

CHINA & ANU
DIPLOMATS, ADVENTURERS, SCHOLARS

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William Sima

中  全球研究中心
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE ON
CHINA IN THE WORLD



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(as represented by the Australian Centre on China in the World)
First published November 2015 by ANU Press
The Australian National University
Acton ACT 2601, Australia
Email: anupress@anu.edu.au
This title is also available online at press.anu.edu.au

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry
Creator: William, Sima, author.
Title: China & ANU : diplomats, adventurers, scholars / by William Sima.
ISBN: 9781925022964 (paperback) 9781925022971 (ebook)
Target Audience: For tertiary students.
Subjects: Research teams--China. | Research teams--Australia. | China--
Research--Australia. | Australia--Foreign relations--China. | China--Foreign
relations--Australia. | Australian.
Dewey Number: 327.94051

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All images in this publication have been fully accredited.

Cover design, art direction and typesetting by Yasmin Masri.
Maps designed by CartoGIS, ANU.

Printed by Cabin Design Graphics Printing, Taipei, Taiwan
The Australian Centre on China in the World is an initiative of the Commonwealth Government of Australia and The Australian National University

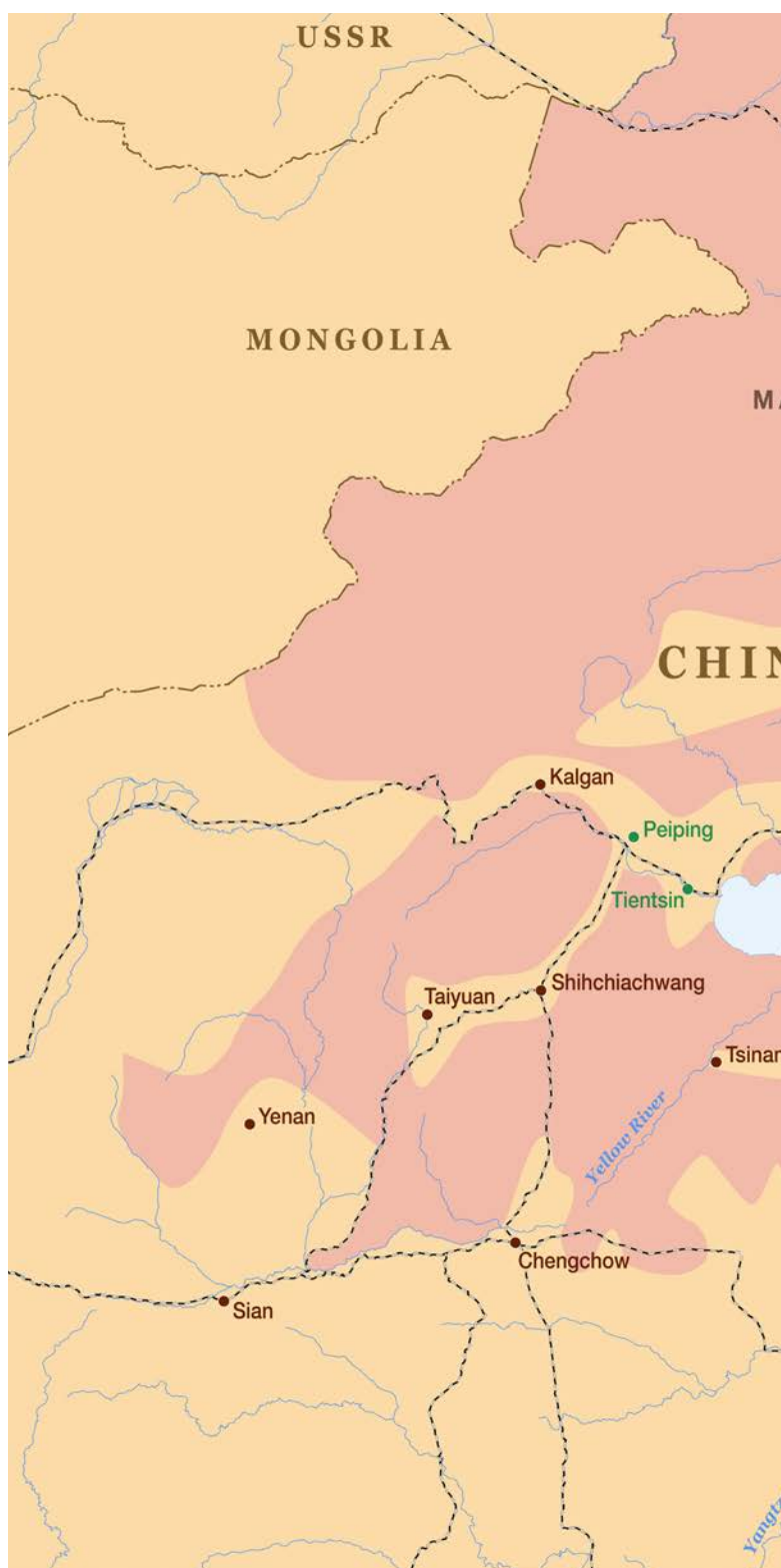
*For
my teachers at
The Australian National University*

MAPS



Manchukuo and Japanese-occupied China, December 1941, showing places visited by Frederic Eggleston, 1941–1944. (CartoGIS, ANU)





Communist-controlled areas in north China, March 1947, showing places visited by Douglas Copland, 1946–1948. (CartoGIS, ANU)



NOTE ON STYLE

Wade-Giles romanisation without aspirations or diacritics, rather than official Chinese *Hanyu pinyin* 漢語拼音 (which in the context of this work would be anachronistic), is used throughout this book. Well-known city names are spelt according to the postal system common during the period covered by this history. Thus, the city of Chongqing is rendered as Chungking; Nanjing is Nanking; and, Beijing is Peking — except for the period 1927 to 1949, when Nanking was the capital of the Republic of China and Peking was known as Peiping ('the North Pacified'). Shenyang is given as Mukden, the Manchu name for the city commonly used in English at the time.

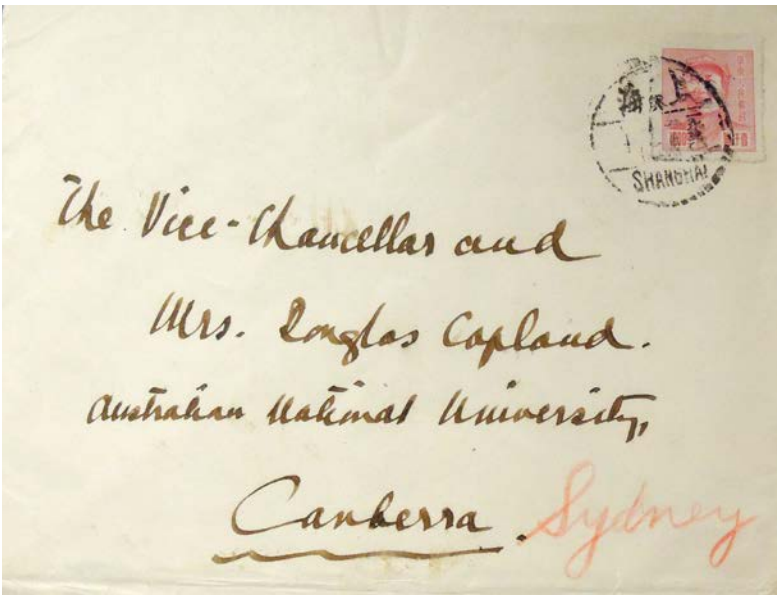
The Australian Centre on China in the World's in-house *Style Guide for The China Story* is followed. Abbreviations are used for archival material cited, thus:

NLA	National Library of Australia
NAA	National Archives of Australia
ML	Mitchell Library
ANUA	Australian National University Archives

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Top: envelope from a letter by Soong Ching-ling 宋慶齡 (widow of Sun Yat-sen) to Douglas Copland, 4 November 1947 (the stamps feature Sun Yat-sen, Father of the Republic of China); bottom: envelope from a letter dated 26 March 1948, the day Copland left Nanking (the stamp features Mao Tse-tung, soon-to-be founder of the People's Republic of China). For Soong's letters, see page 81 below. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

FOREWORD

Geremie R Barmé

Founding Director, Australian Centre on China in the World

This story of Australia's engagement with China and the founding of The Australian National University (ANU) starts in the 1940s during the Pacific war and ends with the opening salvos of the Cold War in the early 1950s. It is a sobering account written at a time when this country again finds itself in a period of transition and vacillation, one that some Chinese commentators call a Sino-Western 'Chilly War' 涼戰.

Over the past seventy years the *Pax Americana* in Asia and the Pacific has been the bedrock of Australian security; the regional arrangements stemming from it have vouchsafed unprecedented levels of trade and prosperity. It has, however, been a fractious peace, one maintained in name despite cloaked enmities and gnawing disputes. It is a peace riven: by decades of national and regional warfare (in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia); by violent social upheavals (in Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia); and, as a result of simmering disagreements over sovereignty (the Ryukyu Islands, the divided China and Korea, the East China Sea, the South China Sea, East Timor, Papua New Guinea).

In the new millennium, the emergence of an economically strong and regionally confident People's Republic of China has thrown into relief, and doubt, the territorial and political settlement contrived for Asia and the Pacific following the Second World War. Contestation over territory, spheres of influence, economic advantage, identity and alliances has resurfaced. For decades history was kept at bay; today, it cannot be denied. In the new millennium we are living in an unfinished twentieth century.

China & ANU introduces us to the world of those two earlier wars and the few short years between them; it does so as part of 'the litany of Australian discoveries of Asia'.^[1] Even before Federation in 1901, Australia was discovering, forgetting and re-encountering Asia and the Pacific, and tussling with its place in the geopolitics of the region. These repeated discoveries, and the attendant national forgetfulness, was related to strategic, economic and racial anxieties; they reflected both the tyranny of distance and the unease of proximity.

William Sima starts by recounting the attempt to introduce Japanese language teaching in Australia when, during the First World War, this country first had to confront a rising, non-Anglo Saxon power in the region. He traces the efforts of public intellectuals, journalists, diplomats and academics who urged (and helped engineer) the reorientation of Australia towards what for many years would be known as the 'Near North'. Prescient thinkers saw the sweeping potential of the region for Australia's weal, although they were also alert to the looming bane of imperial expansion. They encouraged in government and more broadly in the society a multifaceted approach to Asia and the Pacific — adumbrating what former prime minister Paul Keating called Australia's need to 'find its security in Asia, not from it' — while working to create an institution, The Australian National University, that would aspire to international standards of scholarship.

Sima has delved deeply into the archives to uncover the story of Australia's early official contacts with China and the creation of ANU. He has studied the 'frontline' despatches from China to Canberra composed by extraordinary individuals like Frederic Eggleston and Douglas Copland during and after the war, documents that record their studied views of East Asia and their hopes for a future for Australia in Asia. In the process the author offers a profoundly moving account of a time when men of influence were also men of vision. In the Australia of today, one in which governments and universities 'think small', those figures and their generous spirit of engagement and understanding, political and economic, cultural and scholastic, appears nothing less than miraculous.

When Douglas Copland left China in April 1948 to become the inaugural vice-chancellor of ANU, the China-based British historian CP FitzGerald praised the diplomat for being a rare 'candid friend' of China.[2] Frank and well-intentioned professional comments made to Chinese interlocutors, in- and outside of government, would over the years be the mark of others. FitzGerald himself, the founder, with Copland's support, of the study of China at ANU, would also have a career as a public intellectual. His clarion call to understand and engage with Asia was, as the academic turned diplomat Stephen FitzGerald (no relation to CP) puts it:

a challenge to Australians to come to their senses and consider who they were and where they were and how they should express that, and the touchstone was China.[3]

Writing under the pen name Simon Leys, the ANU Sinologist Pierre Ryckmans would later be famous for his incisive, and wry, analysis of Maoist and Deng-era China. For his part, Stephen FitzGerald, Australia's first ambassador to the People's Republic, would temper diplomatic necessity with professional insight and advocate building a bilateral relationship in the national interest, while other ANU scholars, thinkers and commentators would continue in a tradition of engagement with the Chinese world. Their number includes Wang Gungwu 王贛武, Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁, Audrey Donnithorne, Graham Young, Jonathan Unger, Anita Chan, WJF Jenner, John Minford, Richard Rigby and Benjamin Penny, to name but a few, as well as non-Chinese Studies specialists such as Ross Garnaut, Stuart Harris, Peter Drysdale, Hugh White, Katherine Morton, Brendan Taylor, Evelyn Goh, Amy King and Michael Wesley. Over the years they have all contributed to a clear-eyed assessment of contemporary China and the resonances of its traditions, sometimes amidst considerable controversy, both local and international.

Being a 'candid friend' of China as opposed to basking in official Chinese plaudits for being an 'old friend' 老朋友 is not always popular in Beijing. In his 1989 George E Morrison Lecture, *Australia's China*, presented in the wake of the calamitous events in Beijing earlier that year, Stephen FitzGerald was frank about China's cynical use of friendship politics. For his openness he was later told by long-time Chinese diplomat colleagues that he was 'not friend enough' 不夠朋友 of the People's Republic.[4]

Kevin Rudd, an ANU graduate who went on to become prime minister, would famously be an advocate of the need for Australia to be a 'candid friend' in its dealings with contemporary China. Addressing an audience at Peking University in April 2008, he used the obscure term *zhengyou* 諍友 to describe this approach, much to the surprise of his

hosts and to the consternation of Australian commentators.[5] In 2010, the creation at ANU of the Australian Centre on China in the World, an initiative of Kevin Rudd with the university, put into practice the concept of what I call New Sinology 後漢學, the core of which is the academic demeanour of *zhengyou*, a friend who dares to disagree on the basis of principle.[6] It was hardly surprising then that, during his first trip to China as Australian prime minister in April 2014, Tony Abbott would declare: 'To be rich is indeed glorious, but to be a true friend is sublime!'[7]

Candid analysis and new ideas are often unsettling and confronting; a *zhengyou* invites controversy by challenging prevailing opinion and received wisdom. Being a 'candid friend', a '*zhengyou*' or 'true friend' is not a stance limited to interactions with China. Indeed, independent, informed thinking is also the foundation of serious academic interplay with the Australian government and public, as well as with the broader world of scholarship.

The story told in *China & ANU*, however, is not only about the diplomats, adventurers and scholars introduced in the pages that follow. It is part of a much larger history that has unfolded since the end of the conflict in the Pacific seventy years ago.

In the conclusion to the exhibition based on William Sima's work on China and ANU held at the Australian Centre on China and the World from May to September 2015, the curator Olivier Krischer selected an eloquent passage from the historian Wang Gungwu. Speaking at a graduation ceremony in 1986, Wang touched on the origins of the China story at ANU and addressed more broadly the topic of Australia and Asia:

Before the Second World War, only a few perceptive journalists, scholars and officials foresaw what was to come. And it was not until the end of the war that most Australians began to realise that Australia would soon have to deal with most of Asia on its own. They would soon have to think of Asia as several clusters of neighbours, very different in almost every way from Australia and even different in many ways among themselves. It was clearly not easy for most Australians to come to grips with such complex problems. There had, after all, been very little preparation for the new situation and most people were slow to respond.

But it is often forgotten how many Australians did respond and respond quickly and imaginatively. I refer to generations of adventurous Australians who came back from the war and their adventurous younger brothers and sisters who stayed at home and deliberated on the changing international environment. Among other things, that generation involved themselves in the Indonesian revolution; they reported on the war against communism in Malaya and the communist victory in China; they started serious academic study of Asia in Australian universities; colleges and even schools; they grappled with the baffling beginnings of the Vietnam war and, not least they shrewdly observed the rise of the economic superpower, Japan, and coaxed Australians to take advantage of that historic development. Within two decades, these enterprising Australians laid the foundation for a new Australian awareness of how they might live with these disparate

and volatile neighbours.

Let me suggest to you that these changes were not inevitable. They were not merely calculating responses to the hard new realities. What was truly memorable about these early responses was the fact that many individual Australians set off to the new Asia on their own, probing for an understanding of both its ancient cultures and its entanglements with the West. I see this as the spirit of George Morrison, the Geelong boy who travelled to Asia at the end of the nineteenth century, especially among journalists and the creative people who had begun to sense that exciting developments were about to occur to our north. And since 1945, it blossomed among young people, especially the students, who volunteered to work and teach in various parts of Asia for no other reason than that they were curious and caring, or whose minds turned to Asian languages, literatures, fine arts and music, religions and philosophies in search of understanding and their own cultural enrichment.

These individual Australians who sought adventure, took risks and then brought their stories, experiences and creative efforts home, made those first years of Australia-Asian relations remarkable. I wish those experiences were better recorded and appreciated today, not only because they are worth remembering in their own right but also because I believe that they have much to teach us now as well as in the future.[8]

This book is part of The Australia-China Story recorded by the Australian Centre on China in the World. It is one of the many stories at the heart of this country's century-long quest to find a place in the world and, in the process, to enrich not only the nation but also the minds of its people.

— Canberra, September 2015



Notes:

- ¹ Stephen FitzGerald, *Comrade Ambassador: Whitlam's Beijing Envoy*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2015, p.233.
- ² In a letter from CP FitzGerald to Douglas Copland dated 19 March 1948, quoted on page 93 of this book.
- ³ Stephen FitzGerald, *Is Australia an Asian Country?*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997, p.17, quoted on page 110 of this book.
- ⁴ FitzGerald, *Comrade Ambassador*, p.196.
- ⁵ Geremie R Barmé, 'Rudd Rewrites the Rules of Engagement', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 2008, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/rudd-rewrites-the-rules-of-engagement/2008/04/11/1207856825767.html>.
- ⁶ Geremie R Barmé, 'New Sinology 後漢學/后汉学', online at: <http://www.thechinastory.org/new-sinology/>.
- ⁷ 'Abbott Tells China He Wants Free Trade Deal but Friendship is More Important', *AustCham News*, 14 April 2014, online at: http://www.austcham.com.hk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/austcham-news_163_Final.pdf.
- ⁸ Wang Gungwu, 'Address at the Graduation Ceremony of the School of Modern Asian Studies, Griffith University, 12 April 1986', quoted in Nancy Viviani's preface to Francis Stuart, *Towards Coming-of-Age: A Foreign Service Odyssey*, Nathan, Queensland: Griffith University, Division of Asian and International Studies, Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations, 1989.

Seal (opposite): Hsu Ti-shan 許地山, the Buddhist scholar whose personal library formed the basis of ANU's East Asian Collection in the early 1950s (see pages 103-104 below), called his study 'The Facing-wall Studio' 面壁齋. This was a reference to the story of Bodhidharma who is said to have meditated facing a wall for nine years 面壁九年 in search of enlightenment. The seal also features Hexagram XV, Chien 謙, 'Humility', from the I Ching 易經 or Book of Changes, an ancient divinatory text. This hexagram consists of the trigram Kun 坤, Earth or Ti 地 above, and Ken 艮, Mountain or Shan 山 below, the two words that form Hsu's personal name, Ti-shan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book grew out of a project on the city of Nanking undertaken with Geremie R Barmé and Yayun Zhu 朱亞雲 for *China Heritage Quarterly*, an e-journal affiliated with the Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW). In 2013, we were preparing an issue of the *Quarterly* devoted to the dynastic and modern histories of a city celebrated as one of China's 'four great ancient capitals', along with Peking, Sian and Loyang; Nanking also served as the capital of the Republic of China from 1927 to 1937, and again from 1946 to 1949. Geremie, the editor of the *Quarterly*, was aware that Douglas Copland, the first vice-chancellor of The Australian National University (ANU), had served as the Australian Minister, or chief diplomatic representative to China in Nanking in the 1940s, and that I was obsessed with contemporary Nanjing. He asked me to write an essay on the Australian Chancery in Nanking then (from 1946 to 1948) and now (its present state as the residence of a retired People's Liberation Army officer), while Yayun suggested that we look through Copland's papers lodged with the National Library of Australia. What started out as a short essay on a defunct building became an archive-based history project that has resulted both in the present book and an exhibition at the CIW Gallery (29 May–18 September 2015).

As I read through Copland's papers it became clear that many people were involved in the development of Chinese Studies at ANU, in particular, Frederic Eggleston and CP FitzGerald. My investigations soon led me to the Australian National Archives and the ANU Archives, both in Canberra, and the Mitchell Library, in the State Library of New South Wales. At every turn, Geremie guided and supervised my work on *China & ANU*, over what has been an extremely busy and, given his precarious health, difficult two years. I am profoundly grateful to him for his dedication to this project (and unflagging editorial enthusiasm), and for the years of support and encouragement that he has given me, ranging over a number of projects, since my days as an undergraduate at ANU.

I am also deeply privileged to have met people with a direct connection to or involvement with the now not-so-recent chapter in Australian-Chinese history that I attempt to recount in this book. I enjoyed many precious hours with William Hamilton, who served as Douglas Copland's accountant in Nanking in the late 1940s, and then as the accountant, Bursar and finally Registrar at ANU until his retirement in 1978. Mirabel and Anthea FitzGerald shared childhood memories of China and Australia and allowed me rare insights into their father's early career at the university. Barry Hall's wife, Diana, and Megan Dick, whose late father, Max Loveday, worked with Barry at the Australian Legation in the 1940s, were supportive throughout the project. William, Mirabel, Anthea, Diana and Megan also generously lent me many of the documents and photographs used both in the exhibition and in this book.

