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**George E. Morrison and the Tradition of Australian Civilian  
Engagement with China: The Morrison Lectures**

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# George E. Morrison and the Tradition of Australian Civilian Engagement with China : The Morrison Lectures

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## ABSTRACT

The Morrison Lecture was founded in 1932 by Chinese residents of Australia. Named in memory of the late Australian pioneer of engagement with China, George E. Morrison, the lectureship was founded to promote cultural relations between Australia and China. Throughout its near century-long history, the lectureship has evolved to become one of Australia's longest-standing academic traditions, and served as the precursor to the establishment of Canberra as an international hub for the study of the Asia-Pacific region. Although principally an academic institution, the lectures have also served as an important forum for the debate of 'Things Chinese', ranging from questions of how Australia should handle its relationship with China, to confronting its own domestic policy issues, including the White Australia Policy.

This paper draws on archival records to offer a chronology of the Morrison Lectures, and demonstrates the ways in which the institution has honoured the legacy of the man remembered as 'Australia's first China watcher' by playing a key role in the establishment of Chinese Studies in Australia, as well as the ways in which it has been witness to, and exerted influence at various junctures in the Sino-Australian relationship.

## Keywords

Morrison, Sinology, Canberra, Sino-Australian Relations

## ジョージ・E・モリソンとオーストラリアの民間における対中関与の伝統： モリソン・レクチャーズ・シリーズを例として

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## 要旨

モリソン・レクチャー (Morrison Lecture) は、1932年に在豪華僑によって設立された。中国との交流の先駆者である故ジョージ・E・モリソンを記念して名付けられたこのレクチャーシップは、オーストラリアと中国の文化的関係を促進するために設けられた。約1世紀にわたる歴史の中で、レクチャーシップはオーストラリアで最も長い学術的伝統の一つとして発展し、キャンベラがアジア太平洋地域の研究のための国際的な拠点となる先駆けとなった。モリソン・レク

チャーは学術的なものでありながら、オーストラリアが中国との関係をどのように扱うべきかという問題から、白豪主義のようなオーストラリアの国内政策に至るまで、「中国に関するあらゆるもの」を議論する重要な場でもあった。

本論文は、文書館に所蔵されている史料をもとにモリソン・レクチャーの歴史をたどることによって、1世紀近くにわたるこのレクチャーシップが、「オーストラリア初のチャイナ・ウォッチャー」として知られる彼の伝統を尊重し、同国における中国研究の確立に重要な役割を果たしたことを示すと共に、豪中関係のさまざまな局面に際して、いかなる影響を及ぼしてきたかを明らかにするものである。

#### キーワード

モリソン、中国学、キャンベラ、中豪関係

## Introduction

George Ernest Morrison (1862–1920) was an Australian adventurer, journalist, collector, medical doctor, *bon vivant*, and political advisor, active in China between 1897–1920. In his capacity as a foreign correspondent, and later political advisor to the President of the Republic of China (ROC), Morrison was witness to, and often prophet of, a number of events that would shape the future for China and the world.

During his lifetime, Morrison enjoyed an international reputation as the authority on matters Chinese, earning him the monikers ‘Chinese Morrison’ and ‘Morrison of Peking’ among his contemporaries. Morrison was so well-known that the now bustling Wangfujing shopping street in central Beijing, where he once resided, was for a period known as ‘Morrison Street’ 莫里遜大街.<sup>1</sup> Despite his erstwhile celebrity status in both China and Australia, according to the Chinese historian Dou Kun 窦坤, Morrison’s legacy has been regrettably ‘buried in history’, while former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says ‘the truth is he is little known in contemporary Australia’.<sup>2</sup>

For Australians involved with China, however, Morrison is revered as a mentor, and the pioneer of a great Antipodean tradition of engagement with the ‘Near North’. Rudd remembers Morrison as ‘one of the most remarkable Australians in our early national history to enliven the world stage’, while the author Linda Jaivin likens Morrison to ‘the most sacred ground of all’ for Australian Sinologists.<sup>3</sup>

Internationally, Morrison is renowned for having collated the ‘Morrison Library’, an Asiatic collection comprising of 24,000 books and documents, which today forms the basis of the ‘Oriental Library’ (*Toyo Bunko* 東洋文庫) in Tokyo.<sup>4</sup> In Australia, he has been remembered since 1932 by the annual *George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology*, founded by Chinese residents in Australia in order to ‘honour for all time the memory of a great Australian who rendered valuable services to China and to improve cultural relations between China and Australia’.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, his legacy has inspired various eponymous initiatives, including the ‘Morrison Scholars’ sponsored by the Australian Centre on China in the World at the Australian National University (ANU) in

2014-2015 to cultivate young China scholars,<sup>6</sup> as well as the 'Morrison Institute', founded in 2021 by Australian businesspeople to 'help business mend ties with China'.<sup>7</sup>

The Morrison Library has made his a household name among scholars of Asian Studies, especially in Japan, where the collection's acquisition has been called an 'epoch-making event in the history of Asian Studies'.<sup>8</sup> This has spawned numerous efforts to document the collection's contents, history and significance. In Australia, Morrison's diaries, correspondence, and photographs held at the Mitchell Library have formed the basis of various biographical studies.<sup>9</sup> Internationally, particularly in Japan and China, studies have focused respectively on the contents of Morrison's library, his life, and his observations of the world to which he was witness.<sup>10</sup> These studies, primarily concerned with other aspects of Morrison scholarship, however, make only cursory mention of the third aspect of Morrison's legacy — *The George E. Morrison Lectures in Ethnology* — detailed documentation of which remains scant.

If the acquisition of the Morrison Library was of 'epoch-making significance' for Asian Studies in Japan, the Morrison Lecture played a similar role in Australia. Initiated posthumously by admirers in Morrison's memory, the lectures are perhaps the most direct way in which Morrison's legacy has contributed to the development and evolution of the tradition of Australian engagement with China that he pioneered. Dealing with a range of subject matter from the esoteric to the pragmatic and drawing speakers of international influence to crowds that have often included the Australian

intellectual and political élite, the lectures have consistently played an important educational role, as well as a political role, at times influencing the agenda for engagement with China. They also served as a key impetus to the recognition of Asian Studies as an accepted academic 'discipline',<sup>11</sup> in which Canberra would later become an international leader with the establishment of the ANU in 1946, with a research school dedicated to the study of the region.<sup>12</sup> Their continuation to this day — interrupted only by the outbreak of the Pacific War (lectures were halted between 1942–1947), and COVID-19 in 2021 —<sup>13</sup> has seen this role sustained for almost a century, making the lecture one of Australia's longest-standing intellectual traditions. As the pioneer of Australian engagement with China, and the harbinger of the study of Asia in the country, in the words of the former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, 'it is fitting that he [Morrison] is remembered by this, one of the earliest and oldest lecture series in this young country of ours.'<sup>14</sup>

As is the case with the historiography of the Morrison Library, efforts to document the history of the Morrison Lectures have been concentrated at the institution under the auspices of which it is now held, the ANU (since 1948). Since taking over custodianship of the lectureship from the Australian Institute of Anatomy in 1948,<sup>15</sup> the ANU Library has maintained a collection of the manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> In 1996, the ANU journal *East Asian History* produced a selection of lectures from between 1951–1996, with a preface on the origins of the lectureship, which it deemed an 'event of more than national interest', by then Editor, Geremie Barmé.<sup>17</sup> In 2007, *East Asian History* printed the early lectures from 1932–

1941, with details of the events that led to their creation, by then Editor, Benjamin Penny.<sup>18</sup> In 2010, following then Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's 70th Morrison Lecture, 'Australia and China in the World', in which he announced the foundation of the AUD 53 million Australian Centre on China in the World at the ANU, the custodianship of the lectureship was transferred from the ANU China Institute to the newly formed Centre.<sup>19</sup> In 2015, the ANU scholar William Sima offered a history of the early days of the Morrison Lecture in his book, *China & ANU*. Drawing on the archives of the ANU and the National Library of Australia (NLA), Sima's book provides an authoritative history of the 'interconnection between Australia's first diplomat-scholars in China and the founding of Chinese Studies at the newly established Australian National University' between the 1940–1950s. In addition to detailing the lectureship's origins, Sima and Penny present a persuasive case for the pivotal role that the Morrison Lecture and Morrison's legacy played in establishing Asian Studies, and particularly the study of China, as a key focal point for the ANU.

