1050s with "A Chronicle of Being in Service" (*Yu I Chih* 于役志) (Hargett 1986, 936 - 939). Hargett continues to

suggest that Su Shih²⁵, who was the disciple of Ou Yang Hsiu, probably is the best-known composer of the travel account during the Sung period.

Su Shih²⁶ has started writing informal prose in recording his trips taken during the times of leisure (Hargett 2016). Other forms which Su Shih used in his writings are letters, travel records, random notes and prefaces (Strassberg 1994b, 185). Su Shih's prose and poems were used widely by the later artists either by inscribing Su Shih poetry directly or by combining a couplet as colophon in their ink brush painting. Cheng too was very much inspired by Su Shih and in one of the selected artworks Cheng has referenced specifically to Su Shih's poetry. This piece of artwork is discussed in the analysis section (see in section 4.1.2)

Both travel painting and travel writing shared similar characteristics. Firstly, they record first-hand account of an excursion, be it in a foreign land or distant provinces. Secondly, they record a geographical description of a particular place or historical sites for the purpose of official usage or map-making, such as a famous temple, the remains of an ancient place. Finally they show the presence of subjective opinion and interpretations of the artist or writers (Hargett 1986, 937). Excursion to foreign land or distant provinces are common among the literati travellers. The literati travellers were considered the most travelled group as most of them were government officials and been posted away from their home provinces or put into exile when political fortune turned against them. The literati would have an extended excursion for the purpose of leisure, especially to the mountains or a scenic spot, while along the way of their official journey. Their travel writings were therefore mostly based on leisure experiences (Wang 2006, 223-224).

²⁵ One of many Su Shih's famous poetry was his illustration on Mount Lu, the poetry is titled *Ti Xi Lin Bi* (题西林壁).

²⁶ Also known as Su Dong Po (苏东坡 1037-1101).

In identifying a travel painting, Shan Guo Qiang (单国强) has suggested the following three characteristics, that is, it shall be authentic, the landscape visited must be reproduced realistically and finally it shall contain a name of the place and with narration (Shi 2012).²⁷ In the history of Chinese painting, travel painting begin with Zong Bing (宗炳)²⁸, and Zong Bing has suggested *wo you* (卧游)²⁹ as an ultimate objective of travel painting during his time (Wu 2016). It was as what Richard Strassberg has translated as “recumbent travelling”, a term signifying vicarious journeys through texts and images. The fact being that during old age, one is to rely on the painting created earlier to generate the experience of a landscape (Strassberg 1994a, 27). Or through painting one was able to return to a location in spirit (Roberts 2012, 15). It was also Zong Bing who has begun speaking of man’s emotional responses to his surrounding and of the expressive power of landscape and he was looking at what was depicted and not at the depiction (Cahill 2011, 6).

Travel painting is considered as a sub-genre of landscape genre. Historical record shows that it was during the Ming Dynasty that travel painting started to thrive, specifically of the landscape genre, and the infamous artists include Shen Zhou (沈周 1427-1509), Wen Zheng Ming (文徵明 1470 - 1559), Lu Zhi (陆治 1496 – 1576) and Qian Gu (钱穀 1508 - 1572). The literati artists commonly depict the overall impression of a scenic landscape with a composition of a poetry or essay to record their travelling experiences by inscribing the poetry or essay in their painting (Xie 2013, 88-94). The

²⁷ Authenticity - 真实性(客观存在); realistic - 写实性(比较准确再现所游览山水地貌或特征); narration 情节叙述(记录所游览的地点和名称). Translations are of my own and the Chinese wordings here are retrieved from the article. See in Reference.

²⁸ Zong Bing (AD375 – 443) is a Chinese painter, landscape painting theorist. He drafted the first treatise on landscape painting known in history, the Introduction to Landscape Painting (hua shan shui xu 画山水序). This information is extracted from <http://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%94%BB%E5%B1%B1%E6%B0%B4%E5%BA%8F/1664107>.

²⁹ This term refers to when one is not able to travel, but able to imagine of a particular place by reading and observing from travel writing and pictures provided in books form or in paintings.

poem and essay composed are normally unpolitical, private and reflective (Wang 2006). This form of art expression was practiced during the Ming and Qing period. Travel painting produced by many literati artists and some of these artists were frequently discussed by scholars of this period include the Bada Shan Ren (八大山人 1626-1705) and Shi Tao (石涛 1642 - 1707).

Travelling is a common activity among the literati, since in the ancient time till this modern day. The three Lingnan School's founders themselves have travelled widely and encouraged their disciples to travel to observe sceneries and set at firsthand the scene one is going to paint. And it is the emphasis of the Lingnan artists to pay close attention to nature as the basis for 'painting from life (*xie sheng*)' (Croizier 1988, 131). Gao Jian Fu himself travelled to countries such as Japan and India, and has produced numerous artworks not just on landscape but many new subject matters too. To name but a few, *Egyptian War Hero 1943*, *Ruin of Stupas 1934* (Croizier 1988, 120-125). Inspired by the painting theory of Gao Jian Fu³⁰, the subject matter selected by Cheng in his travel series paintings comprise varieties that are not found in the subject matter of the traditional Chinese ink brush painting. For instances, the great waterfalls in the world, animal like ostriches, kangaroo and penguin. And Cheng too, perform life sketching on his travelling journey i.e. landscapes and flora.

In both China and Taiwan, travel painting may not be a popular genre discussed by scholars, despite the fact that well known artists such as Zhang Da Qian, Huang Bin Hong (黄宾虹), did produce ink brush paintings of this genre.³¹ In Singapore, artists go

³⁰ Reference to Wong Shiu Hon's thesis, he suggested that when it comes to the content of a modern Chinese painting, Gao Jian Fu emphasized that the subject matter selected must not be restricted within the frame of traditional Chinese's subject matter. Instead, it must be unlimited and the content must have a meaningful theme (Wong 1972, 14).

³¹ Zhang Da Qian (1899 - 1983), see in Strassberg (1983) for the illustration on Zhang Ta-chien ink brush painting related to his traveling. Huang Bin Hong (1865-1955), see in Roberts (2012) of the discussion on Huang Bin Hong's 'Travelling in Huangshan while remaining at rest' (*Huangshan woyou* 黄山卧游).

travelling to acquire inspiration for their creative artwork is not uncommon. Chen Wen Hsi has produced ink brush paintings from his Bali field trip in 1952, the Ten Men Group toured around South East Asia and produces many artworks of their travelling, and some were produced in ink brush (Kwok n.d). These artworks may not be considered a travel painting as the name of the place, of the scenery or flora or animal captured, were not inscribed on the ink brush painting but it was clearly artworks produced while or after touring of places.

In the local context, most of ink brush painting artists have selected subject matters with strong local flavours such as villages, local flora and animals. There are local artists known to use traditional techniques in painting the traditional subject matters such as bamboo, flora or landscape. No scholarly record has been found yet to show traces of travel paintings produced by local artists. However, this does not necessarily mean that local artists do not produce travel paintings but that they may be not recorded formally.

For Cheng, when it comes to the selection of subject matters, it has always been his intention to create something that is different from the traditional ink brush painting³². In an earlier interview by Walker (1995), Cheng has stated that one cannot keep hanging on with the old master, and as an artist one needs to create something new despite using the same medium in the artworks. His travelling therefore becomes an integral part of his creative approach in search of new subject matters and new formulae for his ink-brush painting.

³² Traditional subject matter and techniques (brushwork).

CHAPTER 3: CHENG HAW CHIEN AS AN ARTIST AND POET

In order to analyze Cheng Haw Chien's travel paintings, it is important for first look at Cheng's background. He as an artist, a poet and his motive to travel as the source of inspiration to produce innovative artworks.

3.1 Biography of Cheng Haw Chien

Cheng Haw Chien developed his interest in Chinese Ink Brush Painting during his adolescent years. He initially started learning Chinese Ink Brush Painting from Reverend Zhu Mo, introduced by Wu Gong Hu when they met at an ink brush painting exhibition in Penang in 1967. With Zhu Mo, apart from the ink brush painting, Cheng practiced calligraphy as well as studying poetry. After approximately 4 years of learning ink brush painting with Reverend Zhu Mo, Zhu Mo organized an exhibition to raise fund for Cheng to pursue his bachelor degree in Taiwan. That was Cheng's first exhibition.³³

Cheng was born in 1948 in Penang and graduated from Taiwan's National Chengchi University, Department of Diplomacy. During his university years, he practiced his ink brush painting with Zhao Shao Ang and Sun Yun Sheng (孙云生).³⁴ Initially Cheng attended class sessions of Zhao Shao Ang, then subsequently followed by a distance learning in which Cheng sent his painting to Zhao for guidance and comments. As with Sun, who is based in Taiwan, Cheng attended his weekly class for approximately 3 years where he learnt traditional ink brush painting techniques and splash-ink technique (*po mo po cai* 泼墨泼彩). These techniques by Sun Yun Sheng were inherited directly from Zhang Da Qian.³⁵ Cheng uses this splash-ink technique actively at the later stage of his

³³ Personal interview in May 2016.

³⁴ Zhao Shao Ang was based in Hong Kong. He was the Lingnan's 2nd generation proponent, follower of Gao Qi Feng. Sun Yun Sheng, he is Zhang Da Qian's disciple.

³⁵ Personal interview in August 2016.

artworks. He has used it to represent the mountains of China such as Mount Lu and Huangshan. An analysis of Mount Lu and Huangshan are provided in the splash ink series paintings (part of the mountain series paintings) in the Chapter 4.