After a few initial drafts of the text, the writer, translator and editor extraordinaire Linda Jaivin focussed her unstinting eye on a full draft manuscript and helped me transform it from being a cluttered, verbose assemblage of archival quotations into a work that could gradually be revised into a readable narrative. I am grateful to Richard Rigby, David Brophy, Linda Allen, Benjamin Penny, Paul Farrelly, Ryan Manuel, Will Zou 鄒述丞, Neil Thomas and Thomas Williams for sharing books, reading my drafts and offering suggestions at various stages of my research and writing. As we prepared the *China & ANU* exhibition Olivier Krischer and Jack Dunstan kept abreast of the early iterations of the manuscript, and Yasmin Masri, who designed the promotional material and layout of the exhibition with such thoughtfulness and style, also did the layout for this book. I would also like to thank Yayun Zhu and Warren Sun 孫萬國 for composing the Chinese abstract for the book. Both the exhibition and book would have been impossible without the organisation and promotional efforts of Merrilyn Fitzpatrick, Nancy Chiu, Jasmin Lin and Kim Yang at the Australian Centre on China in the World. I am sincerely grateful to have such wonderful colleagues.

I have also received the support of many people outside CIW, in particular Stephen FitzGerald, Wang Gungwu, John Minford, David Walker, James Cotton, Nicholas Jose and Colin Mackerras, all of whom were generous in sharing their knowledge and expertise, helping me gain insights into the complexities and nuances of the period covered in this work. I am also very grateful to John Moffett, Librarian at the Needham Research Institute at Cambridge, for his enthusiasm and kindness in sharing with me the Institute's remarkable collection of photographs of Joseph Needham, Frederic Eggleston and Lo Chung-shu. I appreciate the work of Margaret Avard and Sarah Lethbridge who helped me navigate a way through the arcana of the ANU Archives. At the Menzies Library, my sincere thanks go to Darrell Dorrington, Rebecca Wong and Friederike Schimmelpfennig for giving access to the Hsu Ti-shan Collection and for arranging the loan of a number of the collection's treasures for the CIW exhibition. Prue MacKay at the National Archives and Ouyang Dipin 歐陽迪頻 of the National Library were extremely generous with their time in copying and lending documents and photographs. Kay Dancey and Karina Pelling, at CartoGIS in the ANU College of Asia & the Pacific, prepared the elegant maps that grace these pages.

I am deeply grateful to Olivier Krischer and Yasmin Masri for their unflagging dedication to this project, in particular for the long hours they spent with me and Geremie refining and designing this book. Without their efforts neither the exhibition *China & ANU*, nor this book, would have been possible.

PROLOGUE

AUSTRALIA MUST PREPARE

Australia's proximity to Asia has had a profound effect on this country's history. Yet, despite this, much public discussion of Asia remains, even today, relatively uninformed by the past. Politicians, public figures, analysts, scholars and the media frequently discuss Australia's proximity to 'the region' in a language that more often than not celebrates a new-found awareness of our place in the world; they do so in tones of ill-concealed excitement. Meanwhile, as political and economic transformation has swept the region, Asian countries like Japan, Korea, China, Singapore, Indonesia and India have been lauded as 'rising', or 'emergent'. The notion of Australian involvement with these and other nations to the north is constantly evoked, as though Australians need encouragement to go boldly where we think nobody has gone before.

When, in 2011, then-prime minister Julia Gillard announced an upcoming government White Paper, *Australia in the Asian Century*, she spoke of Australia's engagement with a new China that was 'transforming the economic and strategic balance of our world'; with a new India that was 'rising to find its place in the world ... on an ocean whose shores we share'; and, with a new Indonesia, 'the world's third largest democracy ... remarkable and too little remarked-upon'. Twice in the same speech, she declared that Australia 'hasn't been here before'.¹

However, Australia has been here before. The period covered in this study — the years from the late 1910s up to the early 1950s — was a time of profound critical self-reflection for many scholars, educators and public servants who thought about Asia in ways that both challenged their identity as Australians and as members of the British Commonwealth. They used, often interchangeably, terms such as the Orient, the Pacific and the Far East (or, after 1939, the Near North) to describe the region; they felt trepidation when the situation to the north seemed unstable and threatening to Australian security; they expressed wonder at the potential for Asian economic improvement and participation in international affairs; and they would despair when their own government and people appeared unwilling to accept the reality of their geographic situation.

The Second World War (1939–1945) saw Australians engaged in a large-scale Pacific conflict for the first time in their history. This conflict, as well as memories of the Great Depression of the 1930s, would convince a number of public servants working on post-war reconstruction that the involvement of the Commonwealth Government in national education — a novel idea for the time — was necessary to foster a more educated, creative, self-reliant and cosmopolitan society.

¹ Julia Gillard, 'Speech to the AsiaLink and Asia Society Lunch, Melbourne', 28 September 2011, online at: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=18161>. This and other lapses of national memory are discussed by David Walker and Agnieszka Sobocinska in the introduction to their edited volume *Australia's Asia: From Yellow Peril to Asian Century*, Crawley: University of Western Australia, 2012, pp.1-23. For a discussion of the White Paper's garbled understanding of 'Asian' geography, at a time when the Gillard Labor government was implementing policies to exclude the continent of Australia from Australia's migration zone, see David Brophy, 'Australia's Asia', *The China Story*, 31 October 2012, online at: <http://www.thechinastory.org/2012/10/australias-asia/>.

One significant development at this time was the establishment of The Australian National University (ANU) by a Commonwealth Act on 1 August 1946. ANU began as a dedicated research and postgraduate-training institution, with a mandate to pursue work 'in relation to subjects of national importance to Australia'. These subjects were concentrated under the headings of Medical Research, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences and Pacific Studies. These four groupings formed the basis for the first research schools at ANU.²

The scope of research to be pursued at the new School of Pacific Studies — today's College of Asia & the Pacific — was one of the many issues to be decided by the ANU Interim Council during the university's establishment phase, from 1946 to 1951. Two Council members, Frederic Eggleston and Douglas Copland, had successively served as Australia's diplomatic representatives to the Republic of China during and shortly after the war. Both were adamant that the study of China should be included in the research programme of Pacific Studies. When addressing a gathering of Chinese officials and foreign diplomats before boarding a train out of Nanking, China's capital city, in March 1948, Copland, who was returning to Canberra as ANU's inaugural vice-chancellor, said:

I regret leaving, but in returning to the academic world, I do not feel that I am deserting the world of China, which I have come to respect and admire. One of the special fields of study to be fostered by the new university at Canberra is Pacific Studies, and this will, of necessity, keep me in active touch with many phases of Chinese life and scholarship. I believe that it is in the promotion of cultural relations that the most abiding understanding between peoples can be fostered, and on this count Australia has much to profit by the closest association with China.³

Indeed, it was due to the efforts of Eggleston and Copland that work on China became one of ANU's great strengths. This was not, however, the first time that the study of our region was seen to be a matter of national importance. Australia had been there before.

The greatest security concern for Australia in the years following Federation in 1901 was the rise of the Empire of Japan and its regional ambitions. Great Britain, which in 1902 signed the Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty, welcomed this strong regional ally as a counterweight to Russian influence in northeast Asia. Australia's leaders were less sanguine. When Japan became the first Asian power to defeat a colonial European force in modern history — as a result of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 — and as Britain began to withdraw its Pacific fleets to meet the growing challenge of German sea power closer to home, many were anxious that

² See the *Australian National University Act*, 1 August 1946, section six, available online at: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C1946A00022>.

³ Despatch no.9, 'Professor Copland's Return', 30 March 1948, Annex A, 'Statement by the Australian Minister on leaving Nanking', p.3, NAA A4231, 1948/NANKING PART 3.



James Murdoch, Australia's first Professor of Oriental Studies (1918–1921), c.1910. (From Hirakawa Sukehiro 平川祐弘, *Sōseki's Teacher, Mr Murdoch* 漱石の師マードック先生, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1984)

without the deterrent of the British navy, Japan might invade and overrun the continent. 'As a fact, Japan is the nearest of all the great foreign naval stations to Australia', warned the country's second prime minister, Alfred Deakin, in 1905. 'Japan at her head-quarters is, so to speak, next door, while the Mother Country is many streets away'.⁴

Such anxieties had reached fever pitch by the time of the Great War (1914–1918). Within the context of a 'world crisis' — marked by the unprecedented bloodshed, toppled monarchies, crumbling empires and drastic redistributions of global power that ensued during and after the war — the historian Neville Meaney has demonstrated that Australians, with national strategic interests vastly different from those of the Mother Country, experienced an 'Australian crisis'. Australians engaged in a 'hot war' against Germany and its allies in Europe, fighting 'as a British people [who] saw their own welfare, both cultural and strategical, linked inextricably to that of Britain and the British Empire'. No less important (though often overlooked in discussions of Australia's Great War) was what Meaney calls a 'cold war' against Japan, Australia's nominal ally in the Pacific. Defying Britain's assurances of protection, the wartime governments of Andrew Fisher and William Hughes drastically expanded military training; Japan was also a central concern in Hughes' attempts to introduce conscription; and, fearful that Japan might change sides should Germany gain the upper hand in the war — a distinct possibility until early 1918 — and reach a post-war accommodation with Germany in the Pacific, Australian intelligence services, acting independently of London, began anxiously gathering information on Japan and the views of its leaders.⁵

⁴ Neville Meaney, *Fears and Phobias: EL Piessé and the Problem of Japan, 1909-39*, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1996, pp.3-4.

⁵ Neville Meaney, *A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, vol.2: Australia and World Crisis: 1914-1923*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, pp.ix-xiii and 500-514, quotation at p.500.

Australia's first university Department of Oriental Studies was born of these anxieties. On 24 April 1916, the Minister for Defence, George Pearce, asked Brigadier General Hubert Foster, the army's Chief of the General Staff, to explore the possibility of establishing a Japanese language lectureship at the Royal Military College at Duntroon, Canberra. The sixty-one-year-old Foster, who knew Russian and had begun to learn Japanese himself, was enthusiastic about the prospect. As he told a meeting at the Department of Defence: 'Great difficulty is experienced in obtaining interpreters of Japanese, either written or spoken. In view of the growing relations between Japan and Australia, the scarcity of interpreters may be a serious embarrassment to the Government'.⁶

On 2 June 1916, Foster cabled Australia House (the Australian High Commission) in London, seeking the British government's guidance in selecting a suitable Japanese language scholar to invite to Australia. Disguising the security concerns behind the appointment, he wrote that a Japanese lectureship at 'an Australian University' would foster 'growing commercial relations between Japan and Australia'. The university he meant was the University of Sydney, the closest tertiary institution to Duntroon, where the successful candidate was expected to spend most of their time teaching army cadets. While Australian security was the main motivation for the proposed Japanese lectureship, Defence was probably also aware that the University of Sydney's Senate had on its table a proposal from the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce to establish a Chair of Eastern Languages.⁷

The Foreign Office suggested two members of the British Consular Service who were soon due to retire: Joseph Henry Longford and JW Robertson Scott. The British Embassy in Tokyo, meanwhile, recommended both Alexander Cardew, a linguist seconded to the Imperial Civil Service in India, and one '[James] Murdoch of Kagoshima Japan with excellent knowledge of Japanese ... a journalist about 60 who has been a teacher in Japanese schools and written on Japanese history'. 'Seldom', writes David Sissons, a scholar of Australian-Japanese relations, 'can an academic appointment have been made by a stranger process or on the basis of greater ignorance concerning the candidates'.⁸

Longford was Hubert Foster's first choice. He surmised that Longford's retirement meant that his transition to Duntroon would be relatively easy to organise and, as he would be receiving his pension, they could offer him a salary at the lower end of the £500-600 per annum that had been set aside for the appointment.

⁶ Jennifer Brewster, 'You Can't Have a Failure Rate of 75%: Idealism and Realism in the Teaching of Japanese in Australia, 1917-1950', in Helen Marriott and Morris Low, eds, *Language and Cultural Contact with Japan*, Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1996, pp.4-40, quotation at p.5.

⁷ David Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese: James Murdoch (1856-1921)', unpublished manuscript, 1985, in DCS Sissons Papers, NLA MS3092, Box 2, p.66. See also the published version, 'James Murdoch (1856-1921): Historian, Teacher and Much Else Besides', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, ser.4, vol.2, 1987. For more on James Murdoch and the origins of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney, see Meaney, *Australia and World Crisis*, pp.155-157; and, David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999, pp. 211-213.

⁸ Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', p.67. For a study of Sissons, see Desmond Ball and Keiko Tamura, eds, *Breaking Japanese Diplomatic Codes: David Sissons and D Special Section during the Second World War*, Asian Studies Series Monograph 4, Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013.

But, on 5 July, Australia House sent a follow-up cable to Canberra apologising for misinformation in its previous telegram: Longford was not fifty-five, as had been originally reported, but sixty-seven — too old, in the view of Defence Minister Pearce, for the job. Foster then tried for Cardew, but he could not be spared from his duties in India. Reluctantly, and admitting that he knew 'nothing of [his] personality', Foster arranged to contact his third choice, James Murdoch, on the proviso that he would be appointed for an initial 'six months on probation, so that if not suitable he can be dispensed with.'⁹

James Murdoch, a graduate of the University of Aberdeen with first class honours in Classics, should certainly have been given greater consideration. He had first come to Australia in 1880, at the age of twenty-five, to take up the post of headmaster of Queensland's new Maryborough Grammar School. He went on to be the second master at Brisbane Grammar and, cashiered for his atheism after only two years in the job, decided to stay in Brisbane to work for the 'radical nationalist' magazine, *Boomerang*. In 1886, Murdoch began travelling in Asia on commission for the magazine until, in 1889, he moved to Japan. Apart from a short stint at 'New Australia', a utopian socialist commune in Paraguay, he had lived in Japan ever since. He taught at a number of high schools there, and was said to be enormously popular with his students. Their number included Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石, who went on to become one of Japan's most influential novelists. Sōseki later described Murdoch as 'very outgoing and conscientious ... [he] combined the qualities of a thorough gentleman with a marked Bohemianism, we admired and respected him.'¹⁰

From 1901 until his departure for Australia, James Murdoch lived in Kagoshima, Kyushu, the southernmost large island of Japan. He wrote occasional articles for the *Kobe Chronicle* and cultivated a citrus orchard to supplement his income as he focussed on writing a comprehensive history of Japan. By the time of his appointment to Duntroon he had already published the first two volumes of his *History of Japan*, covering antiquity to the mid-seventeenth century, and had completed the draft of a third volume, covering the period 1640 up to the 1868 Meiji Restoration. This work — which later included a fourth volume, published posthumously in 1926 — remained a standard source on Japanese history for Western students until the 1950s. But oddly, according to Sissons, 'no-one involved in the selection process knew that Murdoch had teaching experience [in Japan] at both secondary and tertiary level and had lived in Australia. They did not know even the titles of his books.'¹¹

Murdoch arrived in Canberra in early 1917, and taught his first class at Duntroon on 20 March. His classes consisted of cadets who had shown linguistic promise in the Military College's French and German entrance examinations. He also delivered ad hoc after-hours lectures on Japan to interested members of the Duntroon staff. Beginning in April, he taught in Sydney every Monday and Tuesday, returning to Canberra to spend the rest of the week with the army cadets. The Commonwealth

⁹ Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', p.68.

¹⁰ Sissons, 'James Murdoch (1856-1921)', pp.20-21. For an account of Sōseki and Murdoch, see Hirakawa Sukehiro 平川祐弘, *Sōseki's Teacher, Mr Murdoch* 漱石の師マードック先生, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1984.

¹¹ Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', p.68.

Government paid him an annual salary of £600, and the University of Sydney provided a further allowance of £150 to cover travel expenses.

As he developed a vision for Japanese Studies in Australia, Murdoch invited two native Japanese speakers to help him teach the language, and he persuaded the New South Wales' government to support language teaching at Fort Street and North Sydney Boys' High School, two of Sydney's most prestigious state schools. Over the summer holidays before the start of the 1918 school year, Murdoch travelled to Japan to acquire books for the Sydney library, and to recruit his new teachers. For the high school positions he hired Mineichi Miyata, a former colleague from his teaching days in Japan, and for the university, his former student Mitsuji Koide, a graduate of the Imperial University in Tokyo. He returned to Australia in March 1918 with his Japanese wife, Takeko Okada, and brother-in-law, Rokuo Okada, who started teaching at Duntroon for an annual salary of £250.¹²

With Okada now in charge of teaching Japanese at Duntroon, Murdoch was free to focus his energies on developing a broader curriculum in Oriental Studies, including such subjects as history, economics and sociology. In mid-1918, to entice Murdoch to stay in Australia after he had been invited to take up a professorship at Waseda University in Tokyo, the University of Sydney offered to supplement his Commonwealth salary with an additional £400 — bringing the total to £1000.¹³ The university gave Murdoch a professorship and established under his tutelage Australia's first Department of Oriental Studies, located in the Faculty of Arts. Happy with the arrangement, Murdoch turned down the Waseda offer and, with Okada handling teaching at Duntroon, was now free to pursue grand plans for the university's Oriental Studies curriculum.

The historian Marjorie Jacobs, who worked at the University of Sydney from 1938 to 1980 and was an early proponent of what is now called 'Asia literacy', notes that Murdoch was 'keenly alive to the urgent need for Australians to develop a closer understanding of their Asian neighbours both for the immediate purposes of trade and diplomacy and for the cultivation of the broader sympathies which acquaintance with the achievements of Asian civilisations could awaken.'¹⁴

Murdoch put this plainly in *Australia Must Prepare*, his 1919 Inaugural Lecture as Professor of Oriental Studies. He warned that Australia could not hope to remain 'as delightfully self-centred as she was

¹² Another purpose of Murdoch's 1918 and 1919 visits to Japan was to report to Edmund Piesse, the Australian army's Director of Military Intelligence, on Japanese attitudes in the aftermath of the war. In a series of letters addressed to 'Mr. McRae' — the maiden name of Piesse's wife, Christina, used to avoid arousing the suspicion of Japanese censors — Murdoch discussed trends in the media and political circles in Tokyo, especially concerning disagreements between the Japanese and Australian delegations during the Paris Peace Conference. It was at Paris that Prime Minister William ('Billy') Hughes vehemently opposed Japan's claims to German territories in the Pacific, as well as its proposal to include a racial equality clause in the covenant of the League of Nations. See Meaney, *Fears and Phobias*, pp.14-16; and, Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', pp.73-111.

¹³ The amount £1000 is approximately equal to \$85,000 in 2015. Calculations here and throughout this study have been made using the Reserve Bank of Australia Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator, online at: <http://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html>.

¹⁴ Marjorie Jacobs, 'Oriental Studies In the University of Sydney', *The Australian Quarterly*, vol.25, no.2 (June 1953): 82-90. For an obituary of Jacobs, see Pam Spies, Diana Gower and Richard Barnett, 'Academic looked to the Asian Century', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 October 2013, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/obituaries/academic-looked-to-the-asian-century-20131004-2uzna.html>.

a generation ago' and, while conceding that concerns for the country's defence and trade might have been the reasons behind his appointment, that there was much more to be gained from the study of the region than mere 'materialistic' considerations. Murdoch looked forward to expanding Oriental Studies to include Chinese, Sanskrit and Semitic languages. About one third of his lecture was devoted to China:

So far we have been considering the position [of China] not so much on utilitarian, as on brutally materialistic grounds. But on the higher utilitarian grounds, there is also a great deal to be said. Anything which can satisfy a human want or desire is not devoid of utility; and to some few select souls the most imperious of all desires is the craving of knowledge merely for its own sake. If we are to accept Matthew Arnold's rather odd definition of criticism — a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world — we shall find ourselves constrained to admit that there are several things in the vast and voluminous literature of China which we cannot afford to ignore.¹⁵

Murdoch died at his home in Baulkam Hills on 30 October 1921. He was sixty-five. Mungo William MacCallum, Dean of the university's Faculty of Arts, mourned the passing of 'one of the most remarkable men in the Empire' who 'saw what is so very obvious, but what many refuse to admit, that Australia is primarily a Pacific, and therefore an Eastern Power'.¹⁶ Murdoch's colleague Mineichi Miyata wrote that: 'Australia and Japan have lost one of their most celebrated authorities on both countries at a time in their history when he could least be spared.'¹⁷ Although Miyata himself only stayed at Fort Street High School for another two years, on the occasion of the ninetieth anniversary of the longest-running Japanese programme at any Australian school in 2008, the Japan Foundation honoured his crucial early contribution to the teaching of the language in this country.¹⁸

Murdoch's plea in *Australia Must Prepare* for a 'disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world' fell on deaf ears. The Department of Defence soon lost interest in Japanese teaching at Duntroon, their reasoning reflecting changed circumstances in the world at large. Apparently, Australia did not need Japanese Studies anymore.

In the first place, at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference that followed the hostilities of the Great War, the League of Nations had been established; it was formally inaugurated in January the following year. A forerunner of the United Nations, the League was the first intergovernmental organisation devoted specifically to world peace, which it intended to maintain through collective security, military disarmament and the settlement of international disputes through negotiation.

¹⁵ James Murdoch, *Australia Must Prepare*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1919, p.13.