Outside the Australian China studies clique, however, the Morrison Lectures and their significance remain under-appreciated. Although the aforementioned literature details the origins of the lecture and its significance in pioneering Asian Studies in Australia in the early years of the ANU, the ways in which the Morrison Lecture has continued to evolve and influence Australian engagement with China over the succeeding decades, at times having an impact at the highest echelons of government, remain unaccounted for in existing literature.

As this paper will demonstrate, the Morrison Lectures provide a unique lens through which to observe the evolution of Sino-Australian relations and Australian perceptions of China, as well as the evolution of Asian Studies in Australia over the past century. With attention to the more recent years that have not been dealt with in detail in existing histories, this paper extends upon on the work of Barmé, Sima and Penny to, drawing on the available coverage and documentation in the archives of the ANU and NLA, provide a chronology of the lectureship's history, and demonstrate the significance of the Morrison Lectures in continuing to bear witness to and influence changing Australian understandings of, and engagement with China. It also seeks to demonstrate the pioneering role of the Morrison Lectures for Asian Studies in Australia.

### Origins of the Morrison Lecture

When Morrison died in May 1920, the ROC (established in 1912) and the Commonwealth of Australia (formed in 1901) were both young nations. Morrison's work would have a significant role in defining their futures. His contributions to the ROC were crucial to the young nation's survival. Most famously, Morrison convinced President Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 to leak the contents of Japan's '21 demands' in 1915,<sup>20</sup> preventing China from becoming a vassal state.<sup>21</sup> His contribution to his home country would be equally important, albeit under-appreciated until some years after his death.

At a time when the 'Far East' was considered by many Australians to be 'poor, weak and reigned by tyrants' and 'Asian Studies' was

not an accepted field of research,<sup>22</sup> Morrison had foreseen the importance of understanding and engaging with the region for his country's future.<sup>23</sup> His intimate knowledge of Japanese aggression in China informed his prophetic view,<sup>24</sup> which he shared with the Australian authorities, that conflict would eventually implicate Australia.<sup>25</sup> He advocated for an ambassadorial presence in China,<sup>26</sup> and called for direct intercourse for the resolution of issues involving Australia, China and Japan.<sup>27</sup> Morrison also urged the public to realise the importance of engagement with China, noting that with a population 65-fold that of Australia, its regional significance was undeniable.<sup>28</sup>

Morrison's calls for the development of a better understanding of the region would finally be realised with the outbreak of the Pacific War. For many of his contemporaries, however, the 'Far East' remained distant from the 'white fortress' of the British Empire, of which Australia was a part. This thinking informed the enactment of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, better known as the 'White Australia Policy'. Under the act, which was designed to keep Australia 'British' and was only fully repealed by the Whitlam government seven decades later with the introduction of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, Asiatics were considered 'undesirables' and could be easily deported.<sup>29</sup> Coinciding with the establishment of the ROC, many Chinese Australians either fled racist White Australia or were isolated from wider Australian society into Chinese communities, where some founded businesses that capitalised on their ability to transverse between cultures.<sup>30</sup>

William J. Liu OBE 劉光福 (1893–1983) was

one such individual, whose later role in improving trade relations between Australia and China would be recognised with the honour of Officer of the Order of the British Empire. Early in his career, Liu worked as a translator at the Chinese consulate in Melbourne (1912–1914), where he met the then acting consul-general William Ah Ket 麥錫祥 (1876–1936), and Fred J. Quinlan, a senior public servant with the Department of External Affairs.<sup>31</sup> Liu, who went on to pursue a career in business, became a Chinese community leader in Sydney.

The three would later be reunited by a desire to improve cultural relations between Australia and China. The impetus for this would be the foundation of the Australian Institute of Anatomy in the newly established Australian capital of Canberra in 1930, with Sir Colin MacKenzie (1877–1938), an eminent orthopaedist whose private collection formed the basis of the Institute, as its director. At the time, the young capital had a small, highly educated population, but forums for intellectual engagement were scarce. MacKenzie envisioned the Institute as a place that could fill this void, and devised five lectureship endowments, four of which were concerned with scientific and medical subjects. The outlier was the 'George Ernest Morrison Lecture on Chinese Ethnology'. MacKenzie hints at the rationale behind what would have at the time seemed an odd combination, noting that while his primary intention was 'to make Canberra one of the great centres of medical research in the Pacific ... at the present time, relationships between Australia and the East, and especially China, are the subject of increasing attention'.<sup>32</sup>

As Penny notes in his study on the early

days of the Morrison Lecture, it is unclear why MacKenzie made this exception. Drawing on MacKenzie's correspondence, Penny suggests that the idea may have originated with Quinlan, who was reportedly the 'best authority in Canberra on Chinese matters', and that Quinlan was responsible for the meeting that led to its formation. Another account, published in the Melbourne *Herald* following the foundation of the lectureship, has it that it was in fact Liu who proposed the idea.<sup>33</sup> Regardless of Quinlan's role, Chinese Australians were clearly instrumental in making the lectureship a reality. Following the meeting with MacKenzie, Liu drew on the support of his early colleague Ah Ket, as well as the Chinese Consul-General, Weiping Chen 陳維屏. The two raised 402 pounds for the endowment from their respective communities. The 'George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Chinese Ethnology' was thereby established in 1932 by founders William Liu, William Ah Ket, Sir Colin MacKenzie and Fred J. Quinlan, with the support of the Chinese Consulate-General, and under the aegis of the Australian Institute of Anatomy. The annual interest on the endowment was to cover the expenses of the Lecturer, who was to be chosen each year by a 'permanent committee', which comprised of the Australian Minister for Health, the Chinese Consul-General, the Director of the Institute of Anatomy, Liu, and Ah Ket.<sup>34</sup>

The Morrison Lecture was created, according to the founding objectives of the lectureship as quoted in Geremie Barmé's overview of its origins, 'to honour for all time the great Australian who rendered valuable service to China'.<sup>35</sup> With view to the fact that the lectureship was funded by Chinese Australians at the height of the White Australia policy, and

in the aftermath of the Mukden Incident, as Geremie Barmé notes, an important impetus for its establishment was a resistance to the White Australia Policy, as well as outrage at Japanese aggression among Australia's Chinese communities.

### Early days (1932-1941)

The inaugural lecture, titled 'The Objects of the Foundation of the Lectureship, and a Review of Dr Morrison's Life in China' was delivered by Chinese Consul-General Weiping Chen on 10 May 1932 at the Australian Institute of Anatomy, to an audience that included a former prime minister. Chen said that he considered it a 'not only a high honour, but a great privilege' to deliver the first lecture. He noted that although Australian citizens were at the time 'keenly desirous of cultivating trading relationships with China', it was important that the cultural relationship received equal encouragement, and that the lectureship should play a role in this.<sup>36</sup> Chen concluded with a plea for understanding and trust as the basis for the Australia-China relationship.<sup>37</sup>

News of the lectureship was widely reported in both Australia and China. The *Canberra Times* noted that the establishment of the Morrison Lectureship was a timely development for 'insular' Australia at a time when 'the whole world [was] in turmoil', and applauded its befitting namesake:

...Morrison has shown the way to his country in the promotion of a relationship on a far higher plane than that of commerce, though a surest way of creating a basis on which commerce may be built. The

Morrison Lecture, to be an annual event at the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra, is a means whereby the art, science, literature and culture of China may be brought before the Australian people... The life and works of Dr. Morrison have created in China a sacred regard for an Australian. Australians may follow up his work and establish, with the Chinese people a relationship resting upon mutual regard and respect... If we set up the flag of Australian understanding and sympathy in China and exchange some of our new knowledge for their silent wisdom born of antiquity, we may have little worry on the score of trade... trade will infallibly follow.<sup>38</sup>

The *Canberra Times* reported that MacKenzie had received numerous letters of gratitude from senior officials in China, including some who knew Morrison personally.<sup>39</sup> The *South China Morning Post* dedicated an entire page to the announcement, while the *China Critic*, produced by some of China's leading intellectuals at the time, including Hu Shih 胡適, Lin Yutang 林語堂 and Quentin Pan (Pan Guangdan) 潘光旦,<sup>40</sup> celebrated the foundation of the lectureship, and expressed enthusiasm for its potential to bring the two nations closer:

In founding the George Morrison Lectureship in Australia, the promoters ... are desirous of furthering closer relations between Chinese and Australians, particularly along scholastic and commercial lines...