During his years in Taiwan, apart from refining ink brush painting skills and techniques, Cheng explored the composing of poems. He learnt the methods of composing poems mainly from Liu Tai Xi. Intermittently he consulted Liang Han Chao. Liu Tai Xi, who taught Chinese Literature in National Chengchi University at Chinese Department where Cheng attended his classes. Liang Han Chao was the Chairman of Broadcasting Corporation of China. Both have provided invaluable guidance and assistance to Cheng to this endeavour of poetry composition skills.³⁶ For calligraphy, Cheng practiced by imitating the old inscription on stone such as *Cao Quan Bei* (曹全碑) for *li* style (*li shu* 隶书), old master's such as Wang Xi Zhi (王羲之) for *xing* style (*xing shu* 行书), Yu You Ren (于右任) for *cao* style (*cao shu* 草书).

After completing his undergraduate studies from Taiwan in 1974, he was invited to exhibit his artworks in countries such as Thailand, Philippines and Singapore. See example in Figure 3-1 of the travel painting he has produced.

³⁶ Personal interview in February 2017.

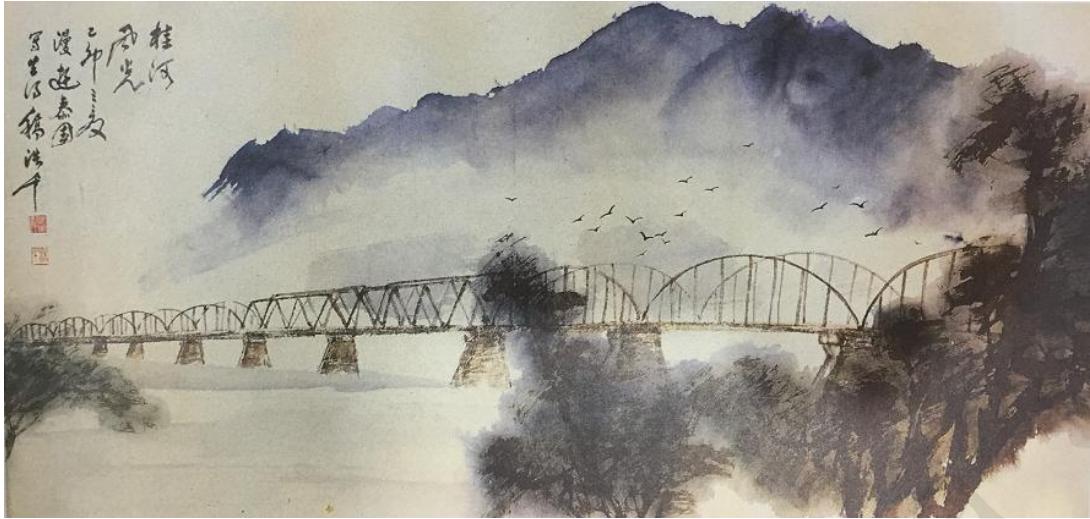


Figure 3-1 Cheng Haw Chien, Bridge Over River Kwai (桂河桥), Ink on paper, Personal Collection, Source: Photograph from art catalogue provided by artist.

Cheng subsequently held exhibitions in places in Europe such as Oxford and Paris. It was during this time that he started travelling around the world while holding exhibitions. This continues for approximately 2 years. In 1976 while having an exhibition in Sabah, he has accepted a role as art coordinator in Sabah Chinese High School, Tawau (斗湖巴华中学).³⁷ This was followed by the founding of Central Academy of Art in Kuala Lumpur in 1984³⁸ and subsequently Central Academy of Research Centre in year 1997.

In between these years he worked as an art educator in various art institutions, Cheng has been active in activities related to ink brush painting. He was invited to exhibit his ink brush paintings, be it solo or in group, in various countries such as China, Russia, Taiwan and Malaysia. He was conferred Master of Fine Arts from Summit University in the United States in 1997 and a Doctorate in Oriental Art from St. George University in Oxford, United Kingdom in 1999.

³⁷ Cheng was with Sabah Chinese High School for 2 years.

³⁸ The year which Central Academy of Art School was registered officially. And Cheng Haw Chien was the president of the art school from 1984 till 1995.

Prior to visually analysing Cheng's travel painting and interpreting the content of the poetry inscribed in his artworks, the following section highlights another role of Cheng Haw Chien, he as a poet, one of the three important roles being a three perfections artist.

3.2 Cheng Haw Chien as a Poet

Cheng has published two poetry collections apart from publication on art collections of ink brush painting. The first poetry collection was published in 2003 and the second in 2013. Similar to his ink brush painting genres, the poetry collections also comprise different genres and with various artistic means. There are poems for travelling, for flowers, for landscapes, for animals and for friends and families. Some of these poems can be inscribed in ink brush paintings but others may not be applicable. Majority of the poems inscribed in his painting are of travel genre. In a personal interview with Cheng, he stated that he may compose a poetry instantly at the place he is visiting or he may compose one during or after the journey. He would naturally inscribe his poem in his painting. There are times when he would create a landscape painting based on these poems to produce an imagistic landscape. It is commonly accepted by the ink brush painting artists that poetry is an integral part of the ink brush painting. It plays an important role towards contributing the overall meaning of the finished artwork. Poetry inscribed on the painting adds light to the artist's purpose, ideas and emotion which in turn helps to diminish obstacles between the artist and the onlooker (Chiang 1964, 110).

The practice of inscribing poetry, Chinese idiom or even a simple phrase into an ink brush painting has always been encouraged when creating an ink brush painting. In the Chinese literati culture perspective, when an artist inscribes a self-composed poetry in his own painting, the painting element, and the poetry element are considered mutually complementing each other for a unified artwork comprising both the pictorial and the verbal components. Jonathan Chaves defined this integral poem-painting as: 'a work in

which the painter himself calligraphs a poem of his own composition directly on the picture surface, and both components contribute to the evocation of a single experiential world'. This is in coherence with Su Shih's famous statement of praise for Wang Wei's poetry "There is painting in poetry; and there is poetry in painting" (*shi zhong you hua, hua zhong you shi* 诗中有画, 画中有诗) (Chaves 1991, 431-455). Poetry inscribed on the painting allows ideas and feelings to flow back and forth between the words—the inscribed poem—and the picture (Sullivan 1974, 30). And this may "carry us deep into the realms of philosophy and metaphysics, art history and art criticism, and may tell us more about the private life of the painter, and his relationship with his friends and patrons, than can be derived from any other source." (Sullivan 1974, 11). Cheng clearly understand, to be able create an artwork with the three elements—poetry, calligraphy and painting, one must cultivate the capability of compose poems and having a strong foundation in calligraphy. And to Cheng Haw Chien, this is done by absorbing from diverse resources from the ancient (i.e. Su Shih, Zhao Meng Fu) and the modern (i.e. Zhang Shou Ping (张寿平), Huang Jun Bi (黄君璧)), be it the Chinese literature such as Tang Dynasty poetry or Sung Dynasty lyric, calligraphy, art theories and many others.

In Cheng's poetry collections, it tells us about his life as an artist, the places he has visited, families and friends he cherished and a few others. His travelling poetries described his feelings and emotions toward the sceneries and objects in the places he visited, and some of these poems are with metaphors. In Cheng's art collections, there are only a small portion of his artwork inscribed with poems by other poets. Most of his ink brush paintings are inscribed with his own original poetry. We shall see in Chapter 4 the analysis of Cheng's travel paintings and how the meaning of the poetries contributed towards the overall meaning of the artworks.

3.3 Cheng Haw Chien's Motive to Travel

In the early 20th century, travelling to gain new experiences and inspiration for painting has already been practiced by the earlier generation artists (see Chapter 2 – section 2.3). In a personal interview with Cheng, on his initial intention of travelling, he stated that in his younger days in Hong Kong, he was much encouraged by the older generation artists to travel around the world to broaden one's view and enrich one's knowledge. He did highlight that travelling was not common in those days for the senior artists probably due to old age and the fact that they did not speak English. Cheng continues this practice of travelling to gain experiences and inspirations. And contributes his travelling experiences in his artworks.

Eric J. Leed suggested that travelling in the modern context has been proposed as 'a mean of discovery, of acquiring access to something new, original and even unexpected' (1991, 7). Travelling is one's curiosity to explore, to understand and to experience something with one's own eyes (Birkeland n.d, 19). Cheng upheld a famous Chinese proverb "Studied Ten Thousand Books, Travelling Ten Thousand Miles" (*du wan juan shu, xing wan li lu* 读万卷书, 行万里路) as his career motto. Travel extends the experiences of the traveller over a broader range of differences, allowing one to familiarize a greater variety of things (J. Leed 1991, 59). It is through the combination of theoretical knowledge with life experiences, Cheng is able to create innovative artworks. For example, when searching for new subject matters, he states that one cannot simply depend on the imagination. It is important to observe and explore the surroundings as well as to experience life in order to produce a good artwork.³⁹

³⁹ Personal interview in June 2017.

Before starting his journey, Cheng would imagine how the destined country would be like and he is always looking forward to the departure. Through these years, Cheng's main motivation to travel is to explore great scenery and native subject of the foreign land in search of new subject matters or to hold exhibitions. This solitary travel experience is key to the life of an artist, it is during the journey that Cheng would contemplate and this may sometimes provide an inspiration to him. With this travel experiences, it has allowed him to enrich his subject matters in his travel painting or other genres, it has also expanded the content of his poeries. For instance, while the literati animal genre is limited to tiger, horse and eagle, Cheng in his travel paintings, capture animals such as Kangaroo, Penguin and Kiwi. These are new subjects within the Chinese ink brush painting, it is therefore, it requires experiment after experiment to capture the spirit and resonance of the animals using the brushwork. When Cheng travels, it is also his aspiration to be able to meet with local artists and ink brush painting enthusiasts, to study their artworks, to share experiences and to observe the different painting techniques. He is always keen to study and observe new painting techniques for enhancing and elevating his style of painting to eventually establish his own unique style and characteristics.⁴⁰

Being an avid traveller, he started travelling widely since mid-1970s. Having exhibitions in different countries has allowed him to also plan for his next destination in search for new subject matters. Cheng confesses that he is leveraging his travelling experiences for his creative ink brush techniques and in search of new subject matters. He has travelled to many countries such as Africa, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Cambodia, Canada, Holland, Indonesia, Japan, Mauritius, Nepal, South Africa and Thailand.