¹⁶ MW MacCallum, 'Professor James Murdoch: A Wise Man of the East', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1921, p.14.

¹⁷ M Miyata, 'Professor James Murdoch: An Appreciation', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 November 1921, p.7.

¹⁸ Collin Jones, '90th Anniversary of the Introduction of Japanese Language into the Australian School System', online at: http://www.jpff.org.au/onlinearticles/profile/issue7_2.html.

The Empire of Japan was a member of the League, and notionally bound to the principles of its Covenant.

Secondly, at the Washington Naval Conference in 1921–1922 the four Pacific powers — the United States, Britain, Japan and France — signed a ‘Four Power Treaty’, known also as the ‘Washington Treaty’. This replaced the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty mentioned above (and the principal source of the ‘Australian crisis’ that had unsettled the Commonwealth since Federation) with a more reassuring strategic regional structure. The four powers agreed to respect existing territorial boundaries in the Pacific, and to limit the expansion of fortifications and naval bases in the areas under their control. The Washington Treaty was unrelated to the League of Nations: Japan was not required to sign.

However, as Defence Minister George Pearce and his adviser Edmund Piesse observed, not only did Japan sign the treaty willingly, it also agreed to limit the size of its armies in China’s Shantung province where, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, it had gained control of territories previously leased to Germany, and in the territory of Siberia that it had occupied following the earlier defeat of Russia. In Parliament, Pearce declared that Australia was entering a new age in its relations with the ‘Far North’. He confessed to having ‘suspected Japan and her intentions in regard to the Pacific’ in the past, but Japan was now ‘peaceful’ and determined to avoid ‘isolation from the rest of the world’, as had been Germany’s fate. In the eyes of the Australian government, it also seemed as if America would now begin to play a more active role in the region.¹⁹ On 13 April 1922, the Prime Minister’s Department informed Pearce in Defence that:

The Washington Conference has now brought about a great change in our position relatively to Japan. Whatever the ultimate outcome of the treaties made at the Conference, there can, I think, be no doubt that the detailed study of Japanese affairs which we contemplated in 1920 is, for the next few years at least, quite unnecessary.²⁰

This saw the end of the Commonwealth’s interest in supporting Japanese and Oriental Studies. Soon after Murdoch’s death, Takeko Okada, Murdoch’s widow, and his brother-in-law, Rokuo Okada, returned to Japan. Duntroon made no effort to replace Rokuo with another native-speaking tutor and, although Japanese language instruction remained part of the Duntroon curriculum until 1938, it was taught by senior officers trained by the programme: it was hardly surprising then that the standard of teaching slipped and, with it, interest in the Japanese language overall. A 1935 survey by the Directorate of Military Operations revealed that there were only seven people affiliated with the Australian Army who were familiar with Japanese. Six of these were ‘able to read and write imperfectly’. The seventh, Arthur Lindsay Sadler, was an Oxford graduate in Far Eastern Languages and Murdoch’s successor at the University of Sydney.²¹

¹⁹ Meaney, *Fears and Phobias*, pp.33-34.

²⁰ Sissons, ‘Australia’s First Professor of Japanese’, p.108.

²¹ Sissons, ‘James Murdoch (1856-1921)’, p.56.



Arthur Lindsay Sadler, 1922. (Courtesy University of Sydney Archives)

If it were not for the enthusiasm of Arthur Sadler, who started teaching at Sydney in 1922, it is unlikely that the Department of Oriental Studies would have survived. The department was threatened with closure in 1928 when Defence, disillusioned with its original scheme of collaborating with the university, attempted to cut its funding only to discover that they were contractually obliged to pay the incumbent until he chose to retire.²² Despite continuing difficulties — consisting of a ‘ridiculously inadequate’ endowment of ‘about £30 per annum’, Sadler wrote in 1927, which made it nearly impossible to establish a working Oriental library — and with the university unable to afford to employ more than one full-time lecturer in the department, Sadler nonetheless remained at Sydney until 1947.²³

Arthur Sadler was ‘already a legend when I first entered Sydney University in 1936’, writes Joyce Ackroyd, who was appointed ANU’s first Japanese Studies research fellow in 1952 after completing doctoral studies at The University of Cambridge. A ‘universal scholar of the “pre-specialist” era ... [who] explored whatever facet of Japanese culture that attracted his discriminating attention’, Sadler was widely admired by his colleagues and students.²⁴

Ackroyd studied and later tutored under Sadler and she recalls her eclectic group of classmates, including:

²² Jennifer Brewster, ‘You Can’t Have a Failure Rate of 75%’, p.13.

²³ See AL Sadler, ‘University of Sydney: Oriental Studies: Lack of Equipment’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 August 1927, p.16; and, ‘Oriental Studies’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1937, p.10. The sum of £30 was equivalent to \$2,300 in 2015.

²⁴ Joyce Ackroyd, ‘Pioneers in Asian Studies: Professor AL Sadler’, *Asian Studies Association of Australia Review*, no.10, no.1 (July 1986): 49-53, at p.53. Ackroyd later served as Associate Professor of Japanese at ANU (1959–1965) before moving to the University of Queensland, where she established the Department of Japanese Language and Literature. A tireless advocate of Japanese in the Queensland education system, Ackroyd received an OBE in 1981 for her services to education. See ‘40 Years of Promoting Australian and Japanese Ties’, *University of Queensland Alumni News*, vol.16, no.1 (May 1984): 6–7.



Joyce Ackroyd, 1984. (From *University of Queensland Alumni News*, vol.16, no.1 [May 1984])

business-men, school-teachers, missionaries, a radio-announcer (later the editor of the now defunct *Hemisphere*), a churchman (later an Archbishop), a fortunate young man of independent means who became an academic, practising journalists, and housewives hooked on the Far East. We all revelled in what we recognised was an unusually valuable learning experience.²⁵

With broad-ranging interests in Japanese architecture, tea culture and martial arts, Sadler published sixteen books and translations during his life. In Sydney his work appeared with the iconic Australian publishing house Angus & Robertson. Notable among

²⁵ Joyce Ackroyd, 'Pioneers in Asian Studies: Professor AL Sadler', p.53. The radio announcer and editor of *Hemisphere* magazine mentioned here may have been Selwyn 'Dan' Speight. While there appears to be no record of Speight attending the University of Sydney in its annual calendars, he might have been among the many students who took casual or night classes, before leaving to cover the war in China for the *The Sydney Morning Herald* in December 1942. In 1957, Speight was awarded the Walkley Award for his reporting on Australia's postwar immigration scheme. In that year, he became the founding editor of *Hemisphere* and stayed with the magazine until he moved to ABC radio in 1961, where he established the highly successful programmes 'AM' and 'PM'. *Hemisphere* was established under the auspices of the Colombo Plan, a Commonwealth government programme sponsoring students from Asian countries to study in Australia. Renowned for its high quality of production and varied content covering Australian and Asian culture and history, *Hemisphere* aimed to strengthen cultural ties between Australia and the region, particularly among Colombo Plan students, until the Labor government of Bob Hawke cut its funding in 1984. Those who criticised the government's decision included ANU professors John Mulvaney, Oscar Spate and Arthur Basham, as well as Alastair Morrison, the son of the celebrated Australian China correspondent for the London *Times*, George Morrison, who will be discussed later in this study. See Jack Waterford, 'Complaints aplenty as *Hemisphere* gets the chop', *The Canberra Times*, 18 August 1984, p.2. See also the oral history recording 'Selwyn Speight interviewed by Mel Pratt', Mel Pratt Collection, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1974; and, Claire Roberts, 'Alastair Morrison (1915–2009)', *China Heritage Quarterly*, no.19 (September 2009), online at: http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=019_vale_morrison.inc&issue=019.



A caricature of AL Sadler showing a Japanese print to the Australian artist Thea Proctor at an exhibition in Sydney. (From *The Home*, vol.7, no.7 [1 July 1926]: 40)

these were: *The Book of Tea: A Japanese Harmony of Art, Culture and the Simple Life* (1937), a translation of and commentary on Okakura Kakuzō's 岡倉覚三 1906 classic treatise on the tea ceremony; *A Short History of Japanese Architecture* (1941); and, *A Short History of Japan* (1946). Outside of university life, Sadler was a highly regarded proponent of Japanese art, and he organised a number of exhibitions in Sydney during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁶

In November 1948, John Kennedy Rideout, a graduate in Far Eastern languages from the University of London, arrived to take the chair of the Department of Oriental Studies. He was a specialist in classical Chinese and his arrival was greeted enthusiastically as it provided an opportunity to expand the department to include more China-related subjects, and to introduce Chinese language instruction. However, the new incumbent soon found that the university's library holdings were not equal to the task. Fortunately, an opportunity to remedy the situation soon presented itself. The same month that Rideout arrived in Sydney, the Chinese Ambassador to Australia, Kan Nai-kuang 甘乃光, donated to the new Australian National University in Canberra a 2000-volume reprint edition of *Selected Publications from the Four Categories* 四部叢刊, a collection of classical texts compiled under the auspices of the Chien-

²⁶ Misuzu Hanihara Chow, *The Study of Japan in Australia: A Unique Development Over Eighty Years*, Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2003, pp.34-40. In 2011, The University of Sydney hosted an exhibition celebrating Sadler's contributions to artistic life in the city. See Ajioka Chiaki and Maria Tornatore-Loong, 'Japan in Sydney: Professor Sadler & Modernism, 1920s-30s', online at: <http://sydney.edu.au/museums/exhibitions-events/japan-in-sydney.shtml>.

lung 乾隆 emperor (r.1735-1796) of the Ch'ing dynasty.

In Canberra a formal ceremony had been organised to celebrate the donation which was attended by Herbert Cole 'Nugget' Coombs, a senior government economist who actively promoted the role of the Commonwealth in higher education. As the Director-General of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction Coombs had been heavily involved in planning ANU, and he is widely regarded as the university's unofficial 'father' — or in the words of one account, as the 'midwife' most responsible, among a number of other planners, for its birth.²⁷

Also present at the ceremony was the thrice-knighted former Solicitor-General, Robert Garran, and Charles Daley who, as chairman of the Capital Territory Advisory Council, was Canberra's unofficial mayor. Garran, a man who regarded it as 'unthinkable' that the territory would not have its own university, once declared that he saw 'no reason why Canberra should not become the centre and the focus of the artistic life of Australia.'²⁸ Also at the ceremony were the two former diplomats mentioned earlier who played a key role in establishing the ANU as the new Australian centre for the study of Asia: Frederic Eggleston and Douglas Copland. All were members of ANU's Interim Council. Eggleston accepted the Chinese books on behalf of the Council and declared that the seminal collection 'would furnish the start of a great library for the university in the study of Chinese culture.'²⁹

In February 1949, Rideout wrote to Douglas Copland, now ANU's first vice-chancellor, to ask if the books might be loaned to Sydney:

Three weeks ago I arrived here to take up the Chair of Oriental Studies and with the object of introducing the academic study of Chinese. My first task was to survey and classify the oriental books in the Fisher Library, and I found there only a very scrappy collection of Japanese texts, and one Chinese text, which had presumably got in by mistake. In fact, had I not possessed with me the nucleus of a working library of Chinese texts it would be impossible for me to start teaching at all. ... I was, however, informed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, that the National University had recently received a collection of some two thousand Chinese books, which were believed to be classical texts. I should be very grateful if you could obtain some more detailed information about this collection, and if you could let me know whether anyone at the National University is working, or proposing to work upon it. If not, rather than have the books lie idle, would the National University be prepared, purely as an interim measure, to lend this collection to the Fisher Library?³⁰

²⁷ See Rosemary Mayne-Wilson, 'Coombs: Midwife to the University, Advisor to the Nation', *The Australian National University News*, vol.9, no.2 (August 1974): 1-6. This edition of the *News*, in celebrating Coombs' contributions to ANU, also carried reminiscences by two of his colleagues: JG Crawford, 'Post-war planning: some reflections on the results'; and, Roy Douglas Wright, 'Nugget and the National University'.

²⁸ RS Parker, 'Sir Robert Randolph Garran (1867-1957)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.8, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1981, online at: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/garran-sir-robert-randolph-410>.

²⁹ 'Chinese Books for National University', *The Canberra Times*, 16 November 1948, p.2.

³⁰ Letter, Rideout to Copland, 5 February 1949, ANUA 122, Box 1.



Members of the ANU Interim Council receiving a gift of Chinese books from Kan Nai-kuang, Chinese Ambassador to Australia, November 1948. From the left: Robert Garran, Charles Daley, Kan Nai-kuang, Leslie Martin, Frederic Eggleston, Roy Douglas Wright (behind Eggleston), Herbert Cole 'Nugget' Coombs and Douglas Copland. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

Copland readily acquiesced as he told Rideout it would be some time 'before active work is commenced in the School of Pacific Studies and the books are likely to be in use by members of our University staff.'³¹ There was nobody yet at ANU who could read, let alone catalogue the texts and the first research students would not arrive for another two years. ANU did not really have a library to call its own: the majority of the books it was slowly accumulating were in safekeeping at the University of Melbourne; others were held in what were called the 'Old Hospital Buildings', a series of temporary shed-like structures on the Acton Peninsula, previously part of Canberra's first public hospital.

During his brief time in Australian academic life, JK Rideout had a further encounter with the new national university. In late October 1949, he travelled to Canberra to present a lecture titled *Politics in Medieval China*. It was the Twelfth George E Morrison Lecture in Ethnology, a series of orations about China discussed at length below that had recently been revived and moved to the university.

By the end of the year, Rideout had decided that he was unable to work with the limited resources available at Sydney and left to take up a professorship at the University of Hong Kong. In February 1950,

³¹ Letter, Copland to Rideout, 16 February 1949, ANUA 122, Box 1.



a fisherman found his body floating some ten miles from Hong Kong Island. During the war, Rideout had worked for the British secret service and there was speculation that he had been killed by underground Chinese communist agents. In May that year, however, a coroner and jury returned a verdict of 'death by misadventure by drowning'.³² John Rideout was only thirty-six.

³² 'No Trace of Missing Professor', *The Canberra Times*, 21 February 1950, p.1; 'Sydney Recluse Revealed as Secret Agent', *The Sunday Herald* (Sydney), 9 April 1950, p.2; and, 'Prof. Rideout Inquest', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May 1950, p.3.

CHAPTER 1

THE ROAD TO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION: 1931–1941



Old Parliament House, Canberra, early 1940s. (Photograph by RC Strangman, courtesy National Library of Australia)

One outcome of the Washington Conference of 1921–1922, with the threat of Japan apparently diminished and British prestige in the Pacific reaffirmed, was the dawning of an era of complacency in Australian foreign relations. If the country's early leaders had been relatively outspoken and assertive in regard to Australia's unique national interests, the conservative governments of Stanley Bruce (1923–1929) and Joseph Lyons (1932–1939), along with most members of the Labor opposition, were now hesitant in questioning their loyalty to Britain. The Washington Conference marked the end of the 'Australian crisis' and, as Neville Meaney concludes, left the country's leaders 'unable to prepare properly for [a] greater global conflagration' as the world slid towards another great war.³³

Nonetheless, the Australian government made tentative steps towards engaging with the region. The Great Depression had convinced many of the need to extend the scope of Australian trade — then heavily oriented,

³³ See Neville Meaney's concluding remarks in *Australia and World Crisis*, pp.512-513.



and strictly regulated, to favour the British market — to neighbouring countries. In 1934, John Latham, the Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs, led what he called Australia's 'first mission of a diplomatic character' to foreign nations. The Australian Eastern Mission visited the Dutch East Indies, Singapore, Malaya, French Indochina, China, Japan and the Philippines, paving the way for trade commissioners to be appointed to China and Japan in 1935. Hitherto, diplomacy had been within the prime minister's portfolio, but in the wake of the Mission in 1936 a Department of External Affairs (today's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) was established as a standalone body in the Commonwealth government.

Regardless of this, as Latham told the *Shanghai Times* during his stay in China, the 'diplomatic character' of Australian engagement would, at least for the time being, extend no further than trade:

As far as diplomatic representation is concerned Great Britain has provided for us, and at present I cannot see that any advantage would be gained by separate representation. I would stress however that Australia is a self-governing country and, as such, could appoint diplomatic representatives as she so desired. But both the interests of my country and our natural loyalty to Great Britain make it desirable that there should be unity in matters of major importance.³⁴

Despite such prevarication in Canberra, from the 1920s a movement made up of writers, public intellectuals and educators, some of whom also served in state and federal politics, agitated at various forums and through their writings in favour of stronger ties between Australia and the countries of the region. Foremost amongst them was Frederic Eggleston. Beginning his working life as a barrister in Melbourne, Eggleston had been, along with John Latham and Robert Garran, a member of the Australian delegation to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. In 1927, he was the principal Australian representative at the second conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), a quasi-political organisation of thinkers and policymakers from Pacific nations, including the US, China, Japan and Canada, which met periodically to discuss shared security concerns and to promote cultural exchange. In 1929, Eggleston led the Australian delegation attending the third IPR conference in Nara and Kyoto, and the sixth at Yosemite in the United States in 1936, at which the economist Douglas Copland was also present. Eggleston also frequently published essays in the IPR journal *Pacific Affairs*.³⁵

In 1933, Eggleston co-founded, with Latham and Garran, the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), which today remains one of Australia's leading foreign relations think tanks. Eggleston was chairman of the editorial board of the AIIA journal *Austral-Asiatic Bulletin* from its founding in 1937 until, on the basis of a distinguished public career, he was appointed the first Australian Minister (equivalent to an ambassador) to China in July 1941. An open-minded internationalist, Eggleston enjoyed a reputation as Australia's leading commentator on Pacific affairs. He published prolifically to promote what, in 1930, he described as the nation's 'Pacific sense':

What we need in Australia is the development of a Pacific sense. We are insular enough, but we do not have that sense of the sea and our surroundings which is generally developed in an island people. We should realise that the Pacific is one of the most interesting areas of the world's surface, that it is one of the most beautiful, that it is a good a place for a holiday as any other part of the world, and that our economic future is bound up with it.³⁶

³⁴ 'Exchange of Australian and Chinese professors is likely in the future', *Shanghai Times*, 7 May 1934, cited along with a further discussion of the Australian Eastern Mission in Timothy Kendall, *Within China's Orbit?: China through the eyes of the Australian Parliament*, Canberra: Department of Parliamentary Services, 2007, p.42.

³⁵ For Eggleston's IPR activities, see Tomoko Akami, 'Frederic Eggleston and Oriental Power, 1925–1929', in Paul Jones and Vera Mackie, eds, *Relationships: Japan and Australia, 1870s–1950s*, Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 2001, pp.101–131.

³⁶ Shannon Smith, 'Towards Diplomatic Representation', in David Goldsworthy, ed., *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia, vol.1: 1901 to the 1970s*, Carlton

Warren Osmond writes that Frederic Eggleston's career challenges 'the common view that Australia's independent foreign policy began with [Minister for External Affairs] Dr. HV Evatt in the 1940s'; a 'shallow' view 'which overlooks the growth of an international affairs movement (originally an intra-imperial debating circle) before and after the First World War.'³⁷ Examining this movement in greater depth, James Cotton concludes that a distinctly 'Australian School' of international relations thinking emerged during the 1920s. With the structure of the Empire-Commonwealth undergoing great change and the League of Nations heralding new possibilities for regional and global cooperation, Eggleston — with others including Keith Hancock and Walter Crocker, both of whom were later professors at ANU — was a leading figure in an early school of thinkers who responded to a changing world with enthusiasm and foresight. In 1947, employing a term that had only recently been coined in Canada, Eggleston described Australia as a 'small or middle power', one with two strategies open to it: 'to seek friends and make alliances, or to seek a solution for the problems of power in an international scheme.'³⁸

Like most Australians with an awareness of the Pacific, Eggleston was mainly concerned with the rise of Japan. His participation in the 1929 IPR conference 'gratified instincts long starved': he was awestruck by the organisation, efficiency and sense of civic consciousness that he observed in a country whose emergence into modernity was 'one of the most remarkable intellectual achievements which history records', and 'distinguished [Japan] with the greatest nations of history'.³⁹ At the same time, Japan presented a challenge to Australia:

What has Australia to say to all this change, fraught with so many tremendous possibilities? Where will she be in fifty years time when the 'unchanging East' has become a new power in the world? So far as I can see, while the East is awakening, Australia is putting herself to sleep like Japan did three hundred years ago under the Shoguns, behind restrictions and tariffs.⁴⁰

By contrast, Eggleston found China weak and unstable. As an Australian liberal in the tradition of Alfred Deakin, he was unsettled by the ideological fervour he encountered in Shanghai: 'China will have to ignore the teaching of Sun Yat Sen. ... a farrago of half-baked political radicalism'.⁴¹ Despite this, he embraced the cause of the Chinese Nationalists, hoping that the new government in Nanking would be successful in '[surmounting] the difficulties attending the inauguration of a new regime in so gigantic a territory'. Although sceptical that this goal could be achieved quickly,

South: Melbourne University Press, 2001, pp.64-65. See also David Walker, *Anxious Nation*, pp.210-226, for discussion of Eggleston and others who espoused the idea of Australia as a 'Pacific citizen'.

