



TAIWANESE CANADIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

台加文化協會

8853 Selkirk Street
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6P 4J6

email: info@tccs.ca
<http://www.tccs.ca>

Tel: 604-267-0901
Fax: 604-267-0903

2021 Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Festival Artist Corner - The Charm of Bamboo Experiencing Bamboo Sculpture Art with Steven Chang

Dr. Steven Chang, a Taiwanese paediatrician and artist, is enamoured by the art of carved sculptures. Many have heard of Dr. Chang's art collection, and those who have had the privilege to see his bamboo carvings called the collection an "artistic treasure trove".

Among his works, Dr. Chang reimagined the clam spirit from Tu-shui Huang's marble masterpiece *Sweet Dew* in his *Free-Spirited Lady of Water*, to pay homage to the pioneer of modern sculptures in Taiwan. Reflecting on the changing times, Dr. Chang's nostalgia for the simple life in rural Taiwan inspired the creation of *Wind from Yesterday*, which brings to life a black drongo perched on the back of a water buffalo. In *Floating Islands*, Dr. Chang carved a group of water buffalos bathing in a river with their backs emerging from the water. Those backs resemble many floating islands, representing Taiwan - an island with many water buffalos - where his beloved hometown is located.

Dr. Chang also took inspiration from the experience of a friend who is an immigrant and the mother of two children. He was deeply impressed by observing the burden that his friend carried while living through family separation. He channeled his sympathy when carving the piece *On a Spring Day in Vancouver*.

The artists' series at the 2021 Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Festival will be the first time Dr. Chang publicly showcases his bamboo carvings.

People often asked Dr. Chang, "How did you get into bamboo carving?" He would smile as he recalls the first piece that he made for his wife thirty years ago.

When looking for a way to impress his wife, his then girlfriend, Dr. Chang recalled the carving lesson he took in his high school art class. As a present, he selected a piece of bamboo from his backyard and carefully carved the words "tranquil contemplation" in Chinese. A little sheepishly, he mused that perhaps she was moved because she interpreted the words as "gentle longing". Dr. Chang believes that the words have a multitude of meanings, another of which is "quiet meditation of one's direction in life".

Not only did Dr. Chang's first piece smoothly convey his feeling, but it also sparked his passion in bamboo carving, leading to his current works.



TAIWANESE CANADIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

台加文化協會

8853 Selkirk Street
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6P 4J6

email: info@tccs.ca
<http://www.tccs.ca>

Tel: 604-267-0901
Fax: 604-267-0903

People frequently enquired Dr. Chang on how he learned his art. Although he did not study under a teacher, he looked up to Tu-shui Huang, the Taiwanese sculpture master from the period of Japanese colonial rule.

Dr. Chang is well versed in Huang's work. Carved in marble, *Sweet Dew* is Huang's most famous sculpture. It was selected for the Japanese imperial exhibition in 1921. At first glance, the beautiful woman in *Sweet Dew* seems to be resting her hands on two oval shapes. The oval shapes are clam shells, Dr. Chang explained, which means the woman is a clam spirit.

Dr. Chang reasons that Huang selected the clam spirit as his subject because of his upbringing. Freshwater clams were common in rivers and ponds in Taiwan, and characters such as clam spirits and fishermen often appeared in *miaohui*, which are local temple festivals. *Sweet Dew* has also been nicknamed "the oriental Venus", referring to the goddess in the famous painting: *The Birth of Venus*.

As a tribute to Huang, Dr. Chang's *Free Spirited Lady of Water* depicts a calm and tranquil clam spirit relaxing by the river, accompanied by an elegant Great Egret and ginger lilies, illustrating a sense of peace and serenity.

Another one of Dr. Chang's pieces is called *Wind from Yesterday*, which he had considered naming *Black Drongo in Search of Water Buffalos*. During his childhood, black drongos resting on the back of water buffalos was a common sight. The black drongos would hunt for pests in the fields, but now all that remains are lonely scarecrows. The piece expresses the passage of time and serves as a memento of the good old days.

In the artist series of Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Festival 2021, Steven Chang will be diving deeper into the stories behind each of his bamboo carvings.

For more information or inquiries, please visit the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Festival website <https://tccfestival.ca/> or follow the TCCS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TCCSVan>

For Media Inquiries: Michael Wu, Project Manager, michael.wu@tccs.ca