⁴⁰ Personal interview in August 2016.

Apart from experiencing the landscape during the journey, what drives Cheng to continue to travel is his desire for artistic and poetic inspiration. He sketches, he composes poetry as well as take photographs. He records his objective observation of the scenery before him and his subjective experiences during the journey both in his painting and poetry. It is in this subjective experience that he has infused with his personal experiences as an artist as well as his reflection of his travelling journey. And this is seen in the poetry inscribed on his travel paintings.

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CHAPTER 4: CHENG HAW CHIEN'S TRAVEL PAINTINGS

Cheng's ink brush painting consists of multiple genres. There are realistic (*xie shi* 写实), splash-ink and 'sketch idea' (*xie yi* 写意) style landscape, animals, birds, flora, fruits and human figures. From the art collection publications of Cheng Haw Chien, it is observed that his early version of artworks, in the 70s, such as birds and insects, has adopted the typical traditional way of painting in ink-brush. That is, starting by imitating his master's artworks as can be seen in the following samples of his artwork:



Figure 4-1: Cheng Haw Chien, A Startled Cry (惊叫), Chinese Ink and Colour on Paper, Personal Collection



Figure 4-2: Zhao Shao Ang, Untitled, Chinese Ink and Colour on Paper, Courtesy of James Tan, Photography Courtesy of Lingnan School of Painting



Figure 4-3: Cheng Haw Chien, Song of the Cicada (清声), Chinese Ink and Colour on Paper, Personal Collection



Figure 4-4: Zhao Shao Ang, Untitled, Chinese Ink and Colour on Paper, Courtesy of James Tan, Photography Courtesy of Lingnan School of Painting

Cheng depicted the same subject matter as Zhao Shao Ang, but having different compositions from that of his master. Through years of practices and experimenting on ink, colours and papers, Cheng has eventually developed his own unique technique and style. This is obvious from his artworks produced at the later stage of his career, which is seen in the following section of the new techniques he has implemented on his travel paintings.

Cheng Haw Chien has published nearly 500 ink brush paintings. Approximately 250 of these are landscape paintings which one either presented in a realistic approach such as the waterfall or in splash-ink method such as the mountains in China. Travel paintings depicting landscape contributed to about 130 pieces, and the other genres within the travel paintings context include the animals, birds and flora. Cheng has expressed his travel experiences and subject matters that are unique in the foreign land in his ink brush paintings and poetries. These travel paintings showcase places in Zambezi River in Africa, Iguazu Falls in Argentina, Kangaroos and Penguins in Australia, Niagara Falls in Canada, Huangshan (黄山), Mount Lu (庐山) and Mount Yan Dang (雁荡山) in China, Windmills in Holland, Himalayas in Nepal, Bridge of River Kwai in Thailand, and many more.

The selected travel paintings for analysis are divided into three main categories:- the mountain series, the waterfall series and the animal series. The mountain series includes the Himalayas, Mount Lu, Huangshan, Yan Dang Mountain, Mount Kinabalu which comprises of about 40 pieces of the artworks. Iguazu Falls, Niagara Falls and Victoria Falls in the waterfall series are selected for analysis because the waterfall series is the second largest theme that Cheng worked on within his travel paintings. The animal series which made up of penguins, kangaroos, ostriches, koalas, panda, deer are considered for analysis because that made up of a slightly larger number than the other subject matters within his travel paintings in comparison to flora and birds. Due to the high number of

artworks produced within the three series, therefore only certain artworks that are relevant to the analysis in this research are displayed for reference purposes. For instance, the selected mountain series artworks, are based on the fact that the novel techniques used by Cheng in representing the texture of the mountain is uniquely different from the traditional techniques. Some of these selected artworks are a combination of traditional methods (use of brushstroke), splash-ink technique, Lingnan style (western painting composition—perspective, shading, light effect) and the use of new medium such as watercolour and Japanese or Korean paper. These travel ink brush paintings are therefore considered significant for research works.

As poetry is part of the analysis in this research, the selection of the painting is partly reliant on the type of poetry inscribed for providing a more comprehensive analysis. Types of poetry selected are firstly, a specific title that specifies the names of the place, secondly, poems with a general title that can be used for any painting as long as the mood and artistic conception matches; and thirdly, poetry inspired by other poets such as Su Shih and Jia Dao.

The travel paintings were analyzed based on each respective series and the selected artworks serve as a point of reference for an analysis. Visual analysis is performed firstly on the technique and the style implemented to address the first research question. Then the interpretation of the poetry inscribed in the travel painting is to address the second research question. The analysis for each series shall be summarised to show Cheng's travelling experiences in the modern day being presented in his travel paintings in both visual experiences and subjective experiences. Also showing how the painting and poetry are integrated seamlessly as a whole to provide a new experience and appreciation of the artwork.

4.1 Analysis of the Mountain Series

The travel paintings selected for the mountain series have two distinct types. This section examines how Cheng combined the traditional and the new techniques, as well as how he has applied the splash-ink technique. In an interview with Cheng, he states that selection of the method to represent a particular landscape is highly depending on the landscape itself i.e. not all landscapes can be represented in splash-ink.⁴¹ For instance, the Himalayas is represented in a traditional method with new techniques. And splash-ink was used on landscapes such as Mount Lu and Huangshan.

4.1.1 The Himalayas Series

In the fundamental of landscape painting, the mountains are perceived in three kinds of perspective: the high distance (*gao yuan* 高远), distance with a depth (*shen yuan* 深远) and level distance (*ping yuan* 平远) (Sze 1957, 162). Cheng's mountain series of artworks appear to be implementing distance with depth and level distance. At the middle ground in most of his mountain series, he would add clouds, houses or waterfalls before the peak of the mountains to create a depth distance. See example in Figure 4-5 below.

⁴¹ Personal interview in February, 2017.

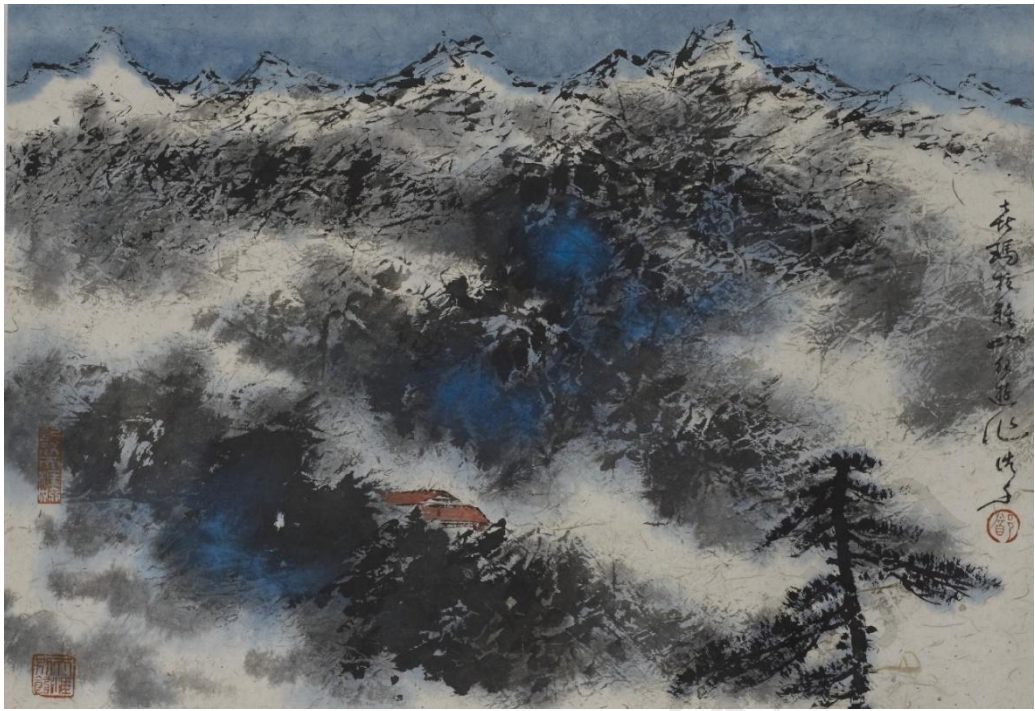


Figure 4-5: Cheng Haw Chien, The Himalayas (喜玛拉雅山一景), 1999, Ink on paper, 46.5 x 67.25cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.

Another common composition that one can easily identify in Cheng's mountain series artworks is that at the foreground of the painting, there is a grove of trees, normally of pine trees, red-leaved trees or old trees and it is painted at the bottom border of the rice paper. This composition can be clearly observed in his mountain series as well as the waterfall series of artworks (see section 4.2 for analysis of the waterfall series). As Cheng highlighted, these trees are drawn for providing a distance towards the mountains.⁴² See Figure 4-5 (above) and Figure 4-6 (below).

⁴² Personal interview in February 2016.



Figure 4-6: Cheng Haw Chien, Homage to the Himalayas (壯哉喜瑪拉雅山), 1990, Ink on paper, 142 x 368cm. Source: provided by artist

In the Himalaya series, Cheng has created a unique effect in representing the texture of the Himalayas (see Figure 4-7 below for an enlarged image). This texture is created differently from the traditional types. Traditionally, mountain texture or more commonly known as *cun* is created by applying ink directly on the rice paper with brush without any additional medium or steps but simply the use of ink, water and the handling of brush. However, the texture created in the Himalayas series was first by crumpling up the rice paper, then followed by laying the paper naturally, and finally apply thick or light ink on the rice paper using *ce feng* (側鋒) to create this unique texture. The brushstrokes applied on the crumpled paper must be executed in a short and rapid manner in order to create the diamond-like shape. This shape gives a sense of steepness to the Himalayas peaks.