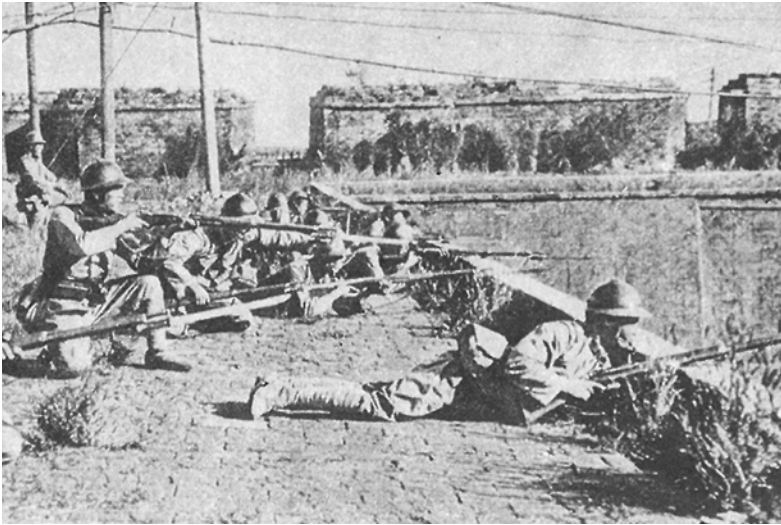
³⁷ Warren Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston: An Intellectual in Australian Politics*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985, p.307.

³⁸ James Cotton, *The Australian School of International Relations*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.70. The thinkers in Cotton's 'Australian School' are William Harrison Moore, ACV Melbourne, H Duncan Hall, William Keith Hancock, Fred Alexander, William Macmahon Ball, Walter Crocker and Frederic Eggleston. Eggleston is discussed in chapter three, 'The Empire and the Pacific', pp.49-72.

³⁹ Eggleston, 'Australia's View of Pacific Problems', *Pacific Affairs*, vol.3, no.1 (January 1930): 3-16, quotation at p.3.

⁴⁰ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.141.

⁴¹ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.142.



Japanese soldiers take an offensive position on the city walls of Mukden, 19 September 1931. (Wikimedia Commons)

he predicted that the country would eventually become a regional power. In 1930, he wrote that this would 'logically involve the removal or modification of special treaty provisions which have governed the relations of other nations and China.'⁴² Eggleston was, in effect, advocating the abolition of 'extraterritoriality', the noxious system of legal and territorial privileges that the foreign trading powers had imposed on China since the 1840s. Twelve years later, as Australia's representative in Chungking, Eggleston would play a role in bringing this iniquitous system to an end.

POLICY WITHOUT 'THE MORAL ASPECT'

In 1931, the Republic of China appeared to be more unified, stable and economically hopeful than at any time since the abdication of the Ch'ing emperor in 1912. The president and generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石, had brought his Northern Expedition to a successful conclusion: after launching a military campaign in the southern province of Kwangtung in 1927 he had struck north to wrest control of the country from warlords who had created personal fiefdoms following the collapse of central government rule in 1916.

When he captured Nanking from the warlord Sun Chuan-fang 孫傳芳 in April 1927, Chiang made it the capital of the Chinese republic (it had last been a political capital during the early Ming dynasty, in the fourteenth century). As the successor to the 'Father of the Nation', Sun Yat-sen 孫中山, Chiang now had the dead revolutionary entombed in a grand mausoleum on Purple Mountain on the eastern outskirts of the city. Like many revolutionaries and nationalists, Sun had detested the old dynastic capital of Peking for its 'feudal air' and its association with the alien Manchu Ch'ing dynasty. After leading his troops north and taking the defunct imperial city, Chiang renamed the city Peiping 北平, 'northern

⁴² Eggleston, 'Australia's View of Pacific Problems', p. 6.

peace' or 'the north pacified'. It was known by this name until the communist revolution of 1949.⁴³

The final triumph of the Northern Expedition came when Chiang won over the 'Young Marshall' Chang Hsueh-liang 張學良, the military leader of the region of northeast China known as Manchuria, who took a stand against the Japanese as they extended their control over the area. 'Chang Hsueh-liang may be justly commended on taking this bold step in deference to popular wishes and in defiance of the imperialist dictates of our island neighbour', declared an editorial in *The China Critic*, a liberal English-language Shanghai news magazine in the new year of 1929, when the Nationalist Blue Sky White Sun flag was raised, for the first time, from southern Kwangtung to Manchuria in the north. The editorial crowed: 'Any cynic who has believed in the impossibility of a united China has only his own face to slap.'⁴⁴ But such optimism was to be short lived.

At about 10:30 on the evening of 18 September 1931, soldiers of the Japanese Army detonated explosives at a railway line near Mukden, the capital of Liaoning province. The Japanese were garrisoned near the city to protect the South Manchuria Railway and other properties that Japan had claimed from Russia following the 1904–1905 war. The army's commanders claimed the attack was the work of Chinese nationalist subversives and, initially without the knowledge of Tokyo, they used it as a pretext to occupy not only Liaoning, but also the provinces of Kirin and Heilungkiang. These three north-eastern Chinese provinces were known in English as Manchuria.

Despite the relative success of the Northern Expedition, Chiang's fear of subversion by the Communist Party that had been in coalition with the Nationalists for years had already led him to order a massacre of hundreds of trade union members and suspected Communist agents in Shanghai and other cities. Key leaders survived the purge — including Mao Tse-tung 毛澤東 and Chou En-lai 周恩來 — and, having fled to the hinterlands, they launched what would become a two-decade-long guerrilla war against the government. So, despite the egregious behaviour of the Japanese, Chiang was not interested in taking action in response to the Mukden Incident; he went so far as to request that Chang Hsueh-liang's forces offer no resistance. The Nationalist leader's priority was to crush communist opposition to his power, that is 'to quell internal rebellion before resisting external threats' 抗外必先安內; it was the beginning of what the historian Jay Taylor calls a 'policy of temporary appeasement [which] was to last six years', until Japan's invasion of China proper in July 1937.⁴⁵ For now, Chiang hoped that the League of Nations would come to China's aid against Japan's occupation of Manchuria.

At China's request, the League dispatched a multinational delegation (made up of representatives from the US, Germany, Italy and France) led by the British Lord Lytton. The delegation visited north China, Manchuria and Japan to assess the situation although, by the time it arrived in Manchuria in mid-1932, the Japanese had already established

⁴³ For a discussion of Nanking as the Republican capital, see Charles Musgrove, *China's Contested Capital: Architecture, Ritual and Response in Nanjing*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013; and, Rudolf Wagner, 'Ritual, Architecture, Politics, and Publicity during the Republic: Enshrining Sun Yat-sen', in Jeffrey Cody, Nancy Steinhart and Tony Atkin, eds, *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts*, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011, pp.223-278.

⁴⁴ 'The National Flag in Manchuria', *The China Critic*, vol.II, no.1 (3 January 1929): 1-2.

⁴⁵ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Belknap Harvard, 2009, p.94.



The Australian Institute of Anatomy in the 1930s. (Courtesy Australian National University Archives)

a puppet state there called Manchukuo. The delegation produced the *Lytton Report*, a document that prevaricated over whether Japan or China had authored the Mukden Incident. The report's 'only bold assertion' was to cast doubt over whether Manchukuo had been established 'by a genuine and spontaneous independence movement' in the region, as the Japanese claimed.⁴⁶

As the League debated Lytton's findings in Geneva in late 1932 and early 1933, smaller member states, including Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Spain — all concerned with the rise of militant fascism on their own borders — urged strong action against what they regarded as overt Japanese aggression in China. France, Great Britain and Italy, by contrast, emphasised the complexity of the situation and urged the League to appease rather than to condemn Japan. Crucially, in the eyes of Britain's representatives, it would have been impossible to impose sanctions against Japan without American support. While the United States had been instrumental in founding the League, it was not itself a member state and had no interest in taking any action. In the end, the League refused to recognise Manchukuo as an independent state, which led Japan to quit the League in protest in 1933. In 1934, the abdicated emperor of the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty, Aisin-Gioro Puyi 愛新覺羅·溥儀, was installed as the Kang-te 康德 Emperor of Manchukuo. The puppet state would survive as long as the Japanese Empire held sway in the region.

⁴⁶ Ruth Henig, *The League of Nations*, London: Haus Publishing, 2010, pp.149-150.



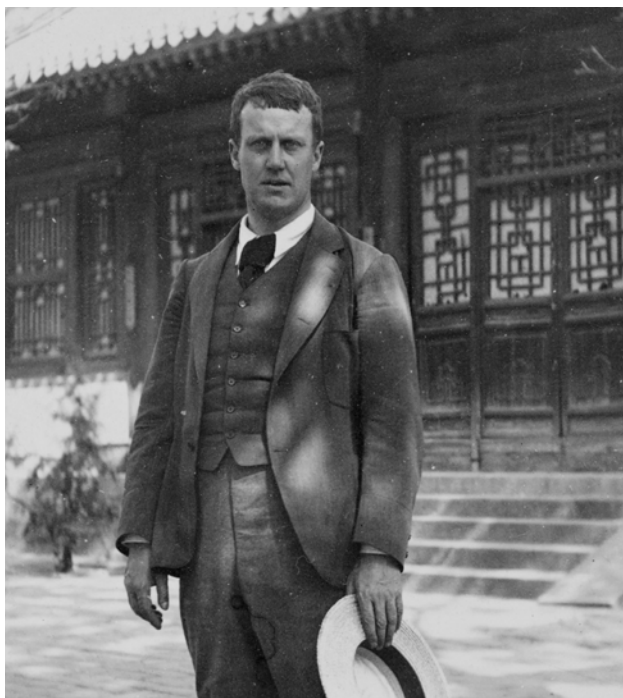
As for China's protestations, a headline that ran in the influential Hearst Press encapsulated the American and to some extent the broader Western reaction to the issue of Japanese aggression in China: 'WE SYMPATHIZE, BUT IT IS NOT OUR CONCERN.'⁴⁷ The diplomat and historian Lachlan Strahan describes a similar reaction among Australians. Despite 'some diffuse popular sympathy in certain quarters' for China's struggle with an aggressive Japan, and regardless of the efforts of organisations like the AIIA to promote a better understanding of the strategic importance of the situation, most Australians — thirty percent of whom were unemployed in 1932 — were apathetic toward events in faraway Manchuria.⁴⁸

Frederic Eggleston was among the small group of public figures who sought to educate Australia about developments in China's northeast, but he too, being convinced that there was no practical policy alternative, advocated a policy of appeasement. To punish Japan with sanctions would, he wrote in 1935, be 'misguided — and ... certainly full of danger to Australia.'⁴⁹ The same year, George Pearce, the former Minister of Defence who had supported the study of Japanese at Duntroon years earlier, described Canberra's position in the following way:

⁴⁷ Richard Bernstein, *China 1945: Mao's Revolution and America's Fateful Choice*, New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2014, p.55.

⁴⁸ Lachlan Strahan, *Australia's China: Changing Perceptions from the 1930s to the 1990s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.21.

⁴⁹ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.180.



Top: Morrison during his early days in Peking, 1894; bottom: Morrison at Wangfuching Road, later also known as 'Morrison Street', c.1910 — the original captions reads: 'Myself and one of the lions at my entrance'. (Courtesy Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

The Government remained suspicious of her [Japan's] ultimate intentions, but with British naval strength reduced below the safety point, and with American aid discounted, there was no policy open to her other than trying to be friendly with Japan and to give her no excuse to adopt an aggressive policy *vis-à-vis* the Commonwealth, and to rejoice (irrespective of the moral aspect) every time Japan advanced more deeply into Manchukuo and North China.⁵⁰

Years later, John Powell, a Shanghai-born American journalist who covered the Sino-Japanese War during the 1930s and 1940s, was more blunt in his assessment: the Mukden Incident marked the 'real beginning of the Second World War'.⁵¹

GEORGE E MORRISON IN CHINA AND AUSTRALIA

In the early 1930s, Canberra was only just beginning to assume its official role as the capital of Australia. It was a city of under ten thousand people, and sheep grazed near the steps of the recently opened Parliament House. In their winning design for the city, Canberra's American planners, Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, had nominated a site for a future national university. They had chosen a parcel of land, what they called 'a situation of gentle undulation' at the foot of Black Mountain, which they anticipated would become the city's most picturesque location.⁵² The story of China and The Australian National University, the theme of the present work, starts nearby at the Australian Institute of Anatomy (now the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia).

The Institute was opened to the public in 1931 and soon became known as the home of the preserved heart of the celebrated racehorse Phar Lap, and a skull alleged to be that of the bushranger Ned Kelly. In the 1930s, the Institute was nothing less than a 'de facto national museum' and 'the centre of much of the town's cultural life'.⁵³ The city's only tertiary institution, Canberra University College, held classes at the Institute; literary and artistic societies also met there, sharing rooms with platypus and Tasmanian tiger specimens preserved in jars of formaldehyde. The Institute hardly seemed to be the likely focus for a campaign to raise Australian awareness of China's struggle with Japan. But, as William Joseph Liu 劉光福, an Australian-Chinese businessman and community leader from Sydney, tells it, this is exactly what happened when he visited Colin MacKenzie, the Institute of Anatomy's first Director, at the time of the Mukden Incident. 'I'm always glad that I went down to Canberra in September, 1931,' Liu wrote:

⁵⁰ Quoted in John Connor, *Anzac and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p.164.

⁵¹ John Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, New York: Macmillan, 1945, p.192.

⁵² Stephen Foster and Margaret Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996, p.5.

⁵³ Benjamin Penny, 'The Early Days of the Morrison Lecture', *East Asian History*, no.34 (December 2007): 1-6, quotation at p.2.



The three founders of the George E Morrison Lecture in Ethnology: Colin MacKenzie, 1932 (Courtesy National Museum of Australia); William Liu, 1922 (from CF Yong, *The New Gold Mountain: the Chinese in Australia*, 1977); and, William Ah Ket, date unknown (from *East Asian History*, no.34, December 2007)

We met by accident Sir Colin MacKenzie, the world-famed anatomist. ... Naturally we talked of China. Sir Colin's dream had been the founding of a lectureship in memory of [George] Morrison. Sir Colin graciously gave his patronage to the Sino-Australian movement, and the Chinese community in Australia did the rest. This movement will grow.⁵⁴

George Ernest Morrison was an adventurer, doctor and journalist from Geelong, Victoria. After studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh and travelling in Europe and America, Morrison arrived in Shanghai at the age of thirty-one to embark on a five thousand-kilometre trek to the Burmese border — a journey vividly recounted in his first book, *An Australian in China* (1895).

As the first China correspondent for the London *Times* during the years 1897–1912, he witnessed, and at times played an active role in, some of the most crucial events to shape modern China: the Boxer Rebellion, the decline and collapse of the Ch'ing dynasty and the rise of Japan as a challenge both to Russian and to British power. After the Republic of China was established in early 1912, Morrison served as a political advisor to its first president, Yuan Shih-k'ai 袁世凱. Such was his influence that he was dubbed 'Morrison of Peking' or, in Australia, 'Chinese Morrison.' The bustling commercial promenade of Wangfuching 王府井, the street on which he lived, was for much of the Republican period known as 'Morrison Street', a testament to his prominence and influence in the old imperial capital. The studio which once housed his extensive library survived until 2007, when it was unceremoniously demolished in preparation for the 2008 summer Olympic Games.⁵⁵

Morrison rose to prominence in 1898 after publishing a secret Russian ultimatum that demanded that the imperial Chinese government lease Port Arthur (now part of the city of Dalian) to the Tsar. At the time, the British authorities paid little heed to this seemingly obscure, and possibly dubious, ultimatum and, writes Cyril Pearl, Morrison '[risked] his reputation on the truth of an uncorroborated report' when the *Times* ran his story on 25 March that year. But then:

On 27th March the Port Arthur convention, giving Russia everything she had demanded, was signed in Peking. When the House [of Commons] met, two days later, Mr J. Dillon

⁵⁴ John Sleeman, *White China: An Austral-Asian Sensation*, Sydney: Alert Publishing, 1933, pp.341-342. *White China* was one of five books and pamphlets that Liu produced in collaboration with the independent Sydney publisher John Sleeman to promote trade with China and to raise awareness about the Manchurian crisis. The others were: *The Trouble in Manchuria — and What it Means to the World* (1931); *An Appreciation, addressed to John Sleeman* (1933); *Bowden-Liu Communications* (1936); and, *Chinese are Sports in the Matter of Sino-Aussie Relations* (1936). Liu praised his collaborator as a friend of China, but Sleeman's pen was also for hire by competitors. He was later paid by the Japanese Mitsubishi corporation to write an anti-*White China* tract, *Japan and Australia: Canberra's Calamitous Attack on Australian Prosperity*, in which he condemned the prospects for Australian trade with China and urged stronger ties with Japan. See Sophie Loy-Wilson, 'Peanuts and Publicists: "Letting Australian Friends Know the Chinese Side of the Story" in Interwar Sydney', *History Australia*, vol.6, no.1 (2009): 6.1-6.20.

⁵⁵ See Claire Roberts, 'George E. Morrison's Studio and Library', *China Heritage Quarterly*, no.13 (March 2008), online at: http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=013_morrison.inc&issue=013.

(Mayo E.) put a question to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: 'I beg to ask ... if he can explain how it is that *The Times* correspondent in Peking has been able on several occasions recently to publish facts of the utmost public importance several days before the Foreign Office had obtained any information in reference to them?'⁵⁶

Morrison 'had been an early admirer of Japan, and found little to quarrel with until after the defeat of Russia in 1905', wrote the historian CP FitzGerald, a figure who will feature prominently below. 'Then gradually he came to see that, as the Chinese put it, "the tiger was driven out by the front gate, while the wolf was admitted by the back gate". Japan was going to be worse than Russia.'⁵⁷ Eleven years after his death in 1920, the Mukden Incident corroborated Morrison's prescience. George Morrison was by far the most influential Australian involved in Chinese affairs during the early twentieth century and there could not have been a better namesake for a lectureship aimed at raising awareness of the country's present struggle.

On 7 October 1931, shortly after their first meeting in the national capital, Colin MacKenzie wrote to William Liu with the following proposal:

The Australian Institute of Anatomy has been founded by the Commonwealth Government for the advancement of medical science and can be regarded as the first unit of the National University of Australia. ... At the present time relationships between Australia and the East, and especially China, are the subject of increasing attention, and ... the cultural aspect is as important as the commercial. A great Australian, the late Dr. Morrison, laboured hard in the interests of China, and I am venturing to suggest the foundation of a Lectureship in his memory to be delivered in the Lecture Theatre of the Institute of Anatomy annually on the subject of Ethnology. If such were founded by Chinese citizens it would be a remarkable gesture of scientific friendship from China to Australia, and especially if the first lecture were delivered by the Consul-General of China.⁵⁸

Thereupon, Liu and MacKenzie contacted William Ah Ket 麥錫祥, a barrister at the Victorian Supreme Court, to enlist his help in raising funds for the lectureship within the Melbourne Chinese community. MacKenzie himself made the first donation of £10 and, by mid-January 1932, the group had raised an endowment of £402 pounds (the equivalent of \$34,000 in today's currency).⁵⁹ A permanent committee was established to select a

⁵⁶ Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1967, pp.97-98. The quotation refers to John Dillon, the representative of what was then the British parliamentary constituency of East Mayo, in Ireland.

⁵⁷ CP FitzGerald, 'Dr. George Morrison and his Correspondence: An Appreciation', in Lo Hui-min, ed., *The Correspondence of GE Morrison, Volume 1: 1895-1912*, Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp.x-xi, online at: <http://chinainstitute.anu.edu.au/morrison/appreciation.php>.

⁵⁸ Letter, MacKenzie to Liu, 7 October 1931, cited in full with further discussion in Benjamin Penny, 'The Early Days of the Morrison Lecture', pp.3-4.

⁵⁹ Letter, MacKenzie to JHL Cumpston (Director General, Department of Health), 19 January 1932; and, JHL Cumpston, 'Memorandum: Endowment for Morrison Lectureship', 22 January 1932, NAA A1658, 151/1/14.

suitable speaker each year that consisted of the Commonwealth Minister for Health, the Director of the Australian Institute of Anatomy, William Ah Ket, William Liu and the Chinese Consul-General in Sydney, Wei-ping Chen 陳維屏.⁶⁰

The announcement in early 1932 of the lectureship made a splash in the Australian press and abroad, with reports in the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong, as well as in China. William Liu, who was visiting Shanghai on business at the time of the announcement, modestly told the *North China Daily News* 'that actually he took a very insignificant part in the matter [of the Lectureship]'; crediting it 'in the main to the great enthusiasm of Sir Colin Mackenzie'.⁶¹ Liu also spoke to *The China Critic*, a popular English-language weekly magazine produced in Shanghai by some of China's leading intellectuals, including Hu Shih 胡適, Lin Yutang 林語堂 and Quentin Pan 潘光旦. *The Critic* lauded the Morrison Lectureship as meeting the 'urgent need of a better understanding between Chinese and other nations of the world'.⁶²

Beginning with Wei-ping Chen's inaugural oration in May 1932, for the first ten years of the George E Morrison Lectures in Ethnology, as the annual talk was formally known, invited speakers tended to discuss politically neutral aspects of Chinese culture and history. William Liu later remarked that Chun-jien Pao 保君健, Chen's successor as Consul-General, had 'always been most emphatic that the Morrison orator should refrain from discussing politics'.⁶³ Chen, who had known Morrison in China, concluded the inaugural lecture by expressing an 'earnest hope that the Australian people will extend to my countrymen sympathy and trust and that the great nation of China may be united with the great Anglo-Saxon race to preserve the peace of the world'. Pao, who delivered the sixth lecture under the title *China Today: with Special Reference to Higher Education* on 4 May 1937, declared that: 'it is only through mutual co-operation that world prosperity can be attained and international peace assured'.⁶⁴ Within months, it would become impossible for anyone speaking about China to maintain such a tone of studied neutrality.

