

A Will to History: Yeh Jung-chung's Writing Activities in His Later Years

「述史」之志：葉榮鐘晚年的書寫活動

Masahiro Wakabayashi 若林正文

Faculty of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University, Japan

日本早稻田大學政治經濟學術院

Yeh Jung-chung was a young Taiwanese activist in political and social movements in opposing Japanese rule before the War ended. His book titled “History of Taiwanese National Movement”, published in September 1971 and appeared first as serial articles in the Independent Evening Post, has been well-regarded by students of Taiwan history. From Yeh’s diary, we learned that he began writing in January 1968, and finally completed it in March 1970.

In a sense, Yeh Jung-chung was just in time to appear before the intellectual movement of 1970s called the "Return to Reality" ferment stimulated by post-war generation of Taiwanese intellectuals. He could be seen as a living agent passing the historical memories from the time of when Taiwanese were under Japanese colonial rule. Not just the book, he has also contributed several other articles about persons and events involved in the anti-Japanese politico-social movements, published in magazines such like “Taiwan Political Review.”

In Dr. A-chin Hsiau’s book “Return to Reality”, he has already drawn a pretty good picture about how Yeh Jung-chung and other former anti-Japanese activists made their appearances in the intellectual ferment of the 70’s. However, this speech tries to show, from the side of Yeh Jung-chung, how and why he was there, that is, how and why he managed to appear in front of the "Return to Reality" generation in time.

To sum up, Yeh Jung-chung had been well-prepared and motivated to pass his historical memory to the next generation. His strong will to write history for the fellow Taiwanese had made it possible in a milieu still not amicable for Taiwanese intellectuals to write history of Taiwan in modern times from their own view point.