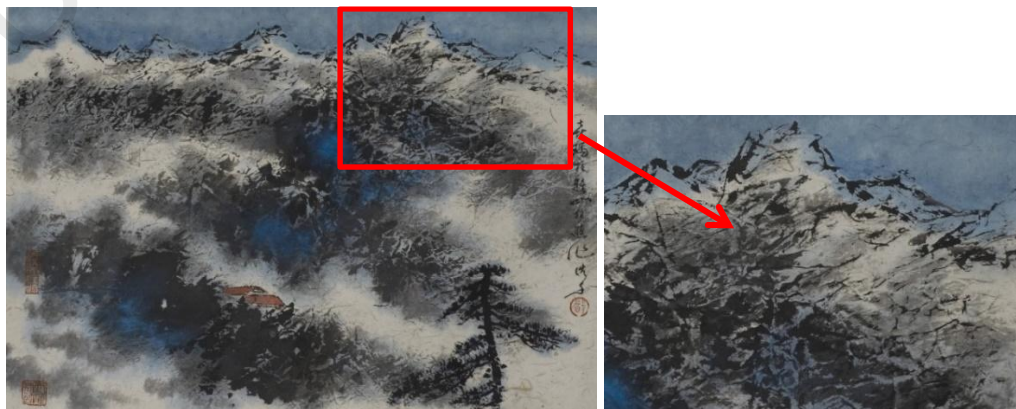


Figure 4-7: Texture of mountain

The Himalaya Series is not a traditional Chinese landscape painting⁴³ but a combination of traditional and new techniques. The trees in the foreground are painted in a conventional way using brushwork. The paintings composition is in compliant with the traditional Chinese landscape fundamental that emphasizes on the foreground, middle-ground and background subjects. The sky is painted with different colour of ink washes, in a Lingnan's style, based on the time when Cheng viewed the Himalaya (see Figure 4-8, Figure 4-9 below). The texture of the peaks was created by the new technique mentioned above. Subtle and vigorous brushstroke applied on top of the texture created earlier provided great contrast and give a grandiose appearance of the Himalayas (see Figure 4-9 for vigorous brushstroke). Cheng's journey to the Himalayas has allowed him to devise a composite style in this series of paintings and revives with emphasis on individualistic reactions towards nature. This combination of techniques is a composite of style where contemporary artist experiment with traditional artistic techniques, forms and values, either out of nostalgia for the past or as self-reflexive (Melissa Chiu 2010, 36). For Cheng, perhaps it is both, as a way in acknowledging the tradition while searching for the new and as a self-reflexive process, in which this can be seen in the poetry inscribed on this series of travel painting.

⁴³ The traditional Chinese landscape painting here refer to the Southern Sung period landscape which uses a combination of different brushwork and ink washes.



Figure 4-8: Cheng Haw Chien, Himalaya at Dawn (喜玛拉雅山之晨), 1988, Ink on paper, 61 x 93 cm. Source: Photograph from art catalogue provided by artist



Figure 4-9: Cheng Haw Chien, Himalayas at Night (喜玛拉雅山之夜), 1996, Ink on paper, 80 x 137cm. Source: provided by artist

In Chinese ink brush painting, it is common for the artist to express his feeling not only in the use of ink and water but also through poetry. Quoting part of Yu (n.d., 27) translation of the opening lines of the *Ta Hsu* (Great Preface) to the *Shih Ching* (Book of

Odes) “Poetry is where the intent of the heart/mind goes: what in the heart is intent is poetry when emitted in words. An emotion moves within and takes form in words”. Similarly, when it comes to composing a poetry or prose or travelogue during the passage of a journey, it is about what was observed, felt or experienced during the journey, as Hargett highlighted that travelling experiences always comprise of both ‘objective-description’ and ‘subjective-personal’ mode of language (Hargett 1986, 937).

Of the selected Himalayas paintings, some were inscribed with a poetry but some were not. Figure 4-10 below shows a Himalaya Series painting which Cheng has inscribed with a poetry. The poem, a quatrain with seven characters per line, may be translated literally as:-

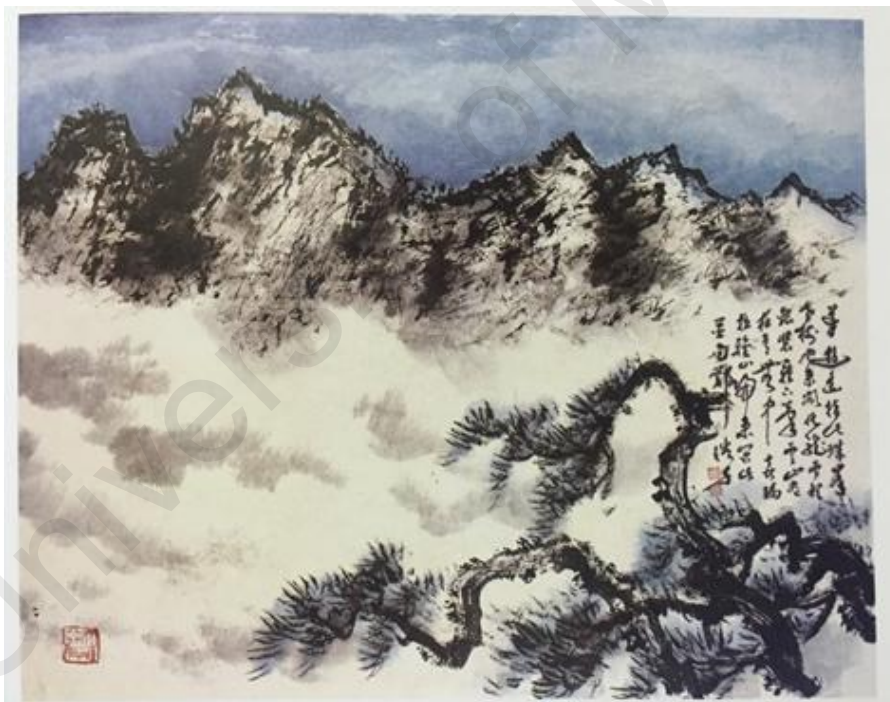


Figure 4-10: Cheng Haw Chien, The Himalayas (喜玛拉雅山), 1998, Ink and Colour on paper, 52 x 60 cm. Collection of Dato Sri Kee Yong Wee, Source: Photograph from art catalogue provided by artist

| | |
|--|--|
| Praising the Himalayas (one of the nineteen poetries published in 2003 of Cheng's poetry collection) | 喜马拉雅山十九首之一 |
| <p>The tour guide points towards Mount Everest</p> <p>Becoming a dragon when the wind blows on the old trees</p> <p>Covered with snow, seems difficult to paint</p> <p>The snowy mountains become seemingly invisible.</p> | <p>导游遥指此珠峰，</p> <p>老树风来欲化龙，</p> <p>雪里银装难下笔，</p> <p>雪山尽在有无中</p> |

Cheng specifically mentioned in the title that it is one of the 19 poetries he composed for the theme of The Himalayas. At the outset, Mount Everest is explicitly referred in the poem so it is a “word-painting” as Jonathan Chaves has put it (1991, 444). Should the poem be absent in this painting, one may know that the mountain shown is the Himalayas from the title of the artwork, but no way one will know it is the Mount Everest. It is mentioned in the second line that an old tree morph into dragon when wind blows on it. However, the kind of old tree is not specified. But from the painting, one can see that it is an old pine tree. In the second part of the second line, Cheng deliberately has used dragon—an important symbol for the Chinese—to represent the windblown old pine trees. This pairing is to give viewers a sense of movement in the old pine tree during a windy situation in which this windy scene could not have been deduced from the painting without the poem. The third and fourth lines, would make more sense when interpreted together. The third line does not specifically mention an object, i.e. a Mount Everest. But it suggests a scene covered with snow and makes one feel difficult to depict the scene as it is probably all white (due to snow and mist). The fourth line depicts that the snowy mountains seems to be between visibility and invisibility. These two lines combined to give the impression that it is distant snowy mountains.

In this painting, *The Himalayas* (Figure 4-10), Cheng uses grove of trees in the foreground to express a far distance overlooking the mountain. The mountain is the host (*zhu* 主) of the painting, supposedly the primary subject of this painting. However, the old pine tree painted seems to have taken the host position. In addition to that, the used of dragon to represent the movement of the windblown old pine tree seems to suggest that Cheng was amazed by the stunning view and spirit of the Mount Everest at a distant. In this artwork, the old pine tree is no longer a visual subject but an important element in highlighting the spirit of the Mount Everest and its strong and endurance character. Traditionally pine trees symbolize strong, longevity and faithful, it is an evergreen plant and able to withstand cold weather. In the first two lines of the poetry, Cheng has expressed his admiration on the Mount Everest scene. Cheng uses the symbolism of pine tree, not just to reflect the endurance character of Mount Everest, but also to reflect his perseverance character as an artist. One way of remembering an attitude that he must always have both in the past and in the future, of being an artist. Then his mood of admiration changed (seen in the third and fourth line) and is wondering how he should create the painting.

With the additional images given in the poetry in this painting, it has provided viewers a more in-depth visual impact. The verbal world created by the poem and the visual world of the painting complemented well to each other and may led the viewer to imagine the thought of Cheng while he was gazing upon the magnificent view of the Mount Everest. Cheng visited the Himalayas in the 1990 and he must have painted many subject matters of Himalayas. Consequently, he should not have difficulty in painting few more. However, poem inscribed in this artwork suggests that the scenery before his eyes covering with snow and mist and Cheng feels that to really capture the scene was a great challenge. From the analysis of this painting, we observed perhaps the literati thought that has

mediated Cheng’s travelling experiences, as he has brought forth the moral symbolism characteristic in the literati tradition—the use of dragon (verbal) and pine tree (visual).