THE 'NEAR NORTH'

On 7 July 1937, the Japanese used a military clash between their forces and those of the Chinese Republican government stationed at Lukouchiao 盧溝橋, known in English as Marco Polo Bridge, to the southwest of Peiping, as a pretext to invade China proper. By August, the Japanese Imperial Army had reached Shanghai and, in December, it marched through the city gates of the Chinese capital, Nanking. Over the following weeks,

⁶⁰ Memorandum: The George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology', 12 May 1932, NAA A1658, 151/1/14.

⁶¹ Tribute to Dr. Morrison: Chinese Memorial to Great Australian, Advancement of Cultural Ties', *North China Daily News*, 29 February 1932, ML MSS6924/5.

⁶² 'Dr. GE Morrison Lectureship', *The China Critic*, vol.V, no.11 (17 March 1932): 245-246.

⁶³ Letter, Liu to FW Clements (Director, Australian Institute of Anatomy), 30 January 1941, ML MSS6294/5.

⁶⁴ WP Chen, *The Objects of the Foundation of the Lectureship, and a Review of Dr. Morrison's Life in China*, 10 May 1932; Chun-jien Pao, *China Today: with Special Reference to Higher Education*, 4 May 1937, both reproduced in *East Asian History*, no.34 (December 2007), available online: <http://www.eastasianhistory.org/34>.



Top: Cartoon of 'Pig-Iron Bob' (from Len Fox, *Australia's Guilty Men*, Sydney: NSW State Labor Party, 1943, p.6); bottom: Fu Ying 傅莹, Chinese Ambassador to Australia (2004-2007), unveiling a plaque commemorating what is known as the 'Dalfram dispute', Port Kembla, 4 December 2006. (From *Illawarra Unity*, vol.7, no.92 [October 2007]: 48)

the invaders massacred hundreds of thousands of civilians in that city alone — an atrocity which soon became known as the 'Rape of Nanking'.⁶⁵

In Australia, the Lyons government and the Labor opposition continued to support a policy of appeasement towards Japan, but widespread public outrage welled up as news of the Rape was reported in the Australian press in early 1938. Church groups and university students staged protests, while at major ports in Fremantle, Melbourne, Geelong and Sydney waterside workers launched strikes, embargoes and industrial actions directed against Japanese exports. The most famous of these disputes occurred in November 1938 when members of the Waterside Worker's Federation at Port Kembla, New South Wales, refused to load more than 200,000 tons of scrap iron bound for Japan. Canberra was unmoved. In the words of the Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons: 'the government cannot permit any section to usurp its functions. It is the responsibility of the government to determine what attitude shall be adopted to the Sino-Japanese dispute.'⁶⁶ Robert Menzies, then Attorney-General, invoked the *Transport Workers Act* to compel the watersiders to load the iron and to prevent additional union groups from joining their strike. Public sentiment was overwhelmingly against the government on this issue, and Menzies' tough stance earned him the nickname 'Pig-Iron Bob'.

It was Menzies who also presided over the establishment of Australia's first diplomatic legations. In November 1937, Italy joined Japan and Nazi Germany's 'Anti-Comintern Pact' against the Soviet Union, which looked increasingly to be more than just a memorandum of understanding between three powers with a common hatred of Communism. A war on two fronts appeared imminent when, less than one year later, the German Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler annexed the Sudetenland in northern Czechoslovakia. Following the death of Joseph Lyons, Menzies was sworn in as prime minister on 26 April 1939. 'Little given as I am', Menzies declared in his inauguration speech, 'to encouraging the exaggerated ideas of Dominion independence and separatism which exist in some minds', he nonetheless made the case for an important shift in Australian foreign policy. While Australia's interests should still be 'guided by [Britain's] knowledge and affected by her decisions' with regard to European affairs, Menzies declared that:

The problems of the Pacific are different. What Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near north. ... I have become convinced that, in the Pacific, Australia must regard herself as a principal providing herself with her own information and

⁶⁵ The Rape of Nanking remains perhaps the most contentious historical issue between China and Japan. The government of the People's Republic of China declares that some 300,000 people were killed during December 1937 and early 1938, and Japan is frequently charged with denying or downplaying the extent of the atrocity. The most widely-known and sensational study among English and Chinese readers is Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanking*, New York: Basic Books, 1997. Chang's work is endorsed by the Memorial Hall for Compatriots Killed in the Nanking Massacre by Japanese Forces of Aggression 侵華日軍南京大屠殺遇難同胞紀念館 in Nanking. For a more nuanced and critical study of the Rape, and the historical debates that surround it, see Joshua Fogel, ed., *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

⁶⁶ Shannon Smith, 'Towards Diplomatic Representation', p.91. See also Derek McDougall, 'The Australian Labour Movement and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939', *Labour History*, no.33 (November 1977): 39-52.

maintaining her own diplomatic contacts with foreign Powers. I do not mean by this that we are to act in the Pacific as if we were a completely separate Power; we must, of course, act as an integral part of the British Empire.⁶⁷

In June 1939, SH Roberts, Challis Chair of History at the University of Sydney, delivered the Eighth Morrison Lecture, *The Gifts of the Old China to the New*. Menzies was in the audience. The speaker echoed the new prime minister's concern for 'the exchange of more real information between Australia and China, instead of political speeches and details of hostilities' — an ongoing concern to this day. He appealed for Commonwealth aid 'to provide facilities for Chinese Studies, as were provided for Japanese Studies at the University of Sydney'. At the end of the oration Chun-jien Pao, the Chinese Consul-General, moved the vote of thanks. If the suggested exchange of 'real information' meant the exchange of diplomatic representatives, Pao said that this would make 'existing cordial Sino-Australia relations' even closer and 'form the key to the future of the world which depends upon the understanding of China'.⁶⁸

In January 1940, Canberra announced that Richard Casey, a senior politician and diplomat, would head Australia's first overseas legation, to be established in Washington DC. Writing in the *Adelaide Chronicle*, Roy Curthoys predicted the imminent appointment of an Australian minister to Japan as well. Curthoys noted that: 'Australians see the Pacific through different eyes from those who have learned their geography out of text books written in the Northern Hemisphere.' He repeated Menzies' phrase, the 'Near North'.⁶⁹

John Latham, the head of the 1934 Australian Eastern Mission, was the logical candidate for the Tokyo post. But a federal election, due to be held in September 1940, delayed his appointment. Then, on 27 September, Japan signed a Tripartite Pact of Nonaggression with the fascist states of Italy and Germany. The British High Commission in Canberra argued that: 'the moment when Japan has signed a political, economic and military alliance with the axis powers' was not 'a suitable moment for so distinguished an Australian [as Latham] to go to Tokyo'.⁷⁰ The government ignored the protests of the British and despatched Latham to the Japanese capital regardless. His presence, argued Menzies, would bolster 'anti-Axis diplomatic representation in Tokyo'.⁷¹ In January the following year, the Department of External Affairs decided that it was also time to appoint an envoy to Chiang Kai-shek's government in its wartime capital of Chungking. In a submission to Cabinet the Department argued that:

⁶⁷ 'Ministry's Policy: Broadcast by Mr Menzies', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1939, p.9.

⁶⁸ SH Roberts, 'The Gifts of the Old China to the New', *East Asian History*, no.34 (December 2007): 113-114, online at: <http://eah.anu.edu.au/34>.

⁶⁹ Roy Curthoys, 'Australia's Role in the Pacific: Ministers for Washington and Tokio', *The Chronicle* (Adelaide), 25 January 1940, p.47.

⁷⁰ Letter, RR Sedgewick (Official Secretary, UK High Commission in Australia) to F Strahan (Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, Canberra), 30 October 1940, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy, 1937-1939, vol.IV: July 1940-June 1941*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1980, p.239.

⁷¹ Letter, Strahan to Sedgewick, 1 November 1940, *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, pp.241-242.



Chun-jien Pao, Chinese Consul-General to Australia (1936-1941), with his wife at an exhibition of Chinese antiques, Sydney, 28 August 1937. (Courtesy Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

Establishment of a Legation [in China] at a most unfavourable time and when few reciprocal material benefits can result, will probably create a profound impression on Chinese minds, and have incalculable consequences in our future relations. ... To this end, it might well be regarded as a very valuable insurance premium.⁷²

Frederic Eggleston's appointment to Chungking came on 7 July 1941. It was four years to the day since the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which precipitated the Sino-Japanese War. One week earlier, the Axis powers had formally recognised the 'Reorganised Government' in Nanking, a Japanese puppet regime headed by the collaborator Wang Ching-wei 汪精衛; immediately thereafter Chiang Kai-shek's Republican government severed its ties with both Berlin and Rome.⁷³ Chun-jien Pao wrote to congratulate Eggleston on his appointment and welcomed a 'new era in the history of our two nations in the Pacific. ... We are very happy, too, to know that Australia has appointed you who is an authority on Pacific affairs, to be the First Minister accredited to my country. Your arrival there will meet with a genuine warm reception.'⁷⁴

In an address to Melbourne's Constitutional Club shortly before his departure, Eggleston claimed that China 'held the key' to peace in the Pacific. Australia had been 'too negligent toward the Chinese in the past'. The country had just entered its fifth year of war against Japan and, while 'dispositions in this war are moving nearer and nearer to Australia', Eggleston stated that he had 'not seen sufficient recognition of that fact in [the Australian] community'. His language may well have gone beyond what was expected of a newly appointed diplomat when he charged that: 'I have been told that I will be in danger of bombs in Chungking,

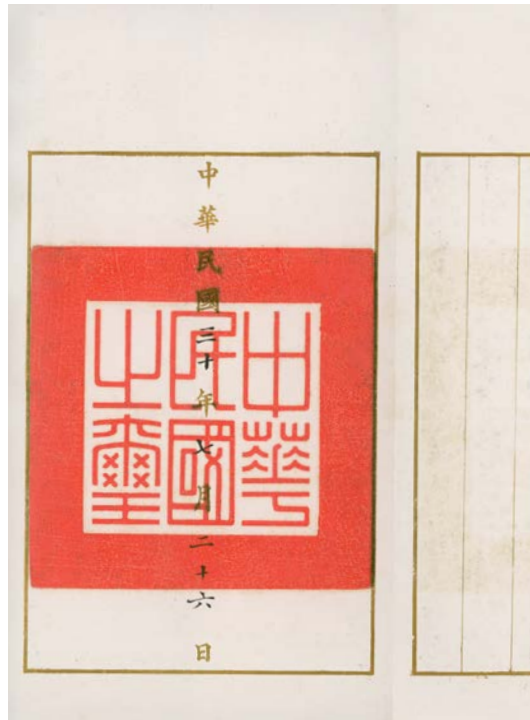
⁷² Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.203.

⁷³ 'China and Australia', *The Canberra Times*, 8 July 1941, p.2.

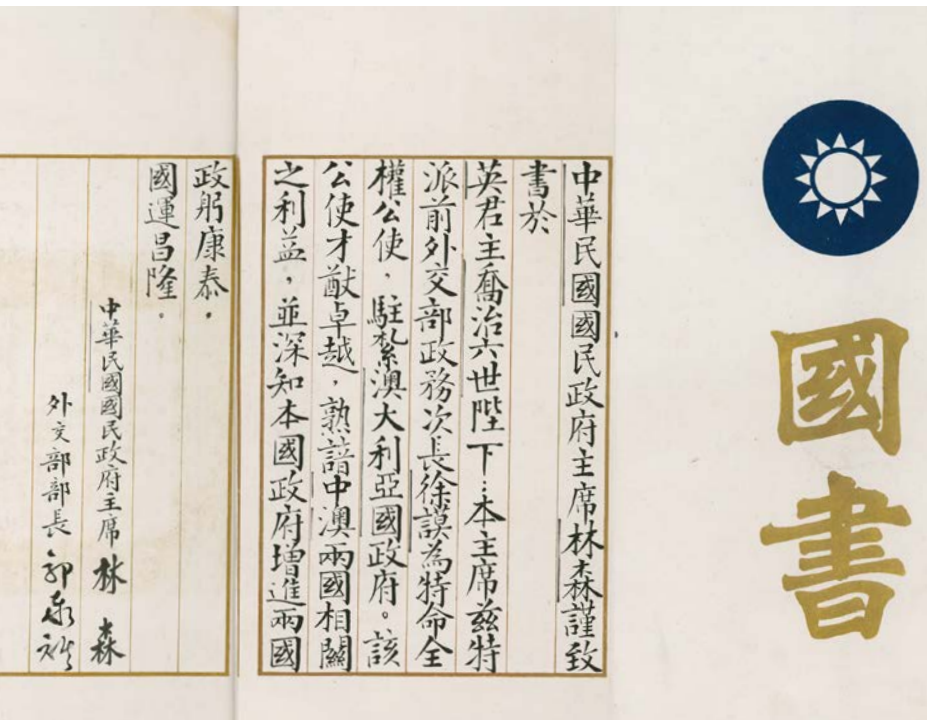
⁷⁴ Letter, Pao to Eggleston, 11 July 1941, NLA MS423/9/12-13.

Hsu Mo's Letter of Credence, bearing the signatures of Lin Sen 林森, President of the Republic China, and Foreign Minister Kuo Tai-chi 郭泰祺, 26 July 1941. (Courtesy National Archives of Australia)

Hsu Mo was the first minister of the Republic of China posted to Australia. Born in Soochow in 1893, Hsu attended middle school in Shanghai. In 1916, he graduated with a Bachelor of Law from Peiyang University, Tientsin. After serving as Secretary to the Chinese Legation in Washington DC, he earned his Master of Laws from George Washington University in 1922. Among China's leading legal scholars and practitioners, Hsu was made Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1931. After his posting to Australia, Hsu served as China's ambassador to Turkey. In 1945, he was a member of the Chinese delegation to the United Nations Committee of Jurists appointed to establish the International Court of Justice. He died in 1956 at The Hague while serving on the International Court.



Portrait Sketch of Dr. Hsu Mo by Charles Wheeler, pastel and colour on paper, 1943. Born in New Zealand, Wheeler was a successful academic painter based in Melbourne, and winner of the 1933 Archibald Prize. This sketch was published in *The Australian* magazine, 20 October 1943. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)



but I prefer those bombs to the stink bombs of Australian politics.⁷⁵ His comments provoked criticism from Charles Morgan, the Labor member for Reid, in Sydney, who questioned Prime Minister Menzies as to whether he approved of 'diplomatic representatives of this country making such statements?' Menzies responded that Eggleston's sentiment was 'one that finds a ready echo in my mind.'⁷⁶

Frederic Eggleston left for Chungking in early September 1941, and a fortnight later China's first minister to Australia, Hsu Mo 徐謨, arrived in Sydney to a grand public welcome led by a delighted CJ Pao and crowds of local Chinese waving the flag of the Republic of China.⁷⁷ Hsu, a former vice-minister for Foreign Affairs and senior jurist, told reporters that China and Australia were 'in the same hemisphere, and to a great extent we share the same perils.'⁷⁸

⁷⁵ 'Peace in Pacific: China Holds Key', *The Canberra Times*, 5 August 1941, p.2; and, 'Dangers in the Pacific', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 5 August 1941, p.3.

⁷⁶ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.206.

⁷⁷ 'Arrival of Chinese Minister and Party', NAA A2880, 6/19/3.

⁷⁸ 'Dr. Hsu Mo a "Hustler": Will Begin Work at Once', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 September 1941, p.4; and, 'China's Tribute to Australia', *The Argus*, 17 September 1941, p.4.

CHAPTER 2

DIPLOMAT AND SCHOLAR: FREDERIC EGGLESTON IN CHUNGKING AND CANBERRA, 1941–1946

Frederic Eggleston was a widower of sixty-seven when he arrived in Chungking on 21 October 1941. After a day's flying from Rangoon, Burma, with a stopover in Kunming, he glimpsed the dim lights of China's wartime capital as his aeroplane approached, circled in descent and touched down at 8:00 in the evening at the city's main aerodrome, a facility built on a tiny islet in the middle of the Yangtze River. The scholar turned diplomat, who suffered from gout that periodically left him immobile, eased himself into a wicker chair that had been arranged for him in the middle of the dusty tarmac, where, he wrote, 'photographers blazed at me and at our group for about a quarter of an hour.' He made a short speech to the gathered members of the Chinese and foreign press before embarking on a launch for the city. There, he was helped into a sedan chair, which he self-deprecatingly took to calling his 'perambulator':

This was an extraordinary contrivance — not at all my idea of what a chair should be. It was a basketware chair between two long bamboo poles but it was fixed — there was no play for the chair and when we went uphill I was leaning back almost parallel to the ground.⁷⁹



Eggleston in his 'perambulator', Chungking, 1941. (Courtesy Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

⁷⁹ 'Diary of Sir FW Eggleston, 21 Oct 41–30 Oct 41', pp.55-56, NLA MS423/1.



Wooden houses crowd the steep slopes of downtown Chungking, c.1945. (Photograph by Barry Hall, courtesy Diana Hall)

Perched on a steeply hilled peninsula where the Yangtze and Chialing rivers meet, Chungking presented constant challenges for the Australian Minister. By the time of Eggleston's arrival, refugees from east China had swelled the city's population from a pre-war level of 475,000 to more than 700,000, many of whom lived in densely-packed, riverside hovels rife with disease and malnutrition. 'Wartime accounts of journeys into Chungking typically describe a sense of despair and horror provoked by the visitor's initial view of the working-class districts along the shore,' writes Lee Mclsaac in his study of modern Chungking, reactions which 'sharply contrast with the delight and relief experienced as the traveler reached the modern district at the top of the hill.' One refugee from Shanghai described the Upper City as being 'as different from the riverfront as heaven is from earth'.⁸⁰

Eggleston certainly shared such sentiments. When he first saw the city's downtown districts, he declared Chungking to be 'outside of civilization as we know it'.⁸¹ Upon reaching what was known as the Upper City, the more salubrious areas of town in its west, where the Australian

⁸⁰ Lee Mclsaac, 'The City as Nation: Creating a Wartime Capital in Chongqing', in Joseph Escherick, ed., *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000, p.186.

⁸¹ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.209.

Legation was located, he wrote in his diary: 'At last we got down on to the motor road — quite a fair stone road — and after going a fair way began to climb out of it into a part with some nice houses and gardens. The houses were quite big of Chinese dark grey bricks. It seemed like a kind of Toorak'⁸²

Although the invading Japanese army never reached Chungking, its air force had bombed the city relentlessly since the Nationalist government's retreat from Nanking in 1938. *The Australasian* magazine published a double-page illustrated feature on the city with photos depicting an anti-aircraft warning system, civilians huddling in caves fitted out as air-raid shelters and panoramas of a smouldering waterfront. 'Sir Frederic,' the paper commented, 'goes to what even Londoners would admit is a real wartime capital.'⁸³ But, by the time Eggleston arrived in the Republic of China, the Japanese were concentrating their forces on driving further into Southeast Asia, and would very soon be engaged more widely across the Pacific. Keith Waller, the Australian Legation's First Secretary, recalled that now 'the bombing attacks, which had been such a feature of life in Chungking and had made physical conditions so unbearable ... virtually ceased.' The Australians experienced only 'four or five' small raids between late 1941 and March 1944, when they returned home — the first did not come until August 1943, and it marked 'the first time', Eggleston wrote in his diary, that 'I have seen a shot fired in anger.'⁸⁴

LEFT IN THE KITCHEN PIANO

On 7 December 1941, less than two months after Eggleston arrived in Chungking, Japan's sudden attack on US naval forces at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii drew the Allied powers overnight into China's now four-year war of resistance. Still, the new alliance was tenuous.

In *Two Kinds of Time*, a memoir about his work for the US Ministry of Information during the war, Graham Peck recalled the mistrust and cynicism in China that followed Pearl Harbor. While 'the rest of the Allied world looked toward [China] with respectful admiration' and praised Chiang Kai-shek as being the noble equal of Roosevelt and Churchill, a 'strange snarling gaiety' swept over Chungking itself as the Chinese people reacted to America's entry into the war: 'A most dreaded event had taken place — China was now encircled from Siberia to India — but the worst had happened to somebody else.'⁸⁵

Chiang Kai-shek, who had converted to Methodism in 1927 so as to marry Soong May-ling 宋美齡, celebrated Pearl Harbor by listening to 'Ave Maria' on his gramophone out of sheer joy. In Washington, President Roosevelt advised Hu Shih, China's Ambassador to the United States, to tell his countrymen to refrain from 'noisy' celebration and show more tactful

⁸² 'Diary of Sir FW Eggleston, 21 Oct 41–30 Oct 41', p.59. Toorak, in Melbourne, was in Eggleston's time, and remains today, one of Australia's most affluent suburbs.