There is urgent need of a better understanding between Chinese and other nations of the world, particularly those speaking the English language, and we

trust that through this Lectureship leaders of thought and culture in China may be invited to meet similar leaders in Australia for mutual benefit.<sup>41</sup>

The lectures found a captive audience in Canberra, including senior members of government. By the time of the second lecture, titled 'Eastern Thought, with More Particular Reference to Confucius' and delivered by the lectureship's co-founder William Ah Ket on 3 May 1933,<sup>42</sup> the Morrison Lectures had attracted such wide interest that the Institute's Lecture Theatre was unable to accommodate the crowd. Both the Chinese and Australian government supported the lectures in their early years, with representatives present including the Chinese Consul-General, and the Acting Director-General of Health, M.J. Holmes, as well as other senior Australian public servants. Senior members of the Chinese community were also supportive, as well as distinguished scholars in China, who offered letters of appreciation.

Although Ah Ket's lecture was more concerned with culture than current affairs, the lecture provoked discussion that would touch on pertinent questions for Australia's future. One utterance, made by community leader William Gock Young (Yu Jinrong 余錦榮),<sup>43</sup> reported in the *Canberra Times* echoed Morrison's earlier warnings that Australia would eventually be confronted by Japanese expansionism.<sup>44</sup> He added that it was possible to see 'the beginning of an understanding which would always keep Australia and China international friends'. His words capture the anxiety among the Chinese Australian community that, at the time, Australia was complacent of the threat posed by Japanese expansionism, as well as the hope



that friendship between the two nations might be advanced in overcoming this common foe. These sentiments highlight the factors which led the Chinese community to enthusiastically support the lectureship in its foundation and early years.

The third lecture, titled 'The History and Development of Chinese Art' and delivered by the Australian art critic and Director of the Sydney Art Gallery James S. MacDonald on 3 May 1934, continued to enjoy the intimate involvement of the Chinese Consulate, as well as further international support, with the British Museum lending rare lantern slides for the lecture.<sup>45</sup>

Two lectures were delivered in 1935 to take advantage of the presence of Chinese Director-General of Quarantine Wu Lien-teh 伍連德 in Australia. The fourth lecture, 'The New Culture Movement in China', delivered for the second time by Weiping Chen on 14 May 1935,<sup>46</sup> marked a departure from the comparatively esoteric themes of the preceding two lectures, shifting its focus back to questions of bilateral engagement. Chen urged the study of China, reiterating that for the sake of commercial interests too, it was imperative that Australia develop cultural knowledge of China, to 'pave the way for a better understanding' between the two countries.<sup>47</sup> He noted that France, Germany and Russia had all made significant efforts in developing this expertise, yet in England (and Australia), for which a 'true understanding of China was much more necessary', the study of China subjects had not yet been pursued 'with the thoroughness... deserved'.

Several months later, on 2 September 1935, Wu Lien-teh, who knew Morrison personally, paid tribute to the man, as well as the contributions of Chinese Australians to the Chinese revolution and state-building efforts in the fifth lecture, titled 'Reminiscences of George E. Morrison; and Chinese Abroad'.<sup>48</sup> Revealing numerous details of Morrison's life, the lecture attracted wide coverage in Australia.<sup>49</sup> In protest against the racism and bigotry that continued to provide justification for the White Australia Policy, Wu noted that while 'some thoughtless persons looked upon the Chinese as a nation of gardeners and laundrymen', China was developing 'steadily but surely', and apart from their role in the revolution, Chinese Australians had drawn on their international experience to make significant contributions to commercial life in China.<sup>50</sup>

Following the 'double lecture' year, and the passing of Ah Ket in 1936,<sup>51</sup> a sixth lecture was not delivered until 1937. Chen's successor as Chinese Consul-General Chun-jien Pao 保君健 delivered the lecture on 4 May 1937, which was titled 'China Today: With Special Reference to Higher Education', and continued to develop the argument for the importance of understanding and engagement between the two nations, again drawing an audience too large to accommodate.<sup>52</sup> The Headmaster of Canberra Grammar School — which today enjoys a reputation for its Chinese language programme and is one of the only high schools to house a dedicated Asian Studies centre —<sup>53</sup> Canon W.J. Edwards chaired the event, prefacing his introduction with a plea for better understanding between nations.<sup>54</sup> Pao called the lectureship 'the right medicine to cure the disease', and relished the opportunity to demonstrate his 'sincere support towards the

achievement for a closer relationship between the two great countries bordering the same ocean'.<sup>55</sup> He went on to argue that especially given Australia's geographical location, it was 'urgent' that a closer relationship and better understanding between the two nations be developed. China would become of such significance, he said, that a true understanding of China would determine who 'holds the key to world politics for the next five centuries'.

Against the backdrop of growing tensions in the region, the Commonwealth became more active in its involvement. The seventh lecture, titled 'The Impact of Western Industrialism on China' and delivered on 17 May 1938 by Alfred F. Barker, Professor of Textile Industries at Chiao-Tung University (Shanghai) and Professor Emeritus at Leeds University, was chaired by then Secretary of the Department of External Affairs Lieutenant-Colonel W.R. Hodgson, who in his introductory remarks spoke of the importance of a 'good understanding being maintained between Australia and China'.<sup>56</sup> Barker seconded this, calling Morrison an individual who had 'helped well and truly to lay the foundations for the future relationships of Australia and China'. He expressed regret that MacKenzie was unable to attend due to ill health, and noted that 'year by year', in honour of their legacies, 'an impetus is given towards uniting Australia and China, not only in their own individual interests, but also in the interests of world service'.<sup>57</sup> MacKenzie passed away later that year, leaving Liu the sole remaining custodian of the lectureship.

Prime Minister Robert Menzies attended the eighth lecture, presented by Professor of Modern History at Sydney University S.H.

Roberts on 5 June 1939, 'The Gifts of Old China to the New'.<sup>58</sup> Roberts' speech bluntly signalled, and possibly influenced, the end of an era of isolation as 'a distant appendage of the British Empire, safeguarded by geographical remoteness and by the British navy', and the urgent need for a Pacific foreign policy, in which China, as the most populous nation 'undergoing vast changes of which no man can see the end', would be of crucial importance. Unlike Japanese studies, which at the time enjoyed Commonwealth funding, Chinese studies had been neglected and, Roberts said, 'incredibl[y] ... depend[ed] on religious or philanthropic bodies'. He was critical of the tendency of international relations to be discussed purely in terms of trade, noting that 'trade, which depends upon goodwill and scientific economic co-operation, cannot be developed without a proper understanding of the parties concerned. Exchange of real information would certainly help to bring closer existing cordial Sino-Australia relations and form the key to the future of the world which depended on the understanding of China'.<sup>59</sup>

As the war progressed, and Japan's occupation of eastern China had forced the relocation of the capital to Chungking, the Morrison Lecture too shifted its focus to the west.<sup>60</sup> The ninth lecture was postponed several times before eventually being delivered on 29 May 1940 at the Albert Hall, to accommodate a larger audience. Howard Mowll, the previous Anglican Bishop of Western China (1925-1933) and then Archbishop of Sydney (1933-1958), spoke on the topic of 'West China as Seen Through the Eyes of the Westerner'.<sup>61</sup> In the presence of the Governor-General, Mowll echoed Morrison's earlier calls for the

appointment of an Australian Minister to China, and urged Australia to 'do more to strengthen our cultural relationships with New China, and give her material help as she faces the future so courageously and enterprisingly'. Australia's first Minister to China Frederic Eggleston was appointed the following year.