Another type of poem which is inscribed in one of Cheng’s Himalayas Series artwork is known as ‘Poem for Landscape’. Poem with this title type—or commonly known as *Ti Hua Shi* (题画诗)—can in fact be inscribed on any ink brush painting if the artist finds the content or the poetic mood conforms to the artistic conception of the painting. In the following artwork, *The Spirit of The Himalayas* (see Figure 4-11 below), Cheng has used this ‘Poem on Landscape’ on this painting. The painting is taking its title from the second line of his poem (*liu shui ban song tao* 流水伴松涛).

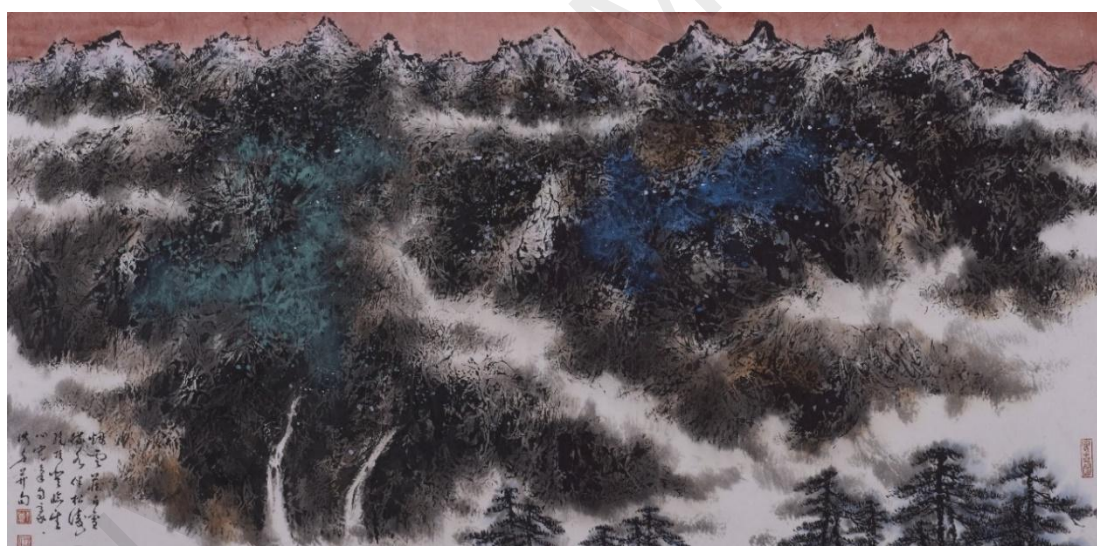


Figure 4-11: Cheng Haw Chien, *The Spirit of The Himalayas* (流水伴松涛), 1995, Ink on paper, 68.5 x 138.5cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.

| Poem for Landscape | 题山水 |
|---|-------|
| White snow hidden in misty clouds | 烟云藏白雪 |
| The flow of the water accompanying the soughing of the wind in the pines | 流水伴松涛 |
| Visiting the peak of mountain | 绝顶登临望 |
| Being broad-minded and filled with pride | 心宽气自豪 |

This poetry does not explicitly mention the actual location of a place, i.e. The Himalayas or Mount Everest. The first two lines give viewer an imagery of misty clouds, snow, a flow of water—possibly waterfall, streams or rivers—and a forest of pine trees and wind breeze. These images can all be seen in the painting, of course, except the wind. The groups of pine trees, the two waterfalls and the misty clouds at the foreground and middle ground and the long range of mountain peaks at the background of the painting gives viewer a feeling of tranquillity specifically with the description provided in the second line of the poetry where it gives viewer a sound of the flow of the water and the sound of the pine trees when it was blown by the wind—the sound of the nature. Additional sense given in this poetry—the snow and the wind—is depicting the coldness of the weather in the Himalayas (based on the English title of the painting). It is a standard in classical poetry that first two lines are to provide details of the season and scenery. In the subsequent two lines of the poetry, Cheng introduced the painter-poet who is most probably himself, had reached the peak of the mountain and with a broad-mind and feeling proud. At the peak of the mountain, Cheng was probably pondering about his life as an artist all these years (he was at his 40s when he visited The Himalayas), a lonely path he has been through as an artist⁴⁴. Despite that, he endured the loneliness and finally he was satisfactory of his own achievement thus far. An emotional moment expressive of human achievement.

As mentioned in the earlier section, not all of Cheng's artworks are inscribe with his own poetry. In this painting (see Figure 4-12 below), Cheng inscribed the first couplet of

⁴⁴ Personal interview in May 2016

Jia Dao's (贾岛) poetry titled 'Evening View as the Snow Clear'⁴⁵ (*xue qing wan wang* 雪晴晚望) by changing the word *xi* (溪) to *shan* (山).



Figure 4-12: Cheng Haw Chien, Immortal Himalayas (山云几万重), 1989, Ink on paper, 214 x 73cm. Collection: Tan Sri Chan Kong Choy, Source: provided by artist.

The couplet of this poetry inscribed may be translated as below:-

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Leaning on the cane, looking far away, and sees layers of thick clouds | 倚杖望晴雪，山云几万重。 ⁴⁶ |
|---|----------------------------|

Based on the original meaning of the poetry, the first line is meant to describe a poet go roaming in an evening after a snow fall, leaning on his cane and looking afar, appreciating distant mountain with the flow of the stream nearby and with layers of thick clouds above the sky. Cheng must have known this poetry before creating this painting, however he did not paint the water element i.e. whether a stream or river or waterfall. Instead, he covers the middle ground with clouds and the painting is thus taking its title from a line of the poem, by changing the word 'stream' (*xi* 溪) to 'mountain' (*shan* 山)⁴⁷ to match the actual scenery. Jia Dao's poetry seems to have impressed Cheng in

⁴⁵ This translation is extracted from A Chinese Companion to Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translation Volume 1: From Antiquity to the Tang Dynasty. Jia Dao (779–843) was a Chinese poet of the Tang Dynasty.

⁴⁶ Original poetry of Jia Dao: 倚杖望晴雪，溪云几万重。樵人归白屋，寒日下危峰。野火烧冈草，断烟生石松。却回山寺路，闻打暮天钟。 This information is retrieved from <http://www.haoshici.com/Jiadao51764.html>.

⁴⁷ The title of the painting in Chinese is *Shan Yun Ji Wan Chong* (山云几万重).

describing the scenery before him. In this painting Cheng inscribed only the first two lines of Jia Dao's poetry by changing a word. Cheng is less concerned with the words in the poetry but rather more on the spirit of the poem imprints in the first two lines of the original poetry. This is contrary to the original poetry which was about Jia Dao himself who had failed multiple times in the imperial examination in expressing his emotion and sense of loneliness.⁴⁸ It is not uncommon that word(s) of poetry is changed when it comes to inscribing a poetry in the painting or when the painting takes its title. However, one must have vast knowledge and understanding of the Chinese classical poem. One may doubt why Cheng didn't compose a poetry himself for this painting. It could be that Cheng himself feels that Jia Dao's poetic conception coincides well with the painting's artistic conception and therefore felt unnecessary to compose one. For this painting, Cheng didn't inscribe with his own poetry, he has instead painted the evening scene of the Himalaya, another way Cheng used in recording his travelling experiences to the Himalayas, textualizing the sights in ink brush painting. 'A traveller as a recorder, textualizing the sights in words and photos, not as a mere viewer consuming the world and its sights' (J.Leed 1991, 61-62).

Cheng's Himalaya Series seems to have an evocative power which allowed one to hear the flow of the water (river or waterfall or stream), the sense of the freshness of the cold air and experiences the appearance of the mountains in different time of the day. Changes in the natural landscape allowed Cheng to associate his feeling—amazed, proud or tranquil—and of what he see in the beauty of the nature, influenced the way he would paint the scenery. Therefore, what is produced will have an effect on the emotion of the viewer, maybe having a similar feeling and emotion as Cheng has experienced. Additional images provided in the inscribed poetry has no doubt given viewers the inner

⁴⁸ Translations are my own. Interpretation of the poetry is based on <http://www.haoshici.com/Jiadao51764.html>.

and experiential aspect of the scene and that of Cheng's personal emotion, his subjective experiences towards the Himalayas. This is in alignment with Susan Bush's suggestion of the aim of scholar-painters, "in painting as in poetry, feeling and description could fuse in mood" (Bush 2012, 27). This unique characteristic, when a painting is inscribed with a poetry, the 'ideas and feelings flow back and forth between the words and picture' (Sullivan 1974, 30), elevates the meaning of the painting than one without a poetry inscribed.

Cheng travelled around Southeast Asia, Europe and Latin American, not until in the 1990s when he travelled to China, to visit the famous Huangshan and Mount Lu.

4.1.2 The Mountains of China

This series of artworks consist of Huangshan and Mount Lu, in which Cheng has chosen to use the splash ink and splash colour ink (*po mo po cai* 泼墨泼彩) methods. Splash colour ink is a method made to known by Zhang Da Qian (张大千). While commenting on his own splash ink landscape, Zhang Da Qian stated that "it was not a new method he has created, but a method created by the ancient artist. However people do not to use it and then I have decided to use it".⁴⁹ He continued to suggest that "something that is abstract is drawn from the figurative, without first knowing the beauty of the figurative and jump straight into abstract, it is consider deceptive"⁵⁰ (Pu 2011, 10). Before creating his splash-ink paintings Cheng was in fact well verse with the traditional ink brush techniques already.