⁸³ Noel Goss, 'Journey to Chungking: Australia Recognises the Spirit of New China', *The Australasian*, 9 August 1941, pp.12-13.

⁸⁴ Keith Waller, *A Diplomatic Life: Some Memories*, Nathan (Queensland): Griffith University Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, 1990, p.13; and, 'Diary of Sir FW Eggleston', p.4, NLA MS423/9/1192.

⁸⁵ Graham Peck, *Two Kinds of Time*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950, p.380.

sympathy for American losses.⁸⁶ Such disharmony between China and its Western allies — and between the British and Americans themselves — hampered the war effort against Japan. It was the dominant theme of the almost two hundred diplomatic despatches that Frederic Eggleston sent back to Canberra.

Pearl Harbor was soon followed by the fall of Hong Kong and Singapore to the advancing Japanese. Eggleston wrote that the loss of these colonies was a 'severe shock to Chinese faith in British invincibility' and resulted in a 'brisk recrudescence of the Anglophobia which has always characterised certain sections of the [Chinese] community'. He predicted that such Anglophobia could, in the midst of constant Japanese appeals to broker a truce with the Nationalist government, lead 'to China deserting the Allies'.⁸⁷

The Australian Minister understood why so many Chinese people he encountered were suspicious of Westerners, especially the British. It had been a century since the end of the Opium War fought between Great Britain and the Ch'ing dynasty, yet the pernicious 'extraterritoriality' laws initiated with the signing of the 1842 Treaty of Nanking were still in place. Eggleston wrote that repealing extraterritoriality had been the most 'outstanding diplomatic question' during his time in Chungking.⁸⁸ Even though a series of abrogation treaties were concluded in 1943, many Chinese remained wary of Western intentions. Their suspicions were exacerbated by a feeling (one with which Eggleston sympathised) that China's allies viewed their war against Japan with much less gravity than that of Britain and America's against Germany.

Britain and the United States dominated allied war strategy, and their approach was to 'beat Hitler first': to concentrate on winning the war in Europe while fighting a defensive war in the Pacific. It was a strategy with which Eggleston fundamentally disagreed. Writing to Stanley Bruce and Owen Dixon, Australia's representatives in London and Washington respectively, he said despairingly that: 'we in this part of the world are continually beset by the deepest anxiety that the apparent preoccupation in London with European affairs has led to the Pacific and the Far East generally being neglected.' He urged Bruce and Dixon to represent more forcefully what he called a 'Pacific view' of the war in the allied capitals, adding that 'Churchill is to blame' for what he perceived to be a pervading lack of attention to the region.⁸⁹

Eggleston had loathed the British prime minister for nearly three decades. In 1914, he had accused Churchill, who was then the First Lord of the Admiralty, of being 'fallacious and self-serving' when he ordered the British navy to withdraw from the Pacific to confront Germany (and called on Australia to contribute its own ships as well). 'A policy which disregards the Pacific, or leaves it to Japan', he then argued, 'cannot be regarded as a truly Imperial policy'.⁹⁰ Now, he found Churchill's disregard of the Pacific War to be extremely detrimental to Chinese morale. In

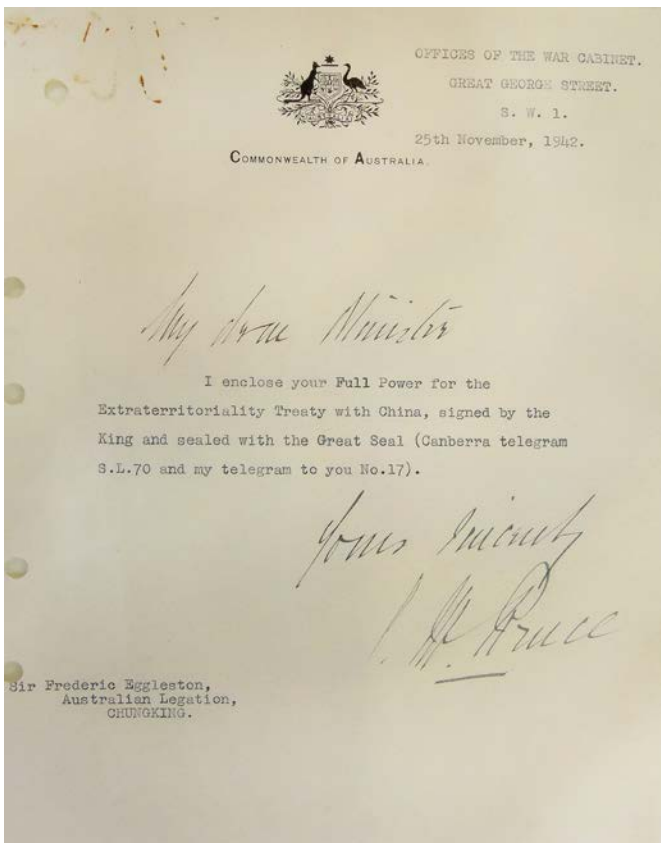
⁸⁶ Rana Mitter, *China's War with Japan, 1937-1945*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p.242.

⁸⁷ Despatch no.18, 'Surrender of Singapore', 3 March 1942, pp.1 and 3, NAA A4231, 1941/1942/NANKING.

⁸⁸ Despatch no.8, 'General Work of Post', 8 February 1944, p.1, NAA A4231, 1944/NANKING.

⁸⁹ Letter, Eggleston to Bruce, 7 July 1942, NAA A4144, 608/1943. Eggleston included a copy of a letter date 4 July to Owen Dixon in this correspondence.

⁹⁰ Neville Meaney, 'Frederic Eggleston on International Relations and Australia's Role in the World', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol.51, no.3 (2005): 359-371, at p.368.



Top: Eggleston presenting his diplomatic credentials to Lin Sen, President of the Republic of China, and Foreign Minister Kuo Tai-chi, Chungking, 30 October 1941 (Central News Agency, Taipei); bottom: letter from Stanley Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner in London, enclosing Eggleston's full powers to sign the Extraterritoriality Treaty with China, 25 November 1942. (Courtesy National Archives Australia)

early 1943, after Churchill spoke in a radio broadcast of the need for the 'partial demobilisation [of British forces] following the defeat of Hitler', Eggleston wrote furiously to Canberra:

It must be rare for any one speech by a public man to have in it so many things which would give offence to an ally. ... We have been striving to build up the belief that Britain and the British countries are interested in China and sympathetic with her difficulties and a speech of this kind undoes, in a few moments, the work of months.⁹¹

The corollary of 'beating Hitler first' was 'keeping China in the war', something to be achieved by supplying as much military aid and technical expertise to the Nationalist government as possible. Eggleston believed this to be essential, and that the recapture of British Burma, followed by a land offensive launched from Burma reaching across China was the best course of action for the Allies to take against Japan.

A belief in this strategy informed his admiration for Joseph ('Vinegar Joe') Stilwell, the American general in charge of US operations in the China-Burma-India theatre. When the British colony of Burma fell to the Japanese in 1942, Stilwell had led an allied retreat through the Burmese jungle to India, marching at a pace known as the 'Stilwell stride' — 105 paces per minute.⁹² Among the allied leaders in China, Stilwell was the main advocate for recapturing Burma. While Eggleston found that some US diplomats were prone to 'flattering China in public while forming the worst opinions of [the country] behind the scenes', Joseph Stilwell was, by contrast, a man of 'tough talk and no side'.⁹³ Eggleston held a generally higher opinion of Americans whom he thought of as being 'Pacific-minded' — men like Stilwell and John Fairbank, the first teacher of Chinese history at Harvard University — than the British, a fact reflected in a diary entry in early 1943:

We are getting quite friendly with a lot of Americans. General Stilwell [*sic*] I like very much. We are going to dinner there tomorrow night. Also a man named Fairbank, a Harvard man. They all strike me as exceedingly competent; their education seems to me to fit them much better for public affairs ... and they are more constantly on the job. The British Secretary [who Eggleston

⁹¹ Despatch no.77, 'Churchill's Speech', 31 March 1943, p.1, NAA A4231, 1943/NANKING PART 2. Churchill's 21 March 1943 speech was titled 'Postwar Planning', see Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963*, London: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974, vol.VII, pp.6755-6765. Later, when visiting India, Eggleston's First Secretary, Keith Waller, reported a pervading belief in British diplomatic circles there 'that it was not necessary or perhaps desirable to defeat Japan, because a relatively strong Japan was needed in the Pacific as a balance to China and Russia' — in other words, this signalled a return to the strategy of appeasing the stronger power. This was 'a most dangerous doctrine for Australia', Eggleston reflected. 'British people do not live in the Pacific area in great numbers and Britain may therefore be prepared to trust another power to play a part in maintaining the balance in the Far East. But Australians live in the Pacific and their destiny is to be decided there.' See Despatch no.81, 'British Attitude to China and Japan', 21 April 1943, NAA A4231/1943/NANKING PART 2, pp.1-2.

⁹² For an account of Stilwell's career in China, see Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945*, New York: Macmillan, 1971.

⁹³ Despatch no.15, 'General Situation', 29 February 1944, p.2, NAA A4231/1944/NANKING; and, Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.215.

described as 'a fine-looking chattering ass of a First Secretary named BG who generally manages to say something completely tactless'] will spend his spare time reading *Clarissa Harlowe*, not thinking about peace time or the economy of Java.⁹⁴

Unlike most other diplomats in wartime Chungking, Eggleston did spend a great deal of time pondering issues like the economy of Java and the Pacific after the war. His main duty was to report on developments in the Sino-Japanese conflict and on Chinese politics. But, from mid-1942, he wrote a number of despatches to Canberra in which he contemplated the necessity of a just, productive peace settlement and the likely shape of the post-war regional order. At ninety pages in length 'The Outlines of a Constructive Peace in the Pacific' (his Despatch no.66), which he submitted to the Department of External Affairs in February 1943, was the magnum opus of Eggleston's Chungking despatches. It was a crystallisation of his thinking on international relations at a time of enormous change in the regional order.⁹⁵

In his overview of the post-war order, he had the following to say about the potential and limitations of China:

Since the Kuomintang [Nationalists] became supreme, there has been greater stability than during the revolutionary period and than during the long period of decadent and corrupt rule under the Ch'ing Dynasty. There was a definite possibility before the war that a period of political and economic reconstruction would develop and that China would begin to realise her potentialities and become, as she is designed by nature to be, the stabilising force in East Asia. This is why Japan found it necessary to act. But the stability of China was never very well-established and five years of war have weakened it substantially. ... The political and economic instability of China is one of the major problems of the peace and the important fact is that her weakness is self-created.⁹⁶

Elsewhere in the despatch, Eggleston proposed the formation of a United Nations — an organisation which would need to solve 'the question of its own authority' in handling disputes, something that had been the main failing of the League of Nations. Because economic crisis had been the principle cause of the hostilities besetting the League, the Australian Minister offered a 'scheme' along the lines of a regional monetary fund to provide assistance to Pacific countries according to their needs. China, Siam, Malaya, the Philippines, Java and Sumatra, Eggleston reckoned, were countries 'in a relatively early stage' of development, and as such would 'need capital to complete primary equipment even before they start the secondary stage'. Australia, which had reached the so-called secondary stage of development, 'lives largely on exports of primary products'.

⁹⁴ 'Diary of Sir FW Eggleston', 3 January 1943, p.3, NLA MS423/9/1139.

⁹⁵ For discussion of Eggleston's 'Despatch no.66', see Cotton, *The Australian School of International Relations*, pp.62-64; and, Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, pp.240-243.

⁹⁶ Despatch no.66, 'The Outlines of a Constructive Peace in the Pacific', Annex B, 'Review of Political, Economic and Geographical Conditions of Pacific Countries and their Strategic Implications', p.6, NAA A4231, 1943/NANKING PART 2.

Precisely because China was still weak, developing and in need of fiscal guidance, not in spite of this fact, it was the keystone or 'stabilising force' in Eggleston's imagined post-war Pacific order. Australia, and the region more broadly, stood to benefit immeasurably from its rise:

[China] will be more definitely a beneficiary of the scheme than Japan because she needs primary and secondary equipment and has no capital. There is no doubt that the purchasing power of her 450 millions, if it could be organised, would be an enormous factor in world stability.⁹⁷

Because Eggleston's reports were so 'fresh and unusual', writes the historian EM Andrews, they were 'read and laughed over in London by [Stanley] Bruce and the High Commissioners in the Dominions Office'; while in Canberra 'it would have needed a staff of four to digest and master these despatches, and one wonders how far they were read by the ministers for External Affairs.'⁹⁸ Eggleston despaired that Canberra failed to respond to his conscientious advice. On one frosty morning in January 1943 he confided to his diary that: 'like children in the marketplace, I pipe unto you and you do not sing. Is it right for me to waste my sweetness on the desert air, in the vacant spaces of Australian minds?'⁹⁹ He would later advise Douglas Copland, Australia's second minister to China, that: 'there is no doubt that you can do exceedingly valuable work for Australia in China ... [but] you will always have to insist on attention being given to your reports and advice. Otherwise, they will be ignored, pigeonholed or left in the kitchen piano.'¹⁰⁰

Warren Osmond believes that Eggleston had a tendency to 'exaggerate [Canberra's] unresponsiveness' to his advice. 'The Outlines of a Constructive Peace in the Pacific' certainly was read, and commented upon at length, by the government economist Lyndhurst Giblin, while Paul Hasluck, a member of the wartime Interdepartmental Committee on External Relations, noted that Eggleston brought 'orderliness and method into the handling of international post-war questions and in clarifying thinking in the various departments on Australia's interests in the world.'¹⁰¹ In March 1954, from his position as Australian High Commissioner in Canada, Douglas Copland would credit his predecessor with being the originator of the Colombo Plan, the most important initiative for education and economic development that the Pacific region had ever seen. Apparently, the bureaucrats in Canberra had been listening after all. As Copland remarked:

That Plan was initiated in Australia and came about in part because my distinguished predecessor in China, Sir Frederic Eggleston, used to write despatches. Of course, we all write despatches — we wonder if they are ever read! But Sir Frederic's despatches were read. And one of his lines of

⁹⁷ Despatch no.66, 'The Outlines of a Constructive Peace in the Pacific', Annex A, 'The Conditions for Peace in the Pacific', pp.22 and 30.

⁹⁸ EM Andrews, *Australia and China: The Ambiguous Relationship*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985, p.99.

⁹⁹ 'Diary of Sir FW Eggleston', 3 January 1944, p.1, NLA MS423/9/1137.

¹⁰⁰ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, 9 November 1945, NLA MS423/1/241.

¹⁰¹ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.242.



Australian Legation, Chungking, c.1945. (Photograph by Barry Hall, courtesy Diana Hall)

thought always was that an investment in technical training to the people of Southeast Asia in the new circumstances after the war would bring large returns [and place] relations between the East and the West on a new basis. And that was the essence of the Colombo Plan.¹⁰²

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Shortly before he left China, Eggleston reported that apart from the issue of extraterritoriality and desultory discussions with the Chinese about a possible trade agreement and an agricultural mission, there had been practically no 'outstanding diplomatic questions' to deal with during his posting. He said that in reality it was China's community of scholars that had informed his 'line of approach' to understanding the country. 'I believed in this approach', he wrote, 'because I have observed that

¹⁰² Douglas Copland, 'Changing Concepts of Commonwealth: An Address by the High Commissioner for Australia to Canada', 4 March 1954, online at: <http://speeches.empireclub.org/60352/data>. For Copland's role in establishing the Colombo Plan, see Marjorie Harper, *Douglas Copland: Scholar, Economist, Diplomat*, Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2013, pp.348-352; and, for his career as High Commissioner to Canada, see pp.366-403.

though scholarship may not apparently take a leading place in a community, the scholars are always more articulate than other sections of the community and their views have considerable currency.¹⁰³

In 1948, when interviewed by the editors of *Near North*, a collection of essays on Australian foreign policy and engagement with Asia, Eggleston reprised the nature of his mission in similar terms: 'scholars are generally more articulate than other sections of the community, and I learned much about China and her ways from them'. Given the state of the war effort, and with Australia playing a minor role in the conflict compared to Britain and America, Eggleston reiterated that during his time in China he 'did nothing' of diplomatic significance.¹⁰⁴

What he did do, however, was foster friendships with a number of prominent scholars and educationalists with the aim, as he himself said, of '[putting] Australia on China's map'. 'To be called a "scholar and a diplomat"', he wrote, 'means something to China.'¹⁰⁵ Robert Payne, who taught English literature at National Southwestern Associated University 西南聯合大學 in Kunming, the provincial capital of Yunnan, describes the atmosphere at the Australian Legation:

Of the Ministers in China, Sir Frederic is the most popular. He lives quietly in his great house, rarely going out, surrounded by Chinese paintings, quietly performing those acts of friendship and understanding which are more important in China than diplomacy. You will find professors and merchants sitting at his table; an official of the Kuomintang [Nationalist Party] will be discussing the paintings of the Wei dynasty with a little schoolmistress; and when the wine is served on a silver platter, and the Minister is beaming at the young soldier who is arguing about the iniquities of the Burma campaign, you have a feeling that the civilization of our forefathers has been restored. He sits in a great chair, one gouty foot stretched forward, and behind him, like a curtain, all the yellow smoke and dust of Chungking rise in the air.¹⁰⁶

The guests at such soirées at the Australian Legation included Wen Yuan-ning 溫源寧, a translator of English literature and former editor of the Shanghai literary journal *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 天下月刊. Yuan Tung-li 袁同禮, the librarian of Peking University, and Mei Yi-chi 梅貽琦, President of Tsinghua University, were invited to peruse Eggleston's library at the Legation, which included such classics as Keith Hancock's *Australia* and WD Forsyth's *The Myth of Open Spaces*. 'Yuan says he has read all my books, even *Swinburne*, but I suppose he means that he catalogued them', Eggleston noted in his diary. 'He is a very nice man and so is Dr. Mei. They want to translate some Australian books into Chinese and want recommendations.'¹⁰⁷ Eggleston proposed library exchanges between China and Australia, but then was 'outraged'

¹⁰³ Despatch no.8, 'General Work of Post', p.6.

¹⁰⁴ EW Tipping, 'Australians in the Near North', in Robert Gilmore and Denis Warner, eds, *Near North: Australia and a Thousand Million Neighbours*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1948, pp.28-32.

¹⁰⁵ Despatch no.8, 'General Work of Post', p.6.

¹⁰⁶ From Payne's memoir, *Chungking Diary*, quoted in Tipping, 'Australians in the Near North', p.30.

¹⁰⁷ 'Diary of Sir FW Eggleston', 6 December 1942, pp.1-2, NLA MS423/9/1992-1993; and, 3 January 1943, pp.1-2, NLA MS423/9/1137-1138.



Top: Eggleston with Kuo Tai-chi, October 1941 (Central News Agency, Taipei); bottom: Eggleston with Joseph Needham (left) and Kuo Yu-shou 郭有守, Minister for Education, Szechuan province, Chengtu, May 1943. (Courtesy Needham Research Institute, Cambridge UK)

by the lack of interest from Canberra.¹⁰⁸

By the end of his first year, Eggleston had visited over fifteen universities in Chungking, nearby Chengtu and Kunming [see Maps, pp.ii-iii]. Some were local universities, but many, like National Central University 國立中央大學 (originally in Nanking) and Fudan University 復旦大學 (originally in Shanghai), had relocated to western China in advance of the Japanese invasion. The problems facing these institutions, Eggleston noted, included 'malnutrition, poor housing and inadequate medical attention, resulting in a heavy increase in disease among staff and students'; 'inadequate salaries paid to staff'; and, a 'complete lack of recent foreign books, periodicals and the latest equipment'.¹⁰⁹ Since the Japanese had disrupted contact between China and the outside world, all such materials and equipment had to be transported via 'The Hump', the dangerous air route from India over the Himalayas.

At National Central University, Eggleston met the painter Ju Peon (Hsu Pei-hung 徐悲鴻), whose classes, he observed, suffered badly from a paucity of art supplies. He told Keith Murdoch, Chairman of Trustees at Melbourne's National Art Gallery, that 'an opportunity exists for an exchange of modern Chinese pictures with Australian ones.' There were art schools 'at nearly all the Chinese universities and some quite good artists', Eggleston noted, yet for them 'materials are almost unprocurable' — these, too, had to be ferried over The Hump. With regard to the proposed artistic exchange, Eggleston suggested to Murdoch that:

Something about £50 would be sufficient; small for ease of transport. The picture should be rather good technically but decorative. ... I am prepared to pay for my share of the picture — say £10. I would do it all myself only I have spent a good deal on the materials in India and the inflation here is so bad that for the last few months I have been living beyond my income.¹¹⁰

At the time, nothing came of the suggestion, although Eggleston did not give up: in late 1945, he would write to the man who would succeed him in China, Douglas Copland, that 'the Chinese are very anxious to send an exhibition of Modern Chinese Art to Australia and I think some reciprocal arrangement of this kind should be made.'¹¹¹

It was a trip to Chengtu, however, that gave practical substance to Eggleston's plans for academic engagement with China. In August 1942, Stanley Smith, an Australian attaché at the British Ministry of Information in Chungking, suggested that Eggleston visit Chengtu to meet Frank Dickinson, Professor of Agriculture at West China Union University 華西協合大學. Smith described Dickinson as:

a very great booster in a practical sort of way for the British Empire. He urged me to discuss with you certain ideas for the transfer of Chinese students to Australia when they had completed their courses in China. He feels, and I agree with him,

¹⁰⁸ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.288.

