

## **Life of Chen Huai-cheng as District Chief and Literatus: Review of His Diaries (1920-1932)**

Yu-lan Lee

### **ABSTRACT**

Chen Huai-cheng (1877-1940) was born in Lukang, Changhua County. He joined the Oak Poetry Society in 1902 and took up the post as District Chief of Lukang in September 1919. After administrative restructuring, he became the first Chief of Lukang Street in October 1920. He had served three full terms in total and governed the district affairs of Lukang for 12 years until September 1932. Unfortunately, he suffered from dementia in his old age.

As Chief of Lukang Street, Chen supervised administrative affairs such as budgeting, tax collection, meeting with patrol leaders (Pao-Cheng) and district chief representatives (Tsunng Dei) to ensure that tasks assigned were accomplished. He also served as the magistrate settling disputes and reflected public opinions to higher authorities. Despite of his many and heavy responsibilities, he had helpful and dependable staff to share the workload.

During his leisure, Chen learned Sinology enthusiastically and was actively involved in the Oak Poetry Society. His pastimes included reading, antique collecting, fan painting, engraving and listening to music. All these showed that while serving as Chief of Street, he had the ability and discipline to realize his aspirations as a traditional literatus.

With reference to historical materials including diaries written by Chen and other literati such as Fu Hsi-chin, Lin Hsien-tang and Chang Li-chun as well as newspapers of that era, this study explored the activities and contribution of Chen during his terms as district chief. In addition, this study also examined his life as a literatus to understand how traditional scholars balance their personal goals with real-life responsibilities under colonial rule.

**Keywords:** Chen Huai-cheng, Chief of Lukang Street, Traditional Literati, Oak Poetry Society, Fu Hsi-chi