⁴⁹ Translations are my own. Original text included here: "并不是我发明了什么新画法,也是古人用过的画法,只是后来大家都不用了,我再用出来而已。", retrieved from Pu Hai Hong's thesis. See in Reference.

⁵⁰ Translations are my own. Original text included here: "我一直认为抽象是从具象中抽离出来,没有纯熟优美的具象基础,就一跃为抽象,不过是欺人之谈", retrieved from Pu Hai Hong's thesis. See in Reference.

Cheng is a great admirer of Zhang Da Qian⁵¹. He learnt his splash ink technique directly from Zhang Da Qian's disciple, Sun Yun Sheng. Cheng has created his Huangshan and Mount Lu paintings using splash ink method, the paintings are a combination of splash ink form with traditional brushwork using calligraphic line to draw trees or boats or human or pavilion or sometimes texture of the mountain, as shown in Figure 4-13 and Figure 4-14. In Figure 4-13, pine trees at the foreground were painted in traditional brushwork.



Figure 4-13: Cheng Haw Chien, Memories of Yellow Mountains (黄山纪遊), 2007, Ink and colour on gold paper, 45 x 48 cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.

⁵¹ Personal interview in May 2016.



Figure 4-14: Cheng Haw Chien, Memory of Lu Shan 3 (庐山纪游遊[三]), 2010, Ink and colour on paper, 68 x 102 cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.

In Figure 4-14, traditional brushwork can be seen on the mountainside and on the peak of the mountain. And it was accomplished in a rapid and subtle oblique brush movements with the combination of light and thick ink.

Zhang Da Qian's splash colour ink is a modern technique which he integrates the traditional techniques with the application of light effect principle of the West. In the use

of ink and brushwork, he stressed on vitality and resonance. He weakened the use of lines in his splash ink artwork but used fresh and elegant colour to enhance the blending of ink and colour, to enforce the obscure and abstract effect (Yan 2015). Cheng has taken a slightly different approach from that of Zhang Da Qian. Cheng combined the use of brushwork and has chosen to use lighter and softer colour in his splash colour ink—green (*shi lu* 石绿), blue (*shi qing* 石青), red (*zhu biao* 朱膘) pigment, as compared to Zhang Da Qian who preferred much thicker (*zhong cai* 重彩) and bold colours. To Cheng, the splash colour ink has remained as embellishment—represents the foliage and light effects—it is perhaps therefore he has opted for softer colour. Mount Lu is always covering with clouds and mist, Cheng states⁵², as an artist one does not need to capture every peaks and rocks of the actual scenery, it is more important to observe calmly its beauty and capture its essence.

In addition to the use of Chinese paint for splash colour ink, Cheng uses Western paint as well. He uses these paints interchangeably in his splash colour ink artworks. As in Figure 4-13 (above), he has used the white colour Western paint to create misty clouds effect, as another way to represent the height and the distant mountain.

The Himalayas Series, its spirit is being expressed through form (*yi xing xie shen* 以形写神), the splash ink however is important to emphasize on the overall emotion and construction of poetic realm on the painting (Shao 2016) and at the same time the ink splashed shall give the mountain a form. In Figure 4-14 (above), shows Cheng's splash ink for the top of Mount Lu, and with a scholar and a pavilion included, these seems to have immediately transport the viewer back to the ancient time. This feeling of going back to the ancient time is further enhanced with the poetry inscribed. In the last line of

⁵² Personal interview in June 2017.

the poetry, Cheng mentioned remembering of Su Shih's poem. The poem, a quatrain with seven characters per line, may be translated as following:-

| Poem for Splash-Ink Mount Lu | 题泼墨庐山 |
|---|---------|
| Pushes away the cloud, walking up to the peak of Mount Lu | 拨云步上匡庐顶 |
| Rocks, waterfalls present hundreds of postures | 乱石飞泉展百态 |
| Being broad-minded in the midst of the mountain | 人在山中胸臆旷 |
| Looking the peak from afar, remembering Su Shih's poem. | 远峰遥望忆坡诗 |

This poetry itself is rich in scenes and moods. Clouds, rocks, waterfalls, are additional images presented in the poem to enrich viewer's visual experiences towards the painting (Figure 4-14). In this painting, Cheng painted a scholar near the peak of Mount Lu, to simulate a moving action in his painting. The action is described in the first line of the poetry, the action of 'pushing away the clouds' and 'walking towards the peak of Mount Lu'. This action described in the first line and the additional images given in the second line of the poem have given viewer an imagistic scene of Mount Lu. After providing a scene in the first two lines of the poem, Cheng moved to describe his own feelings—being broad-minded in the midst of Mount Lu (in the third line of the poetry) and experience Mount Lu through his own eyes and probably through the eyes of Su Shih. Cheng reminiscent of Su Shih in composing such a fine poem. This famous poetry of Su Shih (*Ti Xi Lin Bi* 题西林壁⁵³) has a metaphorical meaning, it gives a philosophical meaning on life. In order for one to see the true face of the mountain, one must see the

⁵³ Original poetry in Chinese:- [题西林壁] 横看成岭侧成峰, 远近高低各不同. 不识庐山真面目, 只缘身在此山中. James Hargett (2016) translation "Beheld crosswise, it is a mountain range; from the side, a single peak. Depending on where you look at the mountain, the perspective is different. I cannot know Mount Lu's true face and eyes, and this is because I am in the very midst of the mountain itself!"

mountain from the outside and not from the within. This means that no matter what we do, we should not be just seeing and making judgement based only from part of the matter, instead we must try to see the whole picture before making judgement. This metaphorical meaning of Su Shih poetry's may or may not have stimulated the reflective process of Cheng. However, what is more obvious is that Cheng has used Su Shih's poetry as a guideline to enjoy the scenery of Mount Lu (fourth line of Cheng's poetry). This poetic inscription of the past has in a way act as a reference in shaping Cheng's travelling experience. Now that Cheng is in the Mount Lu, he finally gets to experience what Su Shih has described in his poetry. Cheng admired and very much impressed on how Su Shih had composed the poetry in such an exquisite manner and with such a great poetic conception. With the poetry inscribed in this painting it has allowed viewers to imagine the psychological state—enjoyed the scenery described by Shu Shih, impressed, admired of Su Shih—of Cheng in the painting at the time he painted this artwork.

From the analysis of Cheng's mountain series artworks, we can see that how he has articulated his travelling journey in both his paintings and poems. This accumulative travelling experiences enrich his creative process. His new techniques enhanced the visual experiences of the viewer thereby giving viewer a natural sense of the mountains. The poetry inscribed in his travel painting showcase the subjective experience of his journey as well as a reflection of his own thoughts and feeling about his life as an artist.

The following section shall look into his waterfall and animal series travel paintings in which in his waterfall series he has adopted the western technique of perspective. The poetries he produced for this series are also different from those in the mountain series, giving the viewer another perspective of his travelling experiences.

4.2 Analysis of the Waterfall Series

In this series, Cheng has continued to combine the use of traditional brushwork and western approach. The perspective, the use of colour washes having the effect of light and shadow as seen in these paintings (see in Figure 4-15, Figure 4-16, Figure 4-17 below) are considered of Lingnan style which has influences from the Western painting. These waterfall paintings did not apply the ‘three distances’ of the traditional Chinese landscape painting, however Cheng maintains the grove of trees or rocks at the foreground in the waterfall painting, this provides a distance towards the main subject, i.e. the waterfall, at the same time it may be Cheng’s intention to give viewer an entry point towards the painting or a focal point that allows viewer to experience the painting at the same height as Cheng. For example, in Figure 4-15, the rocks and trees on the left of the painting act as a point of entry for the viewer to the painting, then slowly moving the viewer’s sight to the right of the painting. This series of artworks, in fact uses more of traditional brushwork. The texture of the rocks and the observation area was done using the traditional *cun* method and the waterfall were presented using *zhong feng* (中锋) dry brushwork which were executed by giving more weight at the beginning of a stroke with the brush lifted up as it goes towards the end of a stroke. This kind of strokes and almost equal curve of each brushwork must be done in a rapid mode and one must be good at handling the brush.

Before travelling to a destination, Cheng would study artworks or references about a destination he is to visit to serve as a historical reference to him. Here, putting his motto “Studied Ten Thousand Books, Travelling Ten Thousand Miles” into practice allowed him to capture the details and the essence of the scenic view of a place he visits. For example, these waterfall destinations, Cheng has referenced the waterfall artworks by

Huang Junbi⁵⁴ prior to making his trip. It was a trip (to Iguazu Falls at Brazil) that was triggered when Cheng was in Tahiti holding an exhibition.⁵⁵ To Cheng, one cannot just read and appreciate a subject provided by others, travel is his way to experience and to get inspired when it comes to creating an artwork.

There isn't a new technique identified in the waterfall series artwork. However, the soft but powerful brushwork—a simple one stroke—Cheng used in representing the waterfall has given viewer a sense of tranquility without losing the magnificent view of the waterfall (see in Figure 4-15, Figure 4-16, Figure 4-17). In addition to that, the waterfalls were painted in horizontal scroll that is not a traditional way of representing a waterfall which they were normally painted in a vertical scroll and the waterfall was always slender to highlight the majestic mountain. Cheng's waterfall series of artworks, even though his brush technique is in the style of Chinese painting but the painting overall setting is more closely related to Western art—its perspective, along with methods of washes and spatial composition.

⁵⁴ Huang Junbi, born in 1898 in China and moved to Taiwan in 1949. He was a traditional Chinese painter skilled in Western styles (perspective) and has painted Niagara Falls, Iguazu Falls and Victoria Falls. Information retrieved from http://archives.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/doc/c4_1_4_eng.pdf.