¹⁰⁹ Despatch no.54, 'Universities in China', 30 November 1942, p.15, NAA A4231, 1941/1942/NANKING.

¹¹⁰ Letter, Eggleston to Murdoch, 30 March 1943, NAA A4144, 608/1943. The sum of £50 at that time is equal to approximately \$3,400 today.

¹¹¹ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, 9 November 1945, NLA MS423/1/243.

that Australia has a very good chance of doing considerable business with China after the war, and that the more Chinese people we get down to our country the better. The general consensus of opinion is that American people get along better with the Chinese than the British because so many Chinese students go to America. Personally, I think there is more to it than that, but Australia should commence to lay down some sort of programme for the development of trade and their relations with China after the war.¹¹²

Dickinson was involved in a British government mission to provide aid to Chinese universities during the war. The mission had its origins in the late 1930s. As news of the Rape of Nanking reached the British public, Lo Chung-shu 羅忠恕, a young lecturer in philosophy at the University of Oxford, appealed to a number of prominent Oxbridge professors — who in turn put pressure on Whitehall — to declare that something had to be done to support China's universities as they fled the Japanese onslaught. Now back in China and teaching at West China Union University himself, Lo, in October 1942, invited Eggleston to address the university's three thousand students. A series of lectures by the Australian Minister — 'The Clash of Ideas in the 20th Century', 'The Social Sciences in Search of a Philosophy', 'The Scientific Approach to Politics' and 'Some Post-war Problems' — had previously been published in the university's student magazine.¹¹³

Work commitments obliged Eggleston to postpone the trip. But when, in April 1943, he finally did go to Chengtu, he travelled with Joseph Needham, a biochemist from Cambridge who had just arrived in China. Needham was Director of the Sino-British Science Co-operation Office 中英科學合作館 established under the auspices of the British mission to aid China. Needham said his work was 'part of the Allied attempt to break the Japanese intellectual and technical blockade round China ... to bring help to the Chinese scientists and technologists isolated even in the biggest cities of "Free China"'.¹¹⁴ Together with his lifelong companion, Lu Gwei-djen 魯桂珍, the daughter of a Nanking pharmacist, Needham would go on to write and edit the monumental *Science and Civilisation in China*, the first volume of which appeared in 1954.

Although the trip from Chungking to Chengtu was less than two hours by plane, Needham wanted to visit a power alcohol factory in the town of Neichiang en route; Eggleston was also keen to see more of the countryside, so the pair decided to travel by road. They got more than they had bargained for when their jeep broke down on a narrow country road some forty miles out of Chengtu, stranding them for twenty-four hours. Eggleston later described the scene:

¹¹² Letter, Smith to Eggleston, 7 August 1942, NAA A4144, 608/1943.

¹¹³ Letter, Lo to Eggleston, 28 October 1942, NAA A4144, 901/1943. For some background on Lo Chung-shu and the origins of the British mission, see Simon Winchester, *Bomb, Book and Compass: Joseph Needham and the Great Secrets of China*, Camberwell (Victoria): Viking, 2008, pp.50-53.

¹¹⁴ Joseph and Dorothy Needham, eds, *Science Outpost: Papers of the Sino-British Science Co-operation Office, 1941-1946*, London: Pilot Press, 1948, p.13.



Top: Two men standing in front of the British Embassy car taking Needham and Eggleston to Chengtu, April 1943; bottom: Needham (fourth from the left), Manager Chang Chi-hsi 張季熙 and Eggleston with workers outside the National Resources Commission Power Alcohol Works 國立資源委員會燃料酒精工廠, Neichiang, Szechuan, April 1943. (Courtesy Needham Research Institute, Cambridge UK)



The peasants were at work from five in the morning until six o'clock at night. There was a charming view of flat land with graded terraces; a man with a water buffalo was ploughing a field nearly down to his knees in water and mud all day long. The children left for school at six o'clock in the morning, returned for an hour between eleven and twelve and finished for the day at three o'clock. They then amused themselves watching the car till it became dark and their parents called them home. They seemed a jolly lot quite free from care and many of them, if dressed as Australian children with the appropriate ties would have made typical public schoolboys.¹¹⁵

Eggleston, charmed by the surrounding countryside, also loved the city of Chengtu. The despatch he wrote about the visit included a lengthy description of the Tukiangyan 都江堰 hydraulic and irrigation network at Pi-hsien county near the city, complete with a two-page chronology of its development from the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) up until 1941. At a time when, as Warren Osmond notes, Eggleston's 'somewhat condescending scepticism gave way to a more informed awareness that [China's] complex cultural heritage would persist' and would give a 'distinctive tone to China's industrialisation and modernisation', the city of Chengtu, and the scholarly atmosphere he encountered there, were certainly formative.¹¹⁶ The warm reception he received at West China Union University he found positively flattering: 'The Chinese have enormous respect for a scholar especially if he is old and stout. If he is difficult he is probably the more profound. The professors were very

¹¹⁵ Despatch no.94, 'Visit to Chengtu', 28 June 1943, p.2, NAA A4231, 1943/NANKING PART 2.

¹¹⁶ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.235.



A large group, including Needham (second row, second from the left); Lo Chung-Shu (front row, third from the left, in traditional dress); Ho Wen-chun 何文俊 (front row, third from right); the philosopher Fung Yu-lan 馮友蘭 (with beard) behind Lo; and Eggleston (front row, second from right), Chengtu, May 1943. (Courtesy Needham Research Institute, Cambridge UK)

cultivated charming people and I made many good friends.¹¹⁷ When interviewed for the book *Near North* in 1948, Eggleston referred to this defining episode:

If I was successful [as Minister to China] ... then it was only because the Chinese like old men; they like fat men; and they like scholars. ... I made genuine friends with a lot of University people because scholars are generally more articulate than other sections of the community, and I learned much about China and her ways from them.¹¹⁸

In a series of discussions with Needham, Lo Chung-shu and others about post-war academic exchange, Eggleston proposed that 'we had to realise that the essential need of China was for reconstruction' and that this involved not only the sciences, as advocated by Needham, but also the social sciences 'such as law, economics, political science and engineering', as well as 'Finance, Statistics, Taxation (Welfare Management)'.¹¹⁹ Fired up by the conversation, soon after returning to Chungking Eggleston wrote a despatch to Canberra in which he suggested that a school of Oriental Studies, one based principally on the exchange of Chinese and Australian students, should be established in the Australian capital. He would frequently refer to this despatch over the coming years.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Despatch no. 94, 'Visit to Chengtu', pp.8-9.

¹¹⁸ Tipping, 'Australians in the Near North', p.30.

¹¹⁹ 'Diary of Sir FW Eggleston: Notes at Chengtu', p.141, NLA MS423/9/1708.

¹²⁰ I have been unable to locate the text of this despatch. Eggleston wrote of his journey to Chengtu in his Despatch no.99, dated 16 April 1943; of the remaining despatches he wrote during that year, nos. 102, 115 and 119 are missing, and one or more of them may well have contained the material Eggleston mentions.

In March 1944, Eggleston returned to Australia for a six-month furlough in Canberra and Melbourne, where he sought treatment for 'gout and osteoarthritis, fatigue, and eyesight threatened by cataracts'. He never returned to China. In October that year, Owen Dixon resigned as Australian Minister to Washington and the Minister for External Affairs, HV Evatt — who had been impressed by Eggleston's work — appointed him as Dixon's replacement.¹²¹

Despite ill health, during the six months he spent in Australia between postings, Eggleston delivered over sixty public lectures in which he continued his advocacy for library, artistic and student exchanges with the Republic of China. He told the Constitutional Club in Melbourne, for example, that China was 'on the eve of a great renaissance, and was destined to play a prominent and more active part in the reconstruction of the Pacific. ... Australia must try to understand China, and work out adequate methods of co-operation to ensure order in the Pacific.' In particular, he said: 'More attention should be given by Australian universities to these affairs.'¹²²

Melbourne's *Argus* newspaper reported Eggleston as saying: 'It is incredible how little we knew about our part of the world until the Japanese began to set fire to the Pacific horizons. ... I would have imagined that when Japan struck, once we had got over the first shock, we would have got to work at once to make provision for a complete study of that part of Asia, that lies nearest to us.' Seemingly unaware of the existence of the University of Sydney's Department of Oriental Studies — or perhaps aware of the extent to which Arthur Sadler's department had declined through neglect — the reporter who had interviewed Eggleston for the article in *Argus* said:

I have not, however, noticed the establishment anywhere in Australia of a new school of Oriental studies since December 1941, and in fact it was noticeable that nobody in Australia was making any stir about such matters until Sir Frederic Eggleston recently put the question of Oriental studies on the map.¹²³

PARENT OF PACIFIC STUDIES

The idea of establishing a national university had been in circulation from even before Federation. As early as the 1870s, the educator Edward Morris proposed that the three colonial universities in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide should be amalgamated, or at least they should form a federation for the purpose of shared standards for examinations and the conferring of degrees.

After Federation, educators turned their thoughts towards the idea of creating a university to serve the nation, and the Griffin plan for the national capital of Canberra, as we have seen, included a site for an institute of higher learning at a 'situation of gentle undulation' at the foot

¹²¹ Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston*, p.236.

¹²² Quoted in 'China "On Eve of Renaissance": Need For Understanding by Australia', *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 31 March 1944, p.4.

¹²³ Auster, 'Men and Ideas: Geographical Realism', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 10 June 1944, p.7.

of Black Mountain. What kind of institute of higher learning it would be was far from clear. Would there be a 'Canberra University' for teaching and a 'Commonwealth University' for national examinations, as John Butters and Mungo MacCallum, two early planners involved with the development of the capital, proposed in the 1920s? Would a Canberra University be an extension of Canberra University College, established with Commonwealth support in 1930 under the auspices of the University of Melbourne to provide tertiary training for public servants and their families?¹²⁴ As we have noted in the above, in the early 1930s, Colin MacKenzie even thought that the Institute of Anatomy might become the 'first unit of the National University of Australia'.

What eventually became The Australian National University (ANU) emerged during the war from discussions amongst and committee meetings of public servants, scientists and military men engaged in planning what was known as 'Post-war Reconstruction'. The economist 'Nugget' Coombs, who became Director-General of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction from 1943 to 1948, was one of many thinkers involved in the creation of ANU. Like many of his colleagues, Coombs had been deeply affected by the Great Depression in the 1930s and was a strong believer in state planning, economic management and Commonwealth involvement in education. He later wrote:

The concept of the National University was an expression of the optimism of the time. We accepted in good faith the assurances of political leaders that they were committed to a richer, more secure way of life after the war; we believed that the war itself had demonstrated that resources could be directed towards chosen purposes; and we were convinced that the social sciences provided the intellectual framework which would enable those purposes to be wisely chosen and the resources to be creatively directed. The Keynesian foundation for the economic management of the war had been sufficiently effective to justify this conviction.¹²⁵

In October 1943, an Interdepartmental Committee on Commonwealth Educational Activities was established to promote federal involvement in education. Its members included Coombs, RC Mills, Chairman of the Universities Commission, David Rivett, Chief Executive Officer of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR, now CSIRO), Charles Daley and Robert Garran, two public servants who had been strong proponents of the arts and education in Canberra since its earliest days as federal capital. Chaired by the economist Ronald Walker, Deputy Director-General of the Department of War Organisation and Industry, it was known as the Walker Committee.

The Walker Committee's purpose was to explore the possibility of, and to act as an advocate for Commonwealth involvement in all aspects of education. This was a novel idea for the time, and Coombs even had to convince his boss, the future Prime Minister Ben Chifley, of its importance: '[RC Mills] and I tried to persuade him. "Education", he said, "is a State matter under the Constitution. Besides it is all mixed up with religion

¹²⁴ Foster and Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, pp.3-7.

¹²⁵ HC Coombs, *Trial Balance*, Melbourne: MacMillan, 1981, p.199.

and causes all sorts of trouble in the Labor party.”¹²⁶ Eventually, however, Chifley would come to champion the cause.

From the outset the Walker Committee envisaged that the national university would be located in Canberra — they called it the ‘University of Canberra’, or the ‘National University at Canberra’ in early meetings; the title ‘Australian National University’ was not fixed until early 1946. A June 1944 memorandum by Charles Daley, one that influenced the eventual scope of the university, suggested that there was a need for ‘post-graduate research into national problems connected with public administration, international relations, oriental affairs, economics, nutrition, forestry, Australian history and other special subjects’. Daley suggested that a national university should mirror the ideals of Canberra, a city which in spite of its small size was ‘a symbol of national aspirations, and dominated by a spirit of national service’.¹²⁷

Just as the nomenclature of the new university vexed the Walker Committee, so did the subject of the study of the Pacific, and of Asia more broadly. Indeed, what exactly was meant by ‘Asia’, or what Daley called ‘the Orient’? And what, precisely, was denoted by the ‘Pacific’, a vague geographical term that was eventually adopted in the title of the ANU Research School of Pacific Studies? In the early 1940s, these were points of constant confusion. It was hardly surprising, as these terms had long confounded the country’s educators. In his 1919 Sydney lecture *Australia Must Prepare* mentioned earlier, James Murdoch had noted that while ‘the Orient from [Australia’s] special standpoint is the wide-flung yeasty expanse of the Southern Pacific’, and its study might include ‘such themes as Maori origins, or the sociology of the Pitcairn islanders’ — these were hardly the kinds of subjects that he was expected to pursue as the country’s first professor of Oriental Studies.¹²⁸

Similarly, in the Walker Committee’s deliberations the question of engagement with the Pacific often focussed on Australia’s responsibility to administer the colonial possessions of Papua and New Guinea, Nauru and other Pacific territories. Not surprisingly, it was argued that the new university should emphasise subjects like public administration, anthropology and even research in tropical medicine. With regard to what geopolitical territory ‘Asia’ covered, planners thought in terms of diplomatic studies, history and geography, subjects which could prepare Australia for closer engagement with the emerging nations in the region. Indeed, the lessons of war were not forgotten. When, in October 1944, the Committee’s definitive statement on the need for Commonwealth involvement in education, the Walker Report, was submitted to the federal cabinet, it cautioned that ‘this country will stand in a situation of peculiar danger vis-à-vis Japan. ... Our survival will depend on vigilance and preparedness’.¹²⁹

The Walker Report recommended the establishment of a Commonwealth Office of Education to oversee the development of the proposed university. This office was set up in early 1945 and, when RC

¹²⁶ Coombs, *Trial Balance*, p.194.

¹²⁷ Charles Daley, ‘A National University’, 6 June 1944, NAA A2473/NN.

¹²⁸ Murdoch, *Australia Must Prepare*, p.3.

¹²⁹ Dani Botsman, ‘Deconstructing the Past to Redefine the Future: a History of Japanese Studies at the Australian National University’, in *Japan and the World: Proceedings of the Seventh Biennial Conference of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia*, vol.3, 1991, pp.240-248.

Mills was appointed as its first Chairman, Eggleston wrote from Washington to congratulate him:

Educationalists in America are very much in favour of interchange of teachers and students and whenever I meet any of them they bring the subject up and seem rather surprised that I am not prepared with any ideas on the subject. The same thing occurred in China and after carefully considering the subject of Chinese education, I wrote a long despatch on the subject. ... I raised in my despatch ... the establishment in Canberra of a School of Pacific Studies, that is to say, a high-class graduate school in which all subjects connected with Pacific countries should be studied. This would cover political geography of anthropology and linguistics of the area. ... I think the Canberra educational effort should be in the form of a School of Graduate Studies, which is so marked a feature of the best American universities, such as, Harvard, Yale and Columbia. ... My despatch from China may interest you and I think if you went to the Department of External Affairs you could get a copy of it. Nothing has been done about it. I fancy it rested in Evatt's hands unread for a long period.¹³⁰

There is no evidence that Eggleston's ideas guided discussions during the university's initial planning phase, be it during the Walker Committee's meetings in 1943 or in the final contents of the *National University Act* of August 1946, which named a Research School of Pacific Studies as one of the four foundational ANU research schools. Yet, on a number of occasions, the former diplomat repeated the claim that Pacific Studies at ANU owed its origins to his 1943 despatch from Chungking. For instance, he later wrote to Keith Hancock, the academic advisor to the Research School of Social Sciences, that: 'I can claim to be the parent of the [School of Pacific Studies] because it was first mooted in a despatch I wrote from China in early 1943.'¹³¹

But, to reiterate the sentiment with which we began this study, others had been there before. In March 1939, for example, writing for the *Austral-Asiatic Bulletin* (a journal which Eggleston edited) Robert Garran had spoken of the importance of establishing a 'School of Oriental Studies' in Canberra. Australia's 'great role' in international relations, Garran said, was 'that of interpreter of the East to the West, and of the West to the East'. Australia had a 'duty of making a close study of the Orient'. Garran anticipated a school that would be substantially research-focused, based in the federal capital, with close links to the government and affiliated with other Commonwealth institutions such as the National Library. He also proposed that 'a special and valuable feature, sooner or later, will be the exchange of professors and students with other countries.'¹³²

In their official history of the first fifty years of ANU, Stephen Foster and Margaret Varghese note that: 'Pacific affairs in one form or another (linked sometimes with international relations or Oriental studies)

¹³⁰ Letter, Eggleston to Mills, 10 September 1945, NLA MS423/1/228.

¹³¹ Letter, Eggleston to Hancock, 9 September 1946, NLA MS423/12/74.

¹³² Robert Garran, 'A School of Oriental Studies', *The Austral-Asiatic Bulletin*, vol.2, no.6 (February-March 1939): 15.



'Nugget' Coombs and Ben Chifley in London, April 1946. During this trip Coombs approached a number of Australian expatriate scholars who would later form ANU's Academic Advisory Committee. (Courtesy National Archives of Australia)

had been discussed as an appropriate research area for at least a decade' before ANU was established. It had certainly been one of Robert Garran's 'favourite themes' during the Walker Committee's preliminary discussions, and Garran 'probably saved it at the last moment when, after it had fallen off the proposal for Cabinet, he stressed how important it was as a way of proclaiming the national character of the university'.¹³³

ANU and its Research School of Pacific Studies were established, at least on paper, but the definition and scope of the school was far from clear. Indeed, in February and March 1946, as the contents of the parliamentary act proposing the new university were being discussed and formulated, it was agreed that it be called 'The School of Pacific and Asiatic Studies'. This was later considered to be too verbose and was abandoned. In July, a last-minute amendment to the Act proposed the name 'Research School of Pacific Studies' instead of 'Pacific Affairs and Diplomatic Studies', as the latter 'suggests under-graduate work or the training of public servants, and does somewhat detract from the full standing of the school'.¹³⁴ ANU was to be, after all, a postgraduate research institution.

The public planners involved in establishing the university were clear on the question that Australia 'needed' postgraduate research in Asian and Pacific affairs. Yet how exactly Asia would fit under the rubric of Pacific Studies — and how aspects of Pacific, 'Oriental' or 'Asiatic' studies might overlap with the Research School of Social Sciences — were knotty issues tackled over a further four years of planning. To this day, however, they have never really been adequately resolved. But it was early days. As yet there was no university to speak of, let alone any students. Even as students began to arrive in 1950, ANU was nothing more than a 'university

¹³³ Foster and Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, p.16.

¹³⁴ 'Agendum 882(c), The Australian National University Bill 1946: Amendments and New Clauses', 2 July 1946, NAA A571, 1945/1316 PART 1.

without buildings, with staff scattered all over the world', noted *The Sydney Morning Herald*: 'The National University is still a shed in a paddock.'¹³⁵ Two main groups were in charge of planning the nascent university. The Interim Council, based in Canberra, was responsible for practical and administrative matters. The Academic Advisory Committee, which had offices in London and was made up of expatriate Australian scholars, offered advice on academic matters including staffing and recruitment. Eggleston was a member of the Interim Council from its first meeting on 13 September 1946. The other members present at that meeting included Coombs, Daley and Mills, the latter of whom was unanimously elected to the chair.¹³⁶

If Robert Garran 'saved' Pacific Studies during the wartime planning of ANU, Eggleston ensured that the idea was not dropped from the Interim Council's planning agenda during the university's first three critical years, when discussion focused more often on the schools of Medical Research and Physical Science. Eggleston may have exaggerated the novelty of his ideas, but he was certainly committed to them — particularly that of inviting Chinese scholars to lecture in Australia. On 2 September 1946, eleven days before the first meeting of the Council, he wrote to his old friend from Chengtu, Lo Chung-shu:

We are establishing a new Graduate University for Canberra and are having a meeting of the Provisional Council of which I am to be a member next week, but there is a lot of establishment work to be done and I do not know when we shall get to work. One of the schools will be a School of Pacific Studies and we are hoping to have exchange professors and courses of lectures by professors in Eastern countries. A course by you on Chinese Philosophy of, say, four to six lectures would be very good.¹³⁷

It would be almost three years before Lo received this letter.



Lo Chung-shu in Chengtu, May 1943. (Courtesy Needham Research Institute, Cambridge UK)

¹³⁵ 'Canberra University Has Its Staff Scattered Worldwide', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 March 1950, p.2; see also Foster and Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, pp.64-66.