Canberrans soon became 'so intently engaged in wartime activities that they have not the time nor the inclination to attend public meetings or addresses'. Combined with the passing of two of the founders and committee members, this complicated Liu's efforts to ensure that the lectureship survived. Liu had hoped that the journalist-cum-political-advisor William Henry Donald (1875–1946), would present the 1941 lecture, but Donald refused to return to Australia, protesting its appeasement of Japan and failure to assist China.<sup>62</sup>

Instead, Liu secured William G. Goddard, the President of the China Society of Australia,<sup>63</sup> to deliver the tenth lecture titled 'The Min Sheng. A Study in Chinese Democracy' on 5 June 1941.<sup>64</sup> Against the backdrop of debate about a post-war 'new social order', Goddard lauded the survival of 'Free China',<sup>65</sup> and spruiked the democratic ideals which underpinned the ROC. He implored Australia to learn from the Chinese experience and suggested that a mission to China would 'see a democracy being shaped, in which economics and industry are being conducted in obedience to ethical laws'.<sup>66</sup>

Despite Liu's efforts to keep the lectureship running throughout the war years,<sup>67</sup> Goddard's provocative speech would be the last before the Pacific War would bring the Morrison Lectures to a halt. Liu made enthusiastic attempts to

convince potential lecturers, unsuccessfully suggesting in 1944 that Frederic Eggleston and Chinese Ambassador to Australia Hsu Mo 徐謨 deliver a joint lecture.<sup>68</sup> Australian Minister for External Affairs Herbert Vere Evatt finally agreed to deliver a lecture titled 'The Life of Morrison' in 1947, but the event was later cancelled as Evatt was required to attend the Tokyo War Trials.

### **Asian Studies in Canberra and the revival of the Morrison Lecture (1948-1972)**

Following the Pacific War, Australia found itself part of a new world order, within which it was no longer a distant outpost of the British Empire, but a key regional ally of the new world superpower, the United States — something Morrison lecturers had predicted some years prior. Despite being paused throughout the war, the calls of earlier lecturers for the Commonwealth and public to realise the importance of understanding the region finally gained traction as post-war Australia found its bearings. Roberts' earlier pleas for the development of a better understanding of the Pacific, and particularly China, were finally answered with the establishment of the ANU by the Chifley Government in 1946. The new University would share numerous links with the Morrison Lectures and the Morrison legacy.

In the first place, it would mark the recognition of interdisciplinary Area Studies as an accepted field of research with the formation of the Research School of Pacific Studies as one of its four founding schools.<sup>69</sup> The Research School of Pacific Studies was established alongside three other research schools which focused on the medical, physical and social

sciences respectively, in response to a 'growing awareness of the importance to Australia of a sound understanding of the problems both of the "Pacific Island neighbourhood" and the near North'.<sup>70</sup> The second was the University's appointment of Sir Douglas Copland (1894–1971) as its first Vice Chancellor. Copland was Australia's first post-war Minister to China (1946–1948). Upon his return to Australia, he continued to speak and write frequently about China, and with the knowledge that the new University would house a research school dedicated to Pacific Studies, China featured prominently in Copland's plans.<sup>71</sup> The last, and most direct connection, would be a product of the first two. Liu's persistence would eventually pay off in 1948 when he met Douglas Copland.<sup>72</sup> Liu suggested to MacKenzie's successor Frederick W. Clements that Copland, as returning Ambassador and newly appointed Vice Chancellor would be an ideal lecturer. Clements obliged, further noting that the Morrison Lecture might find a more appropriate home at the new University, given that the Institute was more 'concerned with the study of human health and disease'. After consulting supporters in the Chinese community, Liu agreed to transfer the endowment to the University in 1948. Copland responded with gratitude for 'the suggestion that this unique and important foundation should be transferred to the University', and the endowment was thereby transferred.

Copland's eleventh Morrison lecture, 'The Chinese Social Structure', delivered on 27 September 1948 at the Institute, marked the revival of the lectureship as well as the beginning of the next phase of its life under the auspices of the University. Having witnessed

the changes underway in China, Copland identified the 'absence of an effective central government' as one of the key defects of the Chinese social structure.<sup>73</sup> The desire to address this by ridding the nation of its warlords was the impetus for the early albeit short-lived alliance between the Chinese Communists and the Nationalist Army during the Northern Expedition (1926–1927), and as Copland appears to have been aware, would underscore the revolutionary efforts that would result in the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the following year.

The twelfth lecture on the topic of 'Politics in Medieval China', delivered by J.K. Rideout, Professor of Oriental Languages at Sydney University on 28 October 1949 was the first to be held under the aegis of the ANU.<sup>74</sup> Although the ANU had taken over responsibility for the organisation of the lectureship from the Institute, the lectures were to continue to be held at the Institute until the still young University could provide a suitable venue. It was also the first lecture to be held following the establishment PRC on 1 October 1949.

The formation of the PRC under a Communist government with an explicit alliance with the Soviet Union and ambiguous notions of territorial sovereignty (particularly regarding its intentions to do with Hong Kong and Taiwan), and the question of whether to recognise its legality, presented a 'problem of world strategy' for Australia.<sup>75</sup> For a variety of reasons, including the preference 'not to take a line inconsistent with the United States',<sup>76</sup> both major Australian parties persisted in their refusal to recognise the PRC government. In its foreign policy, Australia had aligned itself

clearly with the US, with the signing of the Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) 'to protect the security of the Pacific' in 1951. Domestically, the Menzies Government had brought into effect the *Communist Party Dissolution Act* (1950), which was a sweeping legislation that gave the Governor-General the power to declare people communists — a label which would bear with it a range of consequences including restriction of employment. The law was eventually deemed unconstitutional the following year. Nonetheless, these factors served to stigmatise negotiation of Australia's relationship with the PRC and lay the foundation for the conservative parties to depict China as a threat well into the 1960s.<sup>77</sup>

For some years, the Morrison Lecture offered a rare forum where contrary opinion and nuance on this sensitive issue could be conveyed and heard by the political elite. Copland, who likely foresaw the inevitability of this and had detailed at great length his intention to feature China prominently at the new University, invited Charles Patrick Fitzgerald (1902–1992), a prominent scholar who had lived and worked in China for 20 years, to join the ANU as a Reader in Far Eastern History in 1951. C.P. FitzGerald was asked to deliver the thirteenth Morrison Lecture, which dealt with the topical subject of 'The Revolutionary Tradition in China'.<sup>78</sup> The lecture attracted such wide interest that the larger venue of Albert Hall was required to accommodate the crowd, while Copland reiterated that the University 'could do nothing more important than to present to the people of Australia a true interpretation of the Orient in these troublesome times'.<sup>79</sup>

FitzGerald dedicated his lecture, which

examined the underlying causes of the revolution in China, to the late W.H. Donald and Morrison's son, Ian Morrison, who had been killed reporting the Korean War. FitzGerald argued that, in light of the new regime's rise to power, recognition of the Communist government was an eventual inevitability — a view which brought him to the attention of Australia's domestic spy agency, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), which reportedly carried out close surveillance of FitzGerald for some three decades, until after the Whitlam Government's recognition of the PRC in 1972.<sup>80</sup>

Then Leader of the Labor Party and Federal Leader of the Opposition H.V. Evatt finally spoke on 'Some Aspects of Morrison's Life and Work' on 4 December 1952. As the first sitting member of Parliament to deliver the lecture, Evatt 'took time off from his political cares to pay a tribute to one of the most remarkable men Australia has produced', who 'was faithful to China, loyal to China, and at all times a devoted Australian'.<sup>81</sup> During his remarks, Evatt identified Copland as an individual 'continuing the Morrison tradition in China', and concluded that 'if there had been 20 Morrisons in the Far East at the beginning of the century, the course of history would have been very different'.

Michael Francis Morris Lindsay, the 2nd Baron Lindsay of Birker and Senior Research Fellow in International Relations at the ANU, delivered the fifteenth lecture, 'China and the West' on 20 October 1953.<sup>82</sup> Although critical of China's totalitarianism, Lindsay echoed the opinions shared by both FitzGerald and Copland some years earlier, offering the view that two important reasons for the Communist victory

were that its 'administration was much more efficient than the Kuomintang', which he said was led by a number of officials who were 'hopelessly corrupt by Western standards', and the fact that democratic powers in the West had 'very seldom given support to democracy in China', causing its leaders to turn to the Soviet Union for support.