⁵⁵ Personal interview in July 2017.



Figure 4-15 Cheng Haw Chien, Iguazu Falls Brazil (南美夷瓜树大瀑布), 1983, Ink and colour on paper, 68.5 x 143 cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.

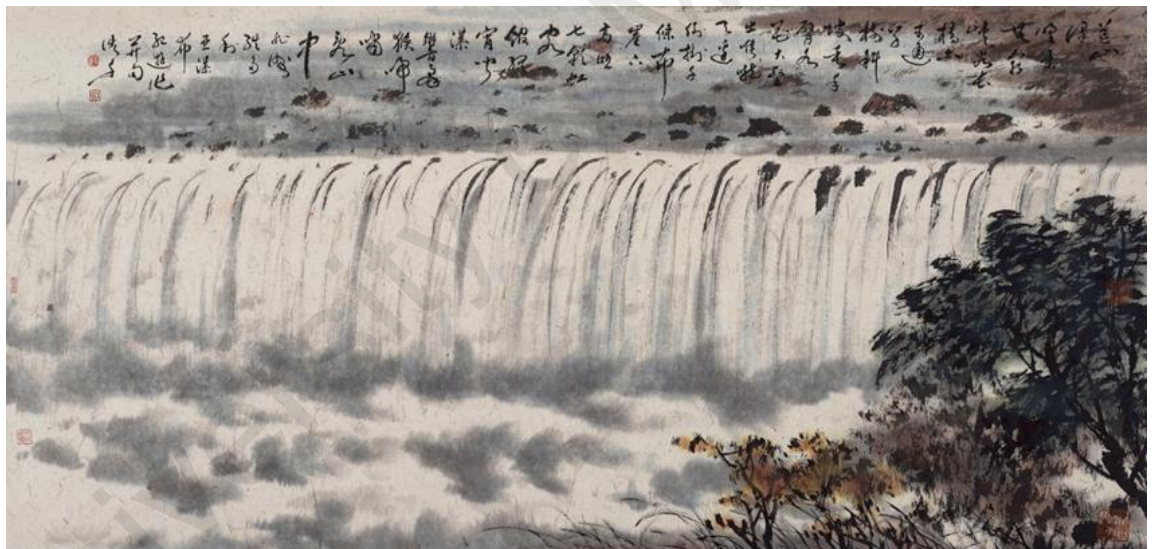


Figure 4-16 Cheng Haw Chien, Victoria Falls Africa (非洲维多利亚大瀑布), 1993, Ink and colour on paper, 69 x 143.5 cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.



Figure 4-17 Cheng Haw Chien, Niagara Falls (加拿大尼加拉大瀑布), 1983, Ink and colour on paper, 68.5 x 143 cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.

The following poem is inscribed in the painting in Figure 4-17 above, a seven characters octave may be translated as following:-

| Trip to Niagara Falls, Canada | 加拿大尼加拉大瀑布纪游 |
|---|---|
| Travelling long distance to Niagara, Not boasting the beauty of the scenery A glance of the wide waterfall, Layers of thin clouds, Sound of thunder transmitted three thousand miles The maple leaf is as red as the flower in February. Before I started painting, the paper is already wet Wind blowing together with rain and sweeping the sand | 长途跋涉到尼加, 美景当前信不夸, 一览无遗宽瀑布, 多层半隐薄云纱, 雷声远播三千里, 枫叶红如二月花, 我未挥毫笺已湿, 风来挟雨掠平沙 |

From the start of the poem (in the first two lines of the poem), Cheng has described that he has travelled long distance to Niagara Falls at Canada followed by appraising the

beauty of Niagara Falls without giving details of the scenery. The second line gives a hint to the viewers that the scenery before him was amazingly beautiful and he was not boasting about it, it was an observation provided briefly by Cheng of Niagara Falls, as a way to prepare the viewers of what to expect of the scenery. The third line of the poetry provided a visual image giving an idea to viewers of the broadness of Niagara Falls. From the painting (without considering the poetry inscribed), one can see that on the right of the painting, Cheng did not add any objects, this composition matches well with the third line of the poetry which allowed the viewers to imagine what is beyond and towards the further right of the painting is the continuation of Niagara Falls. The fourth line described a scene that is near, where there were layers of thin clouds could be seen, then followed by presenting the sound of thunder which was being transmitted from as far as three thousand miles away. This again, provide viewers an image of the Niagara Falls that its surrounding are extensively wide. After giving illustration of the main subject (Niagara Falls), the focus is then moved to the secondary sights. The sixth line described the maple leaves and that the maple leaves are as red as the flower blooms in February. This sixth line gives a setting in time that it is autumn season, and this setting could not have been deduced directly from the painting itself, even though there are red leafed trees painted at the foreground. In the seventh line, the word “I” (wo 我) was used, Cheng clearly states that he wanted to paint at the site, but due to winds and rains (in the last line of the poetry), before he could do so, his paper is already wet. This again show that whenever he is on his trip, he is always ready to capture and record a scene that inspired him. Without reading this last time we wouldn’t know he actually captured the scene in his mind. This tells us that this painting is based on his recollection of Niagara Falls (or of the place) rather than direct observation.

This poetry inscribed is like an anecdote to Cheng. It is at the same time telling viewers what he is experiencing in his visit to Niagara Falls and his feeling of impatient and

wanting to paint the beautiful Niagara Falls immediately. Without the poetry inscribed, viewers will not experience the additional visual and verbal images such as the broadness of the waterfalls, the sound of the thunder, the wind blowing, as part of the parcel in appreciating the artwork. This additional information gives the painting a new vividness and immediacy. The subjective experiences Cheng captured in his poetic inscription give viewers the feeling of being at a real place.

4.3 Analysis of the Animal Series

Within the animal genre of Cheng Haw Chien's art collection, he has painted many different types of animals (as listed at the beginning of this chapter). And they were painted in two different types, the first is with ink and colour washes as the background (see example in Figure 4-18, Figure 4-19, Figure 4-20 below), and another purely in ink (see example in Figure 4-21, Figure 4-22). The Animal Series travel paintings selected for this research are comprises of the penguins from Phillip Island, Australia and kangaroos from Australia. These animals selected are new subject matters within the Chinese ink brush painting animal genre. Cheng states, the difficulty in producing a new subject matter is that there is of no reference. It needs to be done through many experiments by experimenting different brushworks in creating the new subjects.



Figure 4-18: Cheng Haw Chien, Kangaroo (草原袋鼠), 1982, Ink and Colour on paper, 60.5 x 92 cm. Personal Collection, Source: provided by artist.



Figure 4-19: Cheng Haw Chien, Return of Penguins (I) (企鵝归晚[I]), 1982, Ink and colour on paper, 68.5 x 138.5cm. Personal Collection, Source: Photograph from art collection.



Figure 4-20: Cheng Haw Chien, Penguins (企鵝), 1995, Ink and colour on paper, 50 x 63 cm. Personal Collection, Source: Photograph from art collection.

In Figure 4-20 above, it is a painting with background covered with ink and colour. The ink washes here represent the effect of resemblance the shadow is depicted in dilute, blotted ink, evenly applied with a broad brush (*yang hao pai bi* 羊豪排筆). Each colour and texture are carefully considered in terms of providing balance to the painting. This technique of creating such fine blending required experience in handling the amount of water applied and depending on the type of paper used. The technique of applying water on the rice paper before applying the ink to create effect of ink washes was a method first created by Shi Tao (石濤) (Xu 2013). This method by Cheng was first by applying ink using broad brush on to the rice paper, let the ink dry before applying a layer of water on to the rice paper, then apply colour on to the paper. The purpose of this ink washes technique is to allow both the ink and colour to fuse well and so that it does not constitute an unnatural border between the ink and colour.

The composition of this penguin's painting (Figure 4-19 and Figure 4-20) is rather unusual. There is no 'blank leaving' (*liu bai* 留白) in the painting, a compositional approach that is highly valued in traditional ink brush painting. Instead, Cheng has painted the whole painting with ink and colour as the background. And chooses to leave white on the ventral (underside) surface of the penguin and as well as on the beaks, which is inconspicuous in comparison to the sunset background. Nevertheless, the use of thick and dry ink on the dorsal (back) surface of the penguin has given a sharp contrast between white on the ventral surface and the soft sunset colour. The wing and tail was applied using *zhong feng* (中锋) brushwork and the dorsal surface is applied with a few *ce feng* (側鋒) when the dorsal surface was facing the viewer. This composition however has constituted a balanced and unified painting. It is a common approach to composition of Cheng's animal series travel paintings.

The poem inscribed on the painting in Figure 4-20 above, a quatrain with seven characters per line, may be translated literally as below:-

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Australia Phillip Island: Wonders of penguins landed from the sea in an evening⁵⁶ | 澳洲菲立岛黄昏企鹅从海上登 陆蔚为奇观 |
| From the sea chasing the waves in they roll | 逐浪随波海上来, |
| Like soldiers lining up in rows | 如军列队一排排, |
| Their uneven shadows on the land cast by the sun which is setting | 参差岸上斜阳里, |
| At the tourists a few times indifferently they are gazing | 汉向游人望几回 |

The first two lines of the poetry were not reflected in the painting, however, these two lines have given viewers additional images and allowing viewers to imagine the scenery

⁵⁶ The English translation of this poem is by Ms Sharon Goh Seng Pang. Retrieved from "The Art World of Cheng Haw Chien".

beyond the painting. Images of more penguins, lined up, coming to the shore as the waves rolled them in. The third line of the poetry described the sunset scenery at the shore, the shadows cast by the penguins. It is then in the final line of the poetry Cheng described the reaction or may be the attitude of the penguins at the shore towards the tourists, where the penguins do not seem to bother with the gaze of the tourists. In the painting, Cheng captures this reaction of the penguins by emphasizing the penguins' eyes, the eyes were carefully drawn (see Figure 4-20) in meticulous line using *gong bi* (工笔) method, echoing the last line of the poetry. This particular poem inscribed does not reflect Cheng's personal emotion and feeling like the one in his Himalayas Series travel painting as analyzed above (section 4.1.1), here, he recorded what he saw of the nature, his subjective impression—the vivid reaction of the penguins.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, some of the animals were depicted only in ink, such as in Figure 4-21 and Figure 4-22. The brushworks were executed in a smooth manner in these paintings. This smooth brushwork can be clearly seen in the *Kangaroo* painting. These two paintings are considered within the traditional literati painting which purely emphasizes on the interpretive aspect of brushwork and captures the essence of the subjects. Specifically, the *Kangaroo* painting, the structure of the kangaroo—the body, the back legs and the tail—was executed only in a few rapid brushstrokes and it is in a loose calligraphy manner. This successfully brought upon to the viewers the strength of the Kangaroo, specially its tail. These brushstrokes were further enhanced by the well mixture of tonal value of ink and water and successfully given viewer a sense of vitality and the spirit of the kangaroo.