¹³⁶ ANU Interim Council, Minutes of the First Meeting, 13 September 1946, p.1, ANUA 198, Box 2.

¹³⁷ Letter, Eggleston to Lo, 2 September 1946, NLA MS423/12/72.

CHAPTER 3

CANDID FRIENDS: DOUGLAS COPLAND IN NANKING, 1946–1948

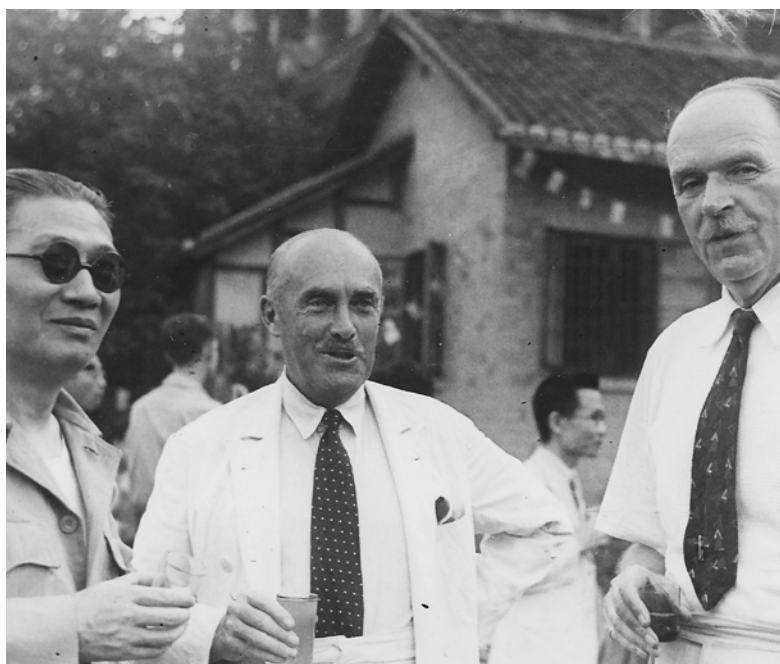
On 8 May 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allied Powers. By the middle of that year, US forces had succeeded in 'island-hopping' across the Pacific, retaking most of the territories that Japan had occupied during the Pacific War. From Saipan the US Air Force launched devastating raids on key cities on the Japanese mainland, including Tokyo and Osaka; in July, a combined force of predominantly Chinese, British and US soldiers recaptured Burma. It was still widely anticipated that the fighting on mainland Asia, and in China in particular, would continue well into 1946 — yet it ended abruptly with the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on 6 and 9 August respectively.

Among those surprised at the war's sudden end was Frank Keith Officer, a Gallipoli veteran who served at the Australian Legation in Chungking as Chargé d'Affaires for most of the time between Frederic Eggleston's departure from China in March 1944 and the arrival of his successor two years later. Officer had been Chargé in Tokyo when John Latham was the Australian Minister to Japan and where, on 8 December 1941, he had received Japan's formal declaration of war. 'Having had the somewhat doubtful privilege of seeing the commencement of the war from Tokyo,' he reflected in his despatch titled 'Victory in the Pacific Day', 'it is particularly interesting to see its end from this, the wartime capital of China.' It was a scene of jubilation:

Within a few moments, Chungking was in a state of hysteria: shouting singing, parading the streets, and, as on every possible occasion in China, letting off strings of fire crackers. A US Army camp near the Legation appeared to celebrate the occasion by the almost continuous firing of revolver shots — one hoped well into the air, but even then wondered where the spent bullets were falling! When the police guard at our gate commenced to discharge their rifles I felt the fun had gone far enough and should be checked!¹³⁸

The war with Japan might have ended, but the long-running civil conflict between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Tse-tung flared up once more. Following the Sian Incident of December 1936 during which Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped and forced to agree to an armistice and the establishment of a 'United Front' between the two warring Chinese political parties against the Japanese, there had been some vague hope of a lasting accommodation. But, as Eggleston had observed in 1943, 'the reconciliation at Sian was not in fact genuine'. Like so many others, Eggleston was of the view that Chiang Kai-shek had never forgiven Chou En-lai, the charismatic Communist envoy in Chungking, for the part he played in the incident. Eggleston

¹³⁸ Despatch no.50, 'VP Day', 16 August 1945, p.1, NAA A4231, 1945/NANKING.



A garden party at the British Embassy, Chungking, 1945. From the left: Peng Sho-pei 彭學沛, Keith Officer and Horace Seymour, British Ambassador to China. (Courtesy Needham Research Institute, Cambridge UK)

had no illusions about the future of China under Communism: 'The communists claim to be democratic but it must be remembered that they are trained in communist principles, and the gospel according to Lenin is one of dictatorship.'¹³⁹

Now, the world watched on hopefully as new attempts to forge peace within China unfolded at breakneck speed. At the end of what was turning out to be a momentous month, Officer sent a despatch to Canberra titled 'Events During August'. The most important development was Japan's surrender; the second was 'the decision of the Communist leader, Mao Tse-tung, to come to Chungking to discuss with the Generalissimo ... the possibility of an agreement between the Communists and the Central Government.'¹⁴⁰

On 28 August, accompanied by the American Ambassador, Patrick Hurley, Mao flew from the Communist base in Yen-an to Chungking. Shortly before embarking on the trip, Mao ordered the Party's guerrilla units to regroup into regiments and to advance on key cities and railway lines in northern and central China. He arrived in Chungking, toasted his nemesis Chiang Kai-shek, who he not seen for twenty years, saluting him as 'elder brother', and smiled for the cameras as forty days of negotiations to determine China's future began. The resulting Double Tenth Agreement of 10 October 1945 pledged that both sides would strive to realise political reconciliation, create

¹³⁹ Despatch no.101, 'Communism', 10 August 1943, p.2, NAA A4231, 1943/NANKING PART 2.

¹⁴⁰ Despatch no.55, 'Events During August', 5 September 1945, pp.1-2, NAA A4231, 1945/NANKING.



Chang Tzu-chung 張自忠, Mao Tse-tung, US Ambassador Patrick Hurley, Chou En-lai and Wang Jo-fei 王若飛 preparing to fly to Chungking for negotiations with the Nationalist government, August 1945. (Wikimedia Commons)

a national army under unified command and undertake elections for a National Assembly that would initiate the country's transition to democracy.

As Australian Minister to the Chinese Republic during the war, Eggleston had been optimistic that the country would emerge as a great Pacific power, one with which Australia would need to engage, cooperate and exchange knowledge. In spite of the best efforts of the US envoy, George Marshall, who arrived in Chungking in December 1945 to broker peace between the Communists and Nationalists and establish a 'strong, united and democratic China', Eggleston's successor would find a country wracked by civil war.

THE 'PROF'

A successor to Eggleston, however, had yet to be appointed. Keith Officer reported to External Affairs in Canberra that the 'main object of China's foreign policy is to obtain and hold a position in the Council of the nations out of all proportion to its present capabilities.' The Nationalist government was 'intensely sensitive to criticism and to anything reflecting in the slightest degree on its prestige', and that included the appointment and relative prominence of foreign diplomats in the republican capital. Ever since Frederic Eggleston had been sent to Washington the previous year, Officer had often encountered 'complaint [about] the non-appointment of a new Minister'.¹⁴¹

The department would soon select Professor Douglas Copland, one of Australia's most distinguished economists to the position. The New Zealand-born 'Prof', as friends and colleagues called him, had enjoyed a career that straddled academic life — most notably as the first Dean of the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Commerce — and public service, as an economic policy advisor to the Commonwealth Government. Copland was the special economic advisor to all three of the country's wartime prime ministers: Robert Menzies, Arthur Fadden and John Curtin.

¹⁴¹ Despatch no.7, 'Legation Report', 27 January 1945, p.4, NAA A4231, 1945/NANKING.

In September 1939, Menzies had invoked emergency powers to appoint Copland Commonwealth Prices Commissioner. By having the authority to fix the prices of certain crucial commodities, Copland frustrated the price gouging and run-away inflation characteristic of other wartime economies. To ensure compliance with the new pricing regime and to prevent profiteering, Copland was given the authority 'to examine the books of any enterprise, to investigate the rate of gross profit and, if necessary to fix a new one.'¹⁴² Adelaide's *Advertiser* newspaper reported that:

Almost without knowing it [Copland] became in a day one of the most important figures on the home front — an autocrat fixing by decrees not subject to Parliamentary revision the prices of goods reaching an annual turnover of over £100,000,000 a year. ... No economist has ever been given such authority in any part of the world. ... He is a 'Prices Czar' in a complete personal sense.¹⁴³

The death of Prime Minister John Curtin on 5 July 1945, and the end of the war only weeks later, brought an effective end to both of Copland's appointments. When the economist wrote to inform the new prime minister, Ben Chifley, of his intention to return to academic life in Melbourne, he received in reply a suggestion that he might be willing to go to China on Australia's behalf. The conditions of this new posting were concluded by mid October. In Chungking the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kan Nai-kuang — a man who, we have noted, would become China's first ambassador to Australia in 1948, and who would present ANU with its first collection of Chinese books — told the Australian Legation that his government was 'very pleased to give agreement to the appointment of Dr. Copland as Australian Minister to China.'¹⁴⁴ It was also, External Affairs told Copland, 'the intention of the Government to raise the status of the mission in China at an early date ... by mutual arrangement with the Chinese consideration also given to the status of other posts.'¹⁴⁵



'He takes the profit out of profiteering', *The Sun*, 26 November 1941.

¹⁴² Marjorie Harper, *Douglas Copland*, pp.225-226.

¹⁴³ 'Canberra Gossip: Autocrat Overnight', *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 30 September 1939, p.23.

¹⁴⁴ Telegram, Australian Legation to Department of External Affairs, 25 October 1945, NAA 1066, IC45/64/2/2.

¹⁴⁵ Norman Makin (Acting Minister for External Affairs) to Copland, 16 October 1945, NLA MS3800, Box 148.



An official photograph following the presentation of Douglas Copland's credentials to the government of the Republic of China, 23 March 1946. Copland stands beside the Chinese President, Chiang Kai-shek, with Chinese officials and members of the Australian Legation: First Secretary, Patrick Shaw (back row, second from the left), Second Secretary Charles Lee (back row, third from the left) and Third Secretary Barry Hall (back row, first on the right). Kan Nai-kuang (right of Chiang), then Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, was a friend of the Coplands and was appointed China's first ambassador to Australia in 1948. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

Copland welcomed the new appointment. Accompanied by his secretary, Sylvia Brown, and Margaret Lundie, who would serve as the Legation's clerk and archivist, Copland set sail for Hong Kong from Sydney on 28 January 1946 on a Danish merchant vessel, the *Slesvig*. After a week's stopover in the British colony, the party flew to Canton and then on to Chungking, arriving there on 1 March.¹⁴⁶

The Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek had an informal meeting with the new Australian Minister soon after his arrival, one that Copland described as 'most cordial'. He reported to Evatt that the conversation confirmed everything he had heard about the 'very high place' Eggleston had occupied in Chungking's diplomatic circles. During the exchange, Chiang also suggested that Copland might 'be able to assist in the solution of some of China's economic problems, which he said were very serious.'¹⁴⁷ And it was not long before the Australian discovered how serious China's problems were, or that endemic corruption among Chiang's Nationalist officials was at their core.

¹⁴⁶ Margaret Lundie, *Never a Dull Moment in China: Pleasures and Problems of Legation Life*, Roseville: Orana Press, 1987, p.iv.

¹⁴⁷ Despatch no.17, 'Presentation of Credentials', 26 March 1946, p.1, NAA A4231, 1946/ NANKING PART 1.



At this time, in March 1946, Chungking was bustling with grandees, government officials, military personnel, foreign diplomats and journalists, many of whom had converged on the city to participate in or observe the Political Consultative Conference convened as a result of the US envoy George Marshall's efforts at mediation between the Nationalists, the Communists and China's other minor political parties. For his first three weeks in China Copland was caught up in the whirl of diplomatic socialising afforded by this unprecedented gathering.

He found that Chinese government ministers were 'as a whole ... able', at least in terms of their formal education and experience in politics, but that 'it is one of the paradoxes of China that there are so many people of ability and so few who accept the broad civic responsibilities that would be found in a western nation.'¹⁴⁸ He discussed the success of Australia's wartime economic austerity measures with many of the bureaucrats he encountered, including Weng Wen-hao 翁文灏, Minister for Economic Affairs, Yu Hung-chun 俞鴻鈞, Minister of Finance, Chu Chia-hua 朱家驊, Minister of Education and Wang Chung-

¹⁴⁸ Despatch no.23, 'Discharge of Diplomatic Courtesies', 17 April 1946, p.1; and, Annex A, 'Discharge of Diplomatic Courtesies', p.1, NAA A4231, 1946/NANKING PART 1.

hui 王寵惠, a prominent jurist and diplomat who was then Secretary of China's National Defence Council. He was somewhat taken aback to find that frugality or restraint of any description 'did not seem to interest the Chinese at all ... [they] have no interest in rationing or, as far as I can see, in an equitable distribution of their own food resources.'¹⁴⁹

By contrast, it was soon a 'well-worn theme' in Copland's exchanges with his Chinese interlocutors that the Nationalist government expected 'much ... from America, both in regard to monetary assistance and the use of technical experts'¹⁵⁰ (it was hardly surprising that the US Army commander 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell dubbed the Nationalist leader 'Generalissimo Cash-My-Check'). Much of the aid was delivered by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), a body founded by the American President, Franklin Roosevelt, to provide support to countries devastated by the war. Two-thirds of Australia's commitment to the UNRRA, amounting to some £6,563,000, went directly to China where relief supplies were frequently pilfered or sold. Throughout 1946 and 1947, the Australian press carried reports and photographs of UNRRA ships lying idle in Chinese ports, with one Labor MP telling parliament that: 'clothes donated by Australian workers, bearing Australian trademarks, were hawked along the [Shanghai] Bund or sold openly in the shops'.¹⁵¹ Just as Australian public opinion and hopes for a post-war China deteriorated, so Copland's view of China's Nationalist government rapidly turned from cautious hope to bitter scepticism.

But what about their opponents, the Chinese Communist Party? Or, for that matter, the minor parties like the Democratic League and the Youth Party, representatives of which also took part in the Political Consultative Conference? 'On the list of Chinese officials on whom I was expected to call', Copland wrote, 'no provision had been made for the leader of the Communist Party or any other Parties outside the Kuomintang': Copland had to arrange such meetings privately. It was not that he was in any way starry-eyed about the Communists. Wary of their anti-democratic ideology and having heard reports of the brutality of their land reforms, he wrote that: 'I would feel happier if the battle for a *democratic* constitution in China were being conducted by somebody other than the Communists'. Nonetheless, he managed to arrange a meeting with Chou En-lai, the Chinese Communist Party's envoy to the peace negotiations:

[Chou] opened the conversation by paying a graceful compliment to Sir Frederic Eggleston, whom he knew well and respected highly. He then referred to the fact that Australia seemed to appoint scholars as her diplomatic representatives. This has been a constant source of amusement to me, and it has always been possible to turn it off by saying that when you are in China you must do as China does and show some respect for the scholar. ... He is rather more restrained in discussion

¹⁴⁹ Despatch no.23, 'Discharge of Diplomatic Courtesies', p.4.

¹⁵⁰ Despatch no.23, 'Discharge of Diplomatic Courtesies', p.3.

¹⁵¹ Henry S Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes Toward China*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965, pp.6-7. The UNRRA figure of £6,563,000 is approximately \$450,000,000 in 2015.



The staff of the Australian Legation on the steps of the Chancery, Nanking, March 1948. From the left: Barry Hall (Third Secretary), Sylvia Brown (Copland's personal secretary), Marion Beattie (Cypher Officer), Douglas Copland, Bill Hamilton (Accountant), Barbara Palmer (Stenographer) and Max Loveday (Third Secretary). Baby Robert Beattie, in Copland's arms, was the first foreign child born in the city following the return of the Nationalist government. In 1950, Bill Hamilton was appointed as an accountant at ANU; he later served as the university's bursar and registrar, retiring in 1978. (Photograph by Barry Hall, courtesy Diana Hall)

than some of the more vociferous people I have met, and has a very strong underlying sense of humour. I hope to see more of him.¹⁵²

With the war over and the political conference under way, the next task for the Chinese government was to relocate back to its pre-war capital of Nanking. During April 1946, the Australian diplomatic mission in Chungking was occupied with preparations to join the exodus. Most diplomatic representatives arrived in the old capital by 5 May, which Chiang Kai-shek declared to be a day marking the government's 'triumphant return to Nanking' 凱旋南京. Copland handed responsibility for the relocation to his Third Secretary, Barry Hall, while he travelled north 'to see China as it was in the spacious days — or at least to form some impression of life in the old concession areas, and how it has been affected by the war and the abolition of extraterritoriality.'¹⁵³ At the invitation of the British Ambassador, Horace Seymour, Copland visited the formerly Japanese-occupied cities of Tsingtao in Shantung province, Tientsin and Peiping [see Maps, pp.iv-v].

As the RAF aircraft in which Copland was flying approached Tsingtao, he was struck by the sea-side city: 'a string of American warships at anchor in the bay, green fields in and around the scattered city ... wide streets with well-built modern houses'. The place 'made a far more pleasing impression on me than has any place in China so far'; yet Copland was also

¹⁵² Despatch no.23, 'Discharge of Diplomatic Courtesies', Annex A, 'Discharge of Diplomatic Courtesies', p.4; and, Annex C, 'Miscellaneous Notes on Further Discussions', pp.1-2. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁵³ Despatch no.27, 'Visit to Tsingtao and Tientsin', 21 May 1946, Annex A, 'The Spacious Days in China', p.1, NAA A4231, 1946/NANKING PART 1.

Copland (front row, second from the left) and the British Ambassador, Horace Seymour (right of Copland) with Chinese and foreign officials at the Summer Palace, Peiping, May 1946. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)



aware that Tsingtao, as well as Tientsin and Peiping represented 'pockets of government resistance' within a Communist-dominated countryside. Only a huge US military presence — some 50,000 US marines were stationed in those three cities alone — ensured that both parties adhered to the ceasefire.¹⁵⁴

In her study of the Chinese Civil War, Suzanne Pepper writes that 'the carpetbagging [Nationalist] official from Chungking became the hallmark of the reconversion period' — the months in which tens of thousands of government soldiers and officers, many of them travelling in American planes, were ferried 'back east' in the wake of the Japanese surrender. 'According to his [the carpetbaggers'] popular image,' she writes, 'he had five preoccupations: gold bars, automobiles, houses, Japanese women, and face.'¹⁵⁵ Copland observed popular outrage at the carpetbaggers first hand. Locals in Tientsin and Peiping told him that 'they had been better off under Japanese control', while the behaviour of the Nationalist government — which was returning ostensibly to liberate them — evoked memories of the brutal warlords who had

¹⁵⁴ Despatch no.25, 'Visit to North China', 13 May 1946, p.1, NAA A4231, 1946/NANKING PART 1.

¹⁵⁵ Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945–1949*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978, p.16.



ruled China during the 1910s and 1920s. In the eyes of many, Chiang's government was well on the way to 'snatching defeat from the jaws of victory'. Many, Copland wrote, '[compared] their position with what it might be if the Communists were in full control'.¹⁵⁶ For the Australian Minister, the prospect of a Communist victory in the Civil War seemed neither unrealistic, nor too far off. On his last night in Tsingtao, he slept badly due to the constant crackle of gunfire coming from the outskirts of the city.

Less than one month after he had settled in at the new Australian Legation in Nanking, Copland had come to some important conclusions about the prospects of the Nationalists and the probable effects of American intervention in Chinese politics. In a despatch to Canberra dated 4 July and marked 'MOST SECRET', he recounted a 'long and frank' conversation with Tillman Durdin, a veteran *New York Times* correspondent who served as an advisor to the US envoy George Marshall. Durdin wanted to 'sound me out', Copland wrote, 'on a proposal he had been thinking of making to Marshall'. For his part, Copland reported:

¹⁵⁶ Despatch no.27, 'Visit to Tsingtao and Tientsin', Annex A, 'The Spacious Days in China', p.8.



Copland's hilltop residence at Kwei-yun Tang 歸雲堂 (The Hall of Returning Clouds) to the west of Nanking, with the city and Purple Mountain in the background, c.1947. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

I had been thinking a good deal about the long term implications of American intervention in China, and I was able to underline his [Durdin's] fears that it would not produce political reform, that it would leave all the abuses of the land and financial systems practically untouched, that it was in danger of producing one of the worst systems of exploitative capitalism the world had known, that it would lead in the end to much dispute between the Chinese Government and the Americans with a new anti-foreign campaign, and that all this would be balm to the soul of the Communists and greatly to the advantage of Russia.¹⁵⁷

NANKING, THE 'GLORIOUS VILLAGE'

The city of Nanking, a glorious centre of commerce and culture from Ming times in the late fourteenth century, had never fully recovered from the depredations of the Taiping Civil War in the mid-nineteenth century. That war — to that date the longest, and bloodiest, civil conflict in human history — left the Lower Yangtze Valley, where Nanking is situated, a depopulated *Trümmerfeld*, so much so that in