Perhaps due to the rising anxiety about 'reds under the bed' in Australian society, Lindsay's lecture would be the last to deal with the increasingly sensitive subject of contemporary China for some years. The sixteenth lecture, given by Mischa Titiev, a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan on 27 July 1954 was titled 'Chinese Elements in Japanese Culture'.<sup>83</sup> If the transition to more scholarly matters served as a temporarily hurdle to the lectureship's advancement of ties between Australia and China at the national level, it surely served another important purpose in affirming the status of the Morrison Lecture as an event of international significance, as well as the international reputation of the ANU in the field of Asian Studies, by facilitating the visits of noted scholars from well-established institutions to the still young University.<sup>84</sup> This development would lead later Sinologists to dub the list of previous lecturers the 'who's who' of Sinology.<sup>85</sup>

Hans Bielenstein, a Professor of Oriental Languages at Canberra University College (later merged into the ANU),<sup>86</sup> renowned for being the first professor of modern or Classical Chinese in Australia and the pioneer of the College's Asian Studies departments, delivered the seventeenth lecture, 'Emperor Kuang-Wu (A.D. 25–57) and

the Northern Barbarians' on 2 November 1955. Bielenstein's would be the last lecture to be held at the Institute of Anatomy, as the ANU campus began to take form.<sup>87</sup> The eighteenth lecture, 'The Buddhist Temples of Yun-kang and Lung-men' given by the President of the National Gallery Society of Melbourne Leonard B. Cox on 17 October 1956, was the first to be held at University House.<sup>88</sup> Otto P.N. Berkelbach van der Sprenkel, a Senior Lecturer in Oriental Civilisation in the School of Oriental Studies at the Canberra University College delivered the 19th lecture, 'The Chinese Civil Service', which looked at 2,000 years of tradition that formed the basis of the Civil Service in imperial China, on 4 November 1957.<sup>89</sup> Albert Richard Davis, Professor of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney, gave the twentieth lecture, 'The Narrow Lane: Some Observations on the Recluse in Traditional Chinese Society' on 19 November 1958.<sup>90</sup>

The 1959 and 1960 lectures stand out as exceptions to the academic focus of this period, inviting C.N. Spinks, Counsellor at the United States Embassy and Ch'en Chih-mai 陳之邁, Chinese (ROC) Ambassador to present the annual lecture, both of which were covered widely in the local press.<sup>91</sup> The 21st lecture, 'The Khmer Temple of Prah Vihar', given by C.N. Spinks on 6 October 1959, deviated from the established convention of dealing with subjects to do with China, and instead offered a description of the Khmer Temple of Prah Vihar in Cambodia, noting that particularly earlier in his career, Morrison had an interest in South-East Asia which was often forgotten given the tendency to 'associate Dr. Morrison principally with China'.<sup>92</sup> The 22nd lecture, 'Chinese Landscape Painting: The Golden Age',

was given by Chen Chih-mai on 5 October 1960. Chen presented to his audience of 200 slides of some of the greatest masterpieces of Chinese landscape painting, which at the time had been relocated to the National Palace Museum in Taiwan.<sup>93</sup> These lectures, which although delivered by diplomats dealt purely with cultural subject matter, may have been an attempt to engage the academic community in an Asian Studies which was not fixated on China, and indeed one that conceived possibilities for China (both the Chinese state and Chinese civilisation more broadly) not to be represented exclusively by the Mainland or the Communists, to which Australia continued to deny recognition.

Subsequent lectures largely returned to 'regular programming', which due to their esoteric nature received little attention in the mainstream press but were nonetheless important contributions to the advancement of Asian Studies in Australia. The 23rd lecture was delivered by Professor of Far Eastern Studies at Columbia University, Luther Carrington Goodrich, who was at the time a visiting scholar at the ANU funded by the Fulbright Program, titled 'China's Contacts with Other Parts of Asia in Ancient Times', on 1 August 1961.<sup>94</sup> The 24th lecture, 'Problems and Methods in Chinese Linguistics' was given by Nils Göran David Malmqvist, Professor of Chinese and Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the ANU, on 22 November 1962.<sup>95</sup>

The 25th lecture, 'Some Motivations of Chinese Foreign Policy', given by H.F. Simon on 3 October 1963,<sup>96</sup> coinciding with the Sino-Soviet split, once again marked a shift in the focus of the Morrison Lecture to contemporary

affairs. Simon gave Australians some cause for hope that although any 'international readjustment which restricted China's freedom of action would be more difficult', the Russians, who the Chinese took issue with for having 'compromised the Communist doctrine', might persuade the Chinese to 'change their fundamental attitude', which would 'add not only to the security of other countries, but to the well-being of the people of China'.

Wang Ling 王鈴, a Professional Fellow in Far Eastern History at the ANU, delivered the 26th lecture, 'Calendar, Cannon and Clock in the Cultural Relations between Europe and China' on 18 November 1964.<sup>97</sup> Wang offered a history of cultural interaction between East and West, beginning in the 16th century with Jesuit scientists in China, and suggested although the exchange of 'certain scientific information... was premature', atomic scientists might in the future continue this tradition. Cognisant of the themes of the Cold War which dominated his audience's reality, Wang offered the analogy of the cannon, which would 'play a part in the introduction of Western science to benefit generations of their [Chinese] descendants', to hint at a future beyond the zero-sum rhetoric of the day, in which nuclear science 'which today may have dangerous implications, in the future could be a blessing to all human beings'.<sup>98</sup>

The 27th lecture invited A. M. Halpern, a Research Associate with the Centre of International Relations at Harvard University, to speak on the topic of 'Chinese Foreign Policy - Success or Failure?', on 9 August 1966.<sup>99</sup> Halpern argued that China's one 'trump card' was that there was 'no advantage to anyone in having Communist China isolated, suspicious and

unsatisfied', noting that the 'belief that China is the wave of the future that is destined to lead, if not dominate Asia, ha[d] also... waned'.<sup>100</sup> He offered the interpretation that the Vietnam War was 'so implicated in all aspects of their [China's] foreign policy that a change in their attitude on Vietnam is hardly possible, unless major changes take place concurrently in the strategic principles that they have followed for the past several years', leaving the most likely prospect 'that they will have no alternative but to encourage a long-lasting guerrilla-type struggle'.

J. W. De Jong, Head of the Department of South Asian and Buddhist Studies at the ANU, delivered the 28th lecture, 'Buddha's Word in China', on 18 October 1967.<sup>101</sup> The 29th lecture, 'New Perspectives in Chinese Literature', was delivered on 23 July 1968, and marked the first Morrison Lecture to be delivered at the then recently completed H.C. Coombs Building, which would become the permanent home for ANU's scholarship on Asia and the Pacific, by J. D. Frodsham, a Reader in Chinese at the ANU's Department of Chinese, who was at the time 'considered one of the world's leading scholars in the study of Chinese poetry and its history'.<sup>102</sup>

The series was brought 'back a little closer to its original title' by Arthur Huck, a Reader in Political Science at the University of Melbourne in the 30th lecture, 'The Assimilation of the Chinese in Australia', delivered on 6 November 1969.<sup>103</sup> Huck's assessment that it was 'hard to know how many Chinese in Australia are sympathetic to the Mainland as few are willing to come out in open support of the Communist regime, less they bring themselves to the

attention of... [ASIO]' was a chilling reminder of the domestic political climate. The White Australia Policy had not been fully repealed at this stage, leaving Chinese residents of Australia who were not yet citizens vulnerable to unfavourable assessment by its security agencies. Huck added that, although its hands were tied by the US, Australia seemed to want to have it both ways with regard to China, permitting extensive trade with the PRC despite not recognising the legitimacy of its government, and not reciprocating diplomatic representation to the ROC for some eighteen years, despite nominal recognition.<sup>104</sup>

Karl A. Wittfogel, a Visiting Fellow in the History of Ideas at the ANU and Professor of Far Eastern Studies at the University of Washington, delivered the 31st lecture 'Agriculture: A Key to the Understanding of Chinese Society, Past and Present' on 6 April 1970.<sup>105</sup> Igor de Rachewiltz, a Senior Fellow in Far Eastern History at the ANU, later gave the 32nd lecture, 'Prester John and Europe' s Discovery of East Asia', on 3 November 1971.<sup>106</sup> The 33rd lecturer was Eugene Kamenka, Head of the History of Ideas Unit at the ANU, who spoke on 'Marx, Marxism and China' on 6 September 1972.<sup>107</sup>

### **Normalisation of diplomatic relations with the PRC, and 'national embrace' (1973-1989)**

Following 23 years of conservative rule, discontentment to do with the prolonged involvement of Australia in the Vietnam War helped the Labor Party to victory in 1972. Gough Whitlam finally established diplomatic relations with the PRC in December 1972, shortly



after becoming Prime Minister. Australia's recognition of the PRC, which preceded that of the US by six years, signalled the advent of a new era of what Australia's first Ambassador to the PRC Stephen FitzGerald would later describe as a time of 'national embrace' with China.<sup>108</sup> The renewed public interest in China, combined with the ANU's now well-established reputation as a world-leading centre for Asian Studies, led the Morrison Lectures to take on a new flavour which, while retaining their popular appeal in addressing subjects relevant to contemporary China, offered scarcely available historical, cultural and linguistic context.

Liu Ts'un Yan 柳存仁, then Dean of the Faculty of Asian Studies and later a teacher of the future Mandarin-speaking Prime Minister Kevin Rudd,<sup>109</sup> signalled the direction that the Morrison Lectures, and indeed Chinese Studies at the ANU more broadly, would take in the following years in presenting the 34th lecture, 'On the Art of Ruling a Big Country: Views of Three Chinese Emperors' on 13 September 1973.<sup>110</sup> Against the backdrop of a wide range of progressive social reform, governance and China were on the minds of Australians. The *Canberra Times* reported that Liu wanted his oration to be 'relevant to Australia and Canberra', leading him to speak on the 'art of ruling a big country', drawing on the perspectives of three emperors and the Taoist philosophy of Lao Tzu to offer some lessons from Chinese wisdom to the Australia's politicians of the day. The holistic and multifaceted approach to 'Things Chinese', in which an appreciation of the past informs readings of the present, evident in Liu's methods, would form the basis of a particular approach to Chinese Studies at the ANU, which Geremie Barmé would develop and later term

'New Sinology'.<sup>111</sup>

Lectures over the subsequent period would continue to deal with subjects that mixed the past with the present, and the esoteric with the practical. Jerome Ch'en (Ch'en Chih-jiang) 陳志讓, a Professor of History from York University in Toronto spoke on 'Peasant Activism in Contemporary China' in his 35th lecture, delivered on 22 July 1974. Yi-fu Tuan 段義孚 visited from the University of Minnesota give the 36th lecture on 'Chinese Attitudes to Nature: Idea and Reality' on 3 September 1975. Cognisant of the increased public interest in China, and the advent of so-called 'China watching', the ANU's Lo Hui-min 駱惠敏 delivered the 37th lecture 'The Tradition and Prototypes of the China-Watcher' on 27 October 1976,<sup>112</sup> in which he noted that 'the interest in China shown by the rest of the world since 1949 is quite unprecedented'. For the 38th lecture, Roy Hofheinz visited from the Harvard University Department of Government to speak on 'Places and Politics in Modern China' on 17 August 1977. Mark Elvin, who would later in his career join the ANU's Asia Pacific School of Culture, History and Language, visited from St Antony's College, Oxford to speak on 'Self-liberation and Self-immolation in Modern Chinese Thought' for the 39th lecture, on 13 September 1978.

The ANU's Wang Gungwu 王膺武 presented the 40th lecture 'Power, Rights and Duties in Chinese History' on 19 September 1979. Speaking at a time when China was undergoing significant liberal economic and social reforms following the disastrous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Wang spoke of how the anarchy had raised the political awareness of the young,

who would 'never be content to become the inert masses again', and now possessed the wherewithal to 'restore the balance between rights and duties'.<sup>113</sup>

Fang Chao-ying 房兆楹, a US-based Sinologist, gave the 41st lecture, 'The Great Wall of China: Keeping Out or Keeping In?', on 5 June 1980.<sup>114</sup> The 42nd lecture 'Moslem Rebellion in China: A Yunnan Controversy', was delivered by Tien Ju-K'ang 田汝康 who was visiting from Fudan University in Shanghai, on 17 June 1981. Alan Thorne, a Fellow in History at the ANU's Research School of Pacific Studies, gave the 43rd lecture 'China and Australia: Forty Thousand Years of Contact', on 4 August 1982. Chan Hok-lam 陳學霖 visited from the University of Washington, Seattle to present the 44th lecture, 'Control of Publishing in China, Past and Present', on 24 August 1983.<sup>115</sup> The 45th lecture, 'The Chinese and Their Revolutions', was given by J. S. Gregory from La Trobe University on 8 August 1984.

Allen S. Whiting, a former government official and political scientist who the *Canberra Times* reported had made 'major contributions to the improvement of China-United States relations in the 1960-1970s', visited from the University of Arizona to speak on 'China and the World: Independence vs Dependence' for the 46th lecture, held on 31 July 1985.<sup>116</sup> The 47th lecture, 'The Chinese Attitude Towards the Past', was given by Pierre Ryckmans (also known by his *nom de plume* Simon Leys), at the time Reader in Chinese at the ANU, and later future Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Honours supervisor, on 16 July 1986.<sup>117</sup> Visiting from France, the historian Jean Chesneaux brought new international perspective to the

lectureship, noting the connection of Morrison and his library with French scholarship in the 48th lecture 'China in the Eyes of the French Intellectuals', held on 24 June 1987.<sup>118</sup>

By the time of the 1988 lecture, Australia had enjoyed a decade of unprecedented intercourse with an increasingly open and developing China. On the minds of Australians was the question of just how far the reforms might push China towards some form of democracy, and what the future might hold for the fate of Taiwan, and Hong Kong, for which the 1997 handover deadline inched ever closer.

The 49th Morrison Lecture, which was delivered by Ross Garnaut, who had recently returned from a posting as Ambassador to China (1985-1988) and assumed a visiting role at the ANU addressed these matters in his lecture 'China: One Country, Two Systems', delivered on 17 August 1988.<sup>119</sup> With reference to his on-the-ground experience in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, Garnaut observed that there were already in existence numerous forms of economic and social management within China, and argued that the CCP's means by which it intended to resolve the 'separations of the age of imperialism in a manner that does not compromise modernisation and China's opening to the outside world' — the 'One Country, Two Systems' model — would, in practice, be readily integrated into the country's existing spectrum of regional governance systems. He further added that, although reunification with Taiwan would remain a core issue, it was likely that, especially given the increased economic integration across the Straits, 'they can probably live with the current ambiguities for a considerable while to come'.<sup>120</sup> Garnaut's

optimism that the CCP would compromise in the interest of economic prosperity reflected the sentiment that had developed in Australia over the preceding decade of engagement with a China that increasingly appeared to be moving towards a future more similar to that of a liberal, capitalist society.

### **From the Beijing massacre to the Beijing Olympics (1989-2010)**

The 1989 Tian'anmen crackdown was a stark wake-up call and demanded yet another rethinking of Australia's relationship with the PRC. Australia's first Ambassador to China Stephen FitzGerald took to the lectern that November to mount a scathing criticism of Australia's failure over the preceding decade to invest in the necessary resources to properly manage the relationship in the 50th Morrison Lecture, 'Australia's China', delivered on 9 October 1989.<sup>121</sup> FitzGerald argued that Australia had been 'duped' by China,<sup>122</sup> and that this relationship of 'great importance' had been managed with naïveté, overwhelmingly by people 'who have no knowledge of China ... who wouldn't know the difference between Du Fu [杜甫] and *doufu* [豆腐]'. He argued that the Beijing massacre, although appalling, and the Australian response, evidenced little fundamental change to the simplistic terms of engagement:

For what other countries in turmoil and political oppression have we extended such a mass act of grace as we extended to the 16,000 Chinese who happened to be in Australia at the time? Over the years, Burma, Cambodia, South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, for starters, have

all seen government directed killings of innocent civilians, and in numbers. Where was our grace? Our mass outrage? No! 'Our' China had gone off. And our protest was more in the nature of an appeal than what we might have to say, for example, about South Africa. Just come back. Don't forsake us. Just return to normal and so will we!<sup>123</sup>

FitzGerald's thesis was that this hope that China would become 'normal' was naïve and misguided. If Australia wanted to have a relationship with this 'most ancient and manipulative of societies', it would need to invest in training people with the necessary knowledge to inform it. He called for a 'massive increase in education about China and in the Chinese language', not purely on economic grounds as politicians had at the time already identified as a reason for greater education on Asia more broadly, but for the 'health of our relations with China'. 'If China is important,' he asked, 'why is it still the case that not one member of the national parliament speaks Chinese (or any Asian language)?'. According to the *Canberra Times*, the lecture 'marked the onset of a new phase in Australia-China relations.'<sup>124</sup>

Following these turbulent years for China and the relationship during which the lecture attracted heightened public awareness for its high-profile speakers, the Morrison Lecture resumed its role as an academic forum. The 51st lecture, 'Man from the Margin: Cao Cao and the Three Kingdoms', was given by the ANU's Rafe de Crespigny on 8 November 1990.<sup>125</sup> In the 52nd lecture, 'Rethinking Contemporary China', Beverly Hooper revisited the calls

of earlier lecturers for holistic intellectual engagement with China's past to comprehend its present. Hooper argued that Contemporary China is a product of 'interaction and tensions between the country's traditional, modern and recent history, and between various groups — official and unofficial — within society', a sound understanding of which demanded 'more multidimensional' scholarly approaches.<sup>126</sup>

In 1992, when relations were still lukewarm in the aftermath of the Tian'anmen crackdown, the Morrison Lecture became a flashpoint in Sino-Australian relations when the exiled Dalai Lama visited Canberra where he met with then Prime Minister Paul Keating, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Gareth Evans, and delivered the 53rd Morrison Lecture to its largest audience yet at the ANU's Llewelyn Hall — seating around 1,400 people — much to China's outrage.<sup>127</sup> His comments during the visit did not do much to help de-escalate tensions. The *Canberra Times* reported that the Dalai Lama had opined that 'the present Government in China is not going to last very long... we believe it will topple within five years'. As evidence, he shared that his sources had told him that 'only the older army officers still support the regime, and the Chinese people do not support their Government'. He went on to say he had 'had a series of discussions with Chinese intellectuals and dissidents, many of whom fled China after the Beijing massacre, and who could take prominent roles in government if the present regime was overthrown,' and called for international pressure.<sup>128</sup> China responded by labelling the decision to host the Dalai Lama contrary to Australia's recognition of Tibet as part of China, and warned that relations between Canberra and Beijing would be

damaged by this 'political action'.<sup>129</sup>

The 54th lecture, 'A Knife in My Ribs for a Mate: Reflections on Another Chinese Tradition', was given by the ANU's William J. F. Jenner on 6 October 1993.<sup>130</sup> The 55th lecture, 'The Socialist Marketplace in China: Fact or Fiction?', was given by Ramon Myers, who was visiting from the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, on 8 November 1994.<sup>131</sup> Martin K. Whyte, visiting from Harvard University, gave the 56th lecture, 'City Versus Countryside in China's Development', on 4 October 1995.<sup>132</sup>

In the last lecture to be delivered before the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, Geremie Barmé continued to develop its role in providing historical and cultural context to issues of popular interest. In the 57th lecture, 'The Garden of Perfect Brightness: A life in ruins', delivered on 10 December 1996, Barmé addressed the return of Hong Kong and its significance in symbolising the end of an era of imperialism for the CCP by instead talking about another relic of that era, 'the most palpable symbol of the near-century of national humiliation that country experienced from 1840', the Garden of Perfect Brightness 圓明園, which was destroyed by British and French troops during the Second Opium War (1856–1860).<sup>133</sup>

The Harvard historian Philip A. Kuhn gave the 58th lecture, 'The Homeland: Thinking About the History of Chinese Overseas', on 23 July 1997.<sup>134</sup> The 59th lecture, 'The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: The Case of Chinese Muslims' was delivered by the ANU's Donald Leslie on 5 November 1998.<sup>135</sup> T.H. Barrett, visiting from the School of Oriental and

African Studies (SOAS) University of London, spoke about 'Edwardian Theatre and the Lost Shape of Asia: Some Remarks on Behalf of a Cinderella Subject' for the 60th Morrison Lecture, delivered on 9 August 1999.<sup>136</sup> The 61st lecture, 'Politics at the "Core": The Political Circumstances of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin', was given by the University of Sydney's Frederick Teiwes on 5 December 2000.<sup>137</sup>

The following year, the noted sociologist and author of the best-seller *Japan as Number One* (1978) Ezra F. Vogel visited from Harvard University to speak on 'The China-Japan-US Triangle' for the 62nd lecture, delivered on 5 July 2001.<sup>138</sup> Vogel noted that 'the challenge for the US-China-Japan triangle is to create the positive synergy that the three nations enjoyed from 1971 to 1989, in the absence of a common enemy', and hinted at the importance of the forum in which he was speaking, saying that it was his belief that 'businesspeople and academics in the three countries can help shape public opinion and help overcome the narrow domestic political pressures that have the potential to pull us apart'.

The 63rd lecture, 'Globalization and China's 'Race to the Bottom' in Labour Standards', was given by the ANU's Anita Chan on 24 July 2002.<sup>139</sup> Wen-hsin Yeh 葉文心 visited from the University of California, Berkeley to deliver the 64th lecture, 'Historian and Courtesan: Chen Yinke and the Writing of "Liu Rushi Biezhuan"' on 8 July 2003.<sup>140</sup> The University of Sydney's David S.G. Goodman gave the 65th lecture, 'Reforming the Local, Constructing China: Place Identity in a North China Province' on 9 November 2005.<sup>141</sup> John Minford, the noted

translator of Chinese literary classics *The Story of the Stone* 紅樓夢 and *The Art of War* 孫子兵法, (and later the philosophical classics, the *I Ching* 易經 and the *Tao Te Ching* 道德經), delivered the 66th lecture, 'Tradition and Mischief in the Strange Tales of Pu Songling (1640-1715)', on 9 November 2005.<sup>142</sup> Minford remarked that 'it is sad to reflect how reading in general, and the reading of classical Chinese fiction in particular, is now a threatened species of activity'. Coinciding with Minford's laments about the sad fate of classical Chinese literature, fellow Morrison lecturer Geremie Barmé called for a renewed approach to the study of China, one in which a knowledge of Classical Chinese was essential in informing holistic engagement with the contemporary. Barmé termed this approach 'New Sinology' and offered it as the rationale for the creation of the journal *China Heritage Quarterly*, which would in the subsequent years be intimately involved with the Morrison Lectures.<sup>143</sup>

Scott Rozelle visited from Stanford University to deliver the 67th lecture, 'Democracy, Tax Reform & Development of China's Villages in Early 21st Century', on 9 August 2006.<sup>144</sup> The following year's lecture would also be delivered by a visiting scholar, Dai Qing 戴晴, who had earlier been imprisoned for her involvement in the Tian'anmen protests. The Chinese Embassy reportedly protested this speaker choice by encouraging Chinese students and other 'patriots' to stay away from the 'subversive' speech.<sup>145</sup> Dai Qing's 68th Morrison Lecture, '1948: How Peaceful was the Liberation of Beijing?', delivered on 5 September 2007, nonetheless attracted an audience of over 80 people.<sup>146</sup> The 69th Morrison Lecture 'Reporting the Olympic Year', was delivered by Jane

Macartney, who spoke about her experience reporting on the 2008 Beijing Olympics for the *Times*, in the same role Morrison occupied a century earlier.<sup>147</sup> Macartney reflected on how the Olympic Games had prompted the Foreign Ministry to make numerous concessions to its previously restrictive rules around journalism, and how this had prompted wider speculation that the Olympics might signal ‘the dawn of a new era’. ‘Would the Olympics force the Communist Party to introduce unwelcome changes—and then to honour them?’, she pondered.

### **Australia and China in the World (2010-present)**

Macartney’s speculation on the significance of the Olympics in signalling change in China and its foreign relations was a question on the minds of Australians, who had in the previous year elected the country’s first Mandarin-speaking Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. Early in his Prime Ministership, Rudd proposed a new mode of engagement with China, framed in terms of ‘a true friendship which offers unflinching advice and counsels restraint to engage in principled dialogue about matters of contention’, an approach which he summarised by using the esoteric Chinese term *zhengyou* 諍友.<sup>148</sup> Rudd later accepted an invitation from Morrison’s last surviving son Alastair Morrison to expand upon these ideas in the 70th Morrison Lecture, which he presented at the ANU on 23 April 2010.<sup>149</sup> The Prime Minister prefaced his introduction by remarking that: ‘Morrison comes from a remarkable stable of Australian Sinologues, writers and public intellectuals. Figures like: William Henry Donald... C.P. FitzGerald... Wang Gung-wu... Liu Ts’un-yan... Ken Gardiner

... Pierre Ryckmans... Stephen FitzGerald... Ross Garnaut... and Professor Geremie Barmé’, the overwhelming majority of whom had also previously delivered a Morrison Lecture. ‘What unites all of these figures is more than a deep knowledge of China,’ he said. ‘They all also bring, often from different political perspectives, a passionate, sympathetic but nonetheless clear-eyed analysis of the China of their time. In doing so, they have brought a certain “Australian objectivity” to the task.’

Australian engagement with, and the study of China was a strong part of Australian heritage, Rudd argued, ‘as this [Morrison] lecture series amply demonstrates’. In Rudd’s view, however, the country needed a more focused training of expertise in what he called ‘360 degree China literacy’, and it needed to develop a holistic approach to China that ‘goes beyond Cold War concepts of... being anti-China or pro-China, as if we are locked into a binary world’. He drew on Barmé’s earlier arguments for a ‘New Sinology’ to offer a ‘more sophisticated way of understanding today’s China’. To develop this ‘New Sinology’, Rudd argued that scholars, experts, and policy makers needed to be taken ‘out of the silos of separate academic disciplines and departments’, and that collaboration would be key. He said that a new centre, ‘a place where scholars, thinkers and policy specialists can engage in an across-the-board approach that brings history, culture, literature, philosophy, and cultural studies perspectives into active engagement with those working on public policy, the environment, social change, economic, trade, foreign policy, defence policy and strategic analysis’, was urgently needed. Rudd concluded that there was ‘no better place than the Australian National University

to further the sophisticated research and dialogue on China's engagement with Australia, our region and globally', before going on to announce the establishment of a brand-new Commonwealth-funded AUD 53 million (~ USD 39.3 million) China Studies centre at the ANU, to be called the Australian Centre on China in the World.<sup>150</sup> The building housing the new Centre would not be completed until 2014, but the Morrison Lectures would find a new home at the Centre following Rudd's announcement.<sup>151</sup> Under the aegis of the new Centre, which Rudd had poised to make a 'pre-eminent global institution', subsequent lectures often took on a role that was linked to the new Centre's visiting fellowship initiative.

As there was no lecture in 2009, the 71st lecture was presented later the same year by Børge Bakken, visiting from the University of Hong Kong, who spoke on 'The Norms of Death: Capital Punishment in China' on 1 December 2010.<sup>152</sup> The author Linda Jaivin, who had recently written about Morrison's romantic affairs in *A Most Immoral Woman* (2009), spoke in detail of the characteristics of the time in which Morrison lived in her 72nd lecture, 'Morrison's World', delivered on 13 July 2011.<sup>153</sup> The noted Harvard historian Mark Elliott, who was at the time a visiting fellow with the Australian Centre on China in the World, gave the 73rd lecture, 'Reinventing the Manchus: An Imperial People in Post-Imperial China' on 20 June 2012.<sup>154</sup> The 74th lecture, 'New Perspectives on Han Urban Life', was delivered by Michael Nylan, visiting from the University of California, Berkeley, on 26 June 2013.<sup>155</sup>

Following the opening of the Centre's new building earlier in 2014, Christine Wong's 75th

lecture 'State of the Local State in China: Challenges for Xi Jinping and Beyond', delivered on 11 September 2014, was the first to be held at the Centre's auditorium, which would become the new permanent home of the lectures.<sup>156</sup> William Sima marked this juncture in the history of the lectureship with an overview of its origins in a preface to the main presentation.<sup>157</sup>

The 76th lecture, 'Fathoming the Orient: Australian Narratives', was given by Deakin University's David Walker on 3 September 2015, which in the welter of debate in Australia about how to best deal with the 'Asian Century', dealt with how Australia had historically perceived the significance of the 'rise of Asia' since the 19th century.<sup>158</sup> The ANU's Jonathon Unger delivered the 77th lecture, 'The Grassroots Turmoil in China's Cultural Revolution: A Half-Century Perspective', on 3 November 2016.<sup>159</sup> Daniel Kane, a former Australian diplomat and linguist, gave the 78th lecture on 'The decipherment of dead languages in China: the case of Kitan' on 19 October 2017.<sup>160</sup>

In 2018, the Morrison Lectures and Morrison Library would converge as the Oriental Library celebrated 100 years since its acquisition of the Morrison Library. Takeshi Hamashita 濱下 武志 visited the ANU from the Oriental Library in Tokyo to commemorate the occasion by introducing the collection that had such a profound influence on Asian Studies in Japan, as well as his institution's efforts to further scholarship on both Morrison and his collection.<sup>161</sup>

The ANU's John Makeham gave the 80th lecture, 'Chinese Philosophy and Universal

Values in Contemporary China', on 6 November 2019.<sup>162</sup> The 81st lecture, which at time of writing is the last Morrison Lecture to have taken place, was given by Benjamin Elman, visiting from Princeton University, on 'The Role of Shanghai in Building Modern Science in China in the 19th Century', on 11 March 2020.<sup>163</sup>

Presumably due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has not been a Morrison Lecture since 2020. The 82nd lecture is scheduled to take place on 28 April 2022, with the ANU International Relations scholar Evelyn Goh speaking on 'Living with China's Resurgence in East Asia'.<sup>164</sup>

## Conclusion

The Morrison Lectures have, as this paper has shown, for almost a century, been witness to and influenced Australia's terms of engagement with China. They also played a key role in the development of Asian Studies in Australia, and have, as this chronology demonstrates, become an academic forum of international prestige.

Over the years, the Morrison Lectures have oscillated between the esoteric and the practical, and between the historical and the contemporary. Viewed in isolation, this may give the impression that the lectureship lacks thematic consistency and continuity. To be sure, the lectureship has, on occasion, received greater public attention, either against the backdrop of events of national and international significance implicating China, or due to the profile of its speakers, for example, former Ambassador Stephen Fitzgerald's 1989 lecture in the fallout of the events of 4 June 1989, or then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's 2010

lecture. While these lectures were significant, to focus solely on high-profile lectures would be to overlook the lectureship's broader contributions to Australian engagement with China. Irrespective of the subject matter of any given year, the lectureship has stayed true to its founding principle of promoting understanding of China in Australia, whether in terms of informing public debate on contemporary issues or contributing to the maturation of the broader field of Asian Studies in Australia. The lectureship both builds upon and reflects the scholarly tradition, adopted by Morrison himself, of bringing a broad awareness of historical, cultural, linguistic, social, and political issues to contemporary engagement with 'Things Chinese'. The lectureship played an important role in informing Australian engagement with China and contributed to establishing the ANU's reputation in the field of Asian Studies.

Instead of examining bilateral relations at the political level, this paper has adopted the Morrison Lectures as a lens through which to observe developments in Australian engagement with China, as well as the ways in which the lectures have, at times, had an influence on these developments. Future studies might take other long-standing civilian enterprises as a microscopic lens through which to observe these changes from other perspectives. Other aspects of the Morrison Lectures which this paper has not detailed, for example, their academic contributions, may also warrant further research.

The circumstances and anxieties that led to the founding of the lectureship by Chinese Australians in 1932 are vastly different to the challenges with which Australia is faced today.



The Morrison Lecture may have been created with the more immediate hope of addressing the White Australia policy, but it was also driven by the foresight, shared by its namesake during his lifetime, that the region and China in particular would be of crucial importance to Australia's future. The foresight, passion and persistence of the founders is evident in their decision to, in the absence of a dedicated location, create a lectureship under the awkward auspices of an institution concerned with medicine. Posterity can be thankful for their determination, for the Morrison Lecture in its early form surely served an important role in informing the decision to invest in the development of Asian Studies at its future home, the ANU. Were they alive today, the founders would also surely take pride in knowing that their vision was shared, and indeed had influence upon a future Prime Minister, who would make his own investment in the future of the tradition that they pioneered in Morrison's memory.

The unrest that the world faces today evokes unsettling memories of the events that led to the long pause in the early Morrison Lectures. One hopes that history will not be repeated, and that the Morrison Lectures may continue to play their important role in informing understanding at this crucial juncture for Australia, China and the world.

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# 人間社会環境研究

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対中関与の伝統：モリソン・レクチャーズ・シリーズを例として

スミス カレム マイケル ボーデン

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