Figure 4-21: Cheng Haw Chien, Kangaroo (袋鼠), 1982, Ink on paper, 77x54cm. Collection of Ms. Ivy Chang Chun-Sin, Source: provided by artist.



Figure 4-22: Cheng Haw Chien, Return Home in Winter (踏雪归来), 2005, Ink on paper, 67 x 67 cm. Personal Collection, Source: Provided by artist.

Similarly, for this painting above (Figure 4-22), the ink applied for the penguins were executed in different shades. The ventral surfaces of the penguins were painted in different value of diluted ink indirectly provided viewers a sense of light and shadow effect. This painting does not introduce any new techniques. At one glance, it gives viewer an impression that this is a pure traditional artwork, with ink only and on how the penguins were being arranged, in loose and dense manner. With further observation on the different value of the diluted ink applied on the ventral surface of the penguins, Cheng seems to have also considered the light effect when he painted this artwork. Therefore, this may suggest that it is another Cheng's artwork that is with combination of traditional techniques as well as a consideration of western light effect implementation. These two paintings discussed above, as new subject matters within the literati genre, are no doubt an expression of Cheng's own personality, changing constantly and responding to new experience and subject matter. This painting is inscribed with poem of five characters per line, may be translated as following:-

| Poem for Penguin | 题企鹅 |
|--|--------|
| Stepping the snow residue by the beach | 沙滩踏雪残， |
| Walking unsteadily due to tiring journey | 倦旅步阑珊， |
| Coming back late from the sea | 海上归来晚， |
| A temporary wind blows in the cold dusk | 临风暮色寒 |

The first line of the poetry mentioned the snow residue, but the painting above, *Return home in winter* (Figure 4-22) does not present any snow residue, however the white colour of the paper can be imagined as representing the snow—this is a way of the Chinese

painting tradition of the purpose of ‘blank leaving’⁵⁷. This first line given viewers additional image of beach and snow which cannot be deduced from the painting itself. The second line of the poetry does not explicitly mention it is the penguins walking unsteadily, but penguins being the main subject of the painting, one can safely assume that the poetry is referring to the penguins walking unsteadily. The third and fourth line give viewers a setting of the time as well as the weather at that time when Cheng experienced the scenery which was in the evening at Phillips Island⁵⁸.

These paintings and poems again as a way of Cheng making a record of his travelling journey, not simply by jotting down what he sees and experiences on his trip in a direct way, but recording of what he observed—his subjective experiences, i.e. the atmosphere of a place, the temperament of the object, and translating that into the composition of the painting and poem. This composite of styles are not exact copy of the past style i.e. the literati style or the Lingnan style, instead it is like assembling different styles to create something new, something that is contemporary.

⁵⁷ This term ‘blank leaving’ has been described briefly in the earlier section.

⁵⁸ The name of the place of this painting was obtained from a personal interview with Cheng Haw Chien in June 2017.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has studied the travel paintings of Cheng Haw Chien, what is selected and presented in this dissertation is able to cover the new techniques he has developed. The interpretation of the relation between the poem Cheng has composed and his travel paintings are also included in this dissertation. From the interpretation of these poems, we can see additional meaning contributed towards the travel paintings, seeing how Cheng has captured his travelling experiences in the foreign lands, in the form of painting and poetry like a journal—recording his subjective experiences of his travelling journey, the sceneries he saw, and his life as an artist.

In Malaysia, there is no academic research on Cheng Haw Chien before this dissertation. Therefore, in Chapter One, the literature review presented were based from a few academic papers by scholars from China and the prefaces or articles on Cheng Haw Chien's art collection and poetry collection. This chapter gives an overarching view of what has been discussed of Cheng Haw Chien on both his ink brush paintings and his poems in general. This chapter has briefly highlighted the importance of having the three perfections—poem, calligraphy and painting, within the Chinese ink brush painting field. And that Cheng success in acquiring these three skills through many years of practice and his use of travelling as a thematic device has enabled him to produce innovative travel paintings. It is therefore significant to perform a study on Cheng Haw Chien.

Chapter Two provides historical background of the Chinese ink brush painting starting from the 1920s till the recent day in Malaysia. At the beginning of this chapter, showed that the Chinese ink brush painting was brought into Malaya by the Chinese artist migrants. The successful development of the Chinese ink brush painting in the Malaysia can be attributed to these Chinese migrant artists who has settled down in Malaya. From this chapter, we can see that Lingnan School of Painting was brought into Malaya through

exhibitions. These exhibitions and exchanges of knowledge between the local ink brush artists and the Lingnan proponents has allowed the Lingnan School of Painting to develop locally. Travel writing and its evolvement into travel painting was traced and presented at the end of this chapter, it showed the purpose of why artists travel—for leisure, for getting inspiration, for observing and experiencing the scenery first hand and for recording what is seen.

Chapter Three discusses the biography of Cheng Haw Chien, he as an artist and as a poet and his motive to travel. This chapter traces how Cheng as an artist, started his travelling journey in search of new subject matters, artistic and poetic inspiration in creating innovative travel paintings. This chapter has shown how he continued to refer to his mentor, i.e. Reverend Zhu Mo, Liu Tai Xi, and use travelling as a lens to reinterpret their philosophical approaches in Lingnan painting and classical poem.

Chapter Four shows the visual analysis of Cheng Haw Chien's travel paintings. This chapter addresses Cheng Haw Chien's artistic style, techniques and the meaning of the poetry inscribed in the travel painting on how it is contributing to the travel painting as a whole. It is in this chapter that we see that there is no demarcation line in terms of the techniques Cheng adopted in his travel paintings, in which he uses the Traditional, the Lingnan style and his new techniques. It is his believe that recognizing the old and by infusing the new in an artwork is essential at this contemporary time. And it is this approach that has shaped his travelling experience. It is observed from the analysis of Mountain Series and Waterfall Series in this dissertation that Cheng always make himself present in the poem. As argued in chapter 3 and 4, the experience of travel is employed by Cheng as a device or a lens that helps him consolidate both new techniques and traditional conventions seamlessly. It allows him to reformulate a composite style in Chinese ink brush painting that does not break away from the literati tradition but renews

its conventions by emphasizing his individualistic reactions to nature as an important aspect of the artwork. As suggested, this subjective experience is convincingly captured in the poetry inscribed on these travel paintings.

This dissertation has been focused only on the selected Cheng Haw Chien's travel painting, other areas one can research on includes his finger painting, his calligraphy, his collection of poem as well as his collection of seals. Further research is definitely very much in need in order to enrich the collection of academic research on Malaysia Chinese ink brush painting.

University of Malaysia

APPENDIX A – PUBLICATION OF ART AND POETRY COLLECTIONS

| | Title | Year Published | Publisher |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Art Collection</i> | | | |
| 1 | 郑浩千画集 Paintings by Mr. Cheng Haw Chien Volume (1) | 1974 | Haw Chien Art Studio |
| 2 | 浩千画选 Cheng Haw Chien Paintings | 1980 | Haw Chien Art Studio |
| 3 | 郑浩千画集 The Paintings of Cheng Haw Chien | 1985 | Central Academy of Art |
| 4 | 郑浩千画集 The Paintings of Cheng Haw Chien | 1994 | 艺术家出版社 |
| 5 | 郑浩千画集 Paintings of Dr Cheng Haw Chien | 1999 | N/a |
| 6 | 郑浩千诗书画集 The Art of Cheng Haw Chien | 2003 | 法露缘出版社 Fa Lu Yuen Publication, Malaysia |
| 7 | 郑浩千画集 The Art of Cheng Haw Chien | 2006 | 新新出版公司 New New Publishing Company, Hong Kong. |
| 8 | The Art World of Cheng Haw Chien | 2010 | National Art Gallery Malaysia |
| 9 | 郑浩千画集 The Art of Cheng Haw Chien | 2013 | 马大中文系毕业生协会 Persatuan Siswazah Jabatan Pengajian Tionghoa, University Malaya, Malaysia (PEJATI) |
| 10 | 郑浩千画集 The Art of Cheng Haw Chien | 2016 | 惠州博物馆 Hui Zhou Museum, China |
| <i>Poetry Collection</i> | | | |
| 1 | 天涯别馆吟草 - 郑浩千诗集 | 2003 | 马来西亚留台校友会联合总会 The Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan Universities, Malaysia |
| 2 | 天涯别馆吟草 - 郑浩千诗集 | 2013 | 马大中文系毕业生协会 Persatuan Siswazah Jabatan Pengajian Tionghoa, University Malaya, Malaysia (PEJATI) |
| 3 | 天涯别馆词 | 2017 | 文汇出版社 Wenhui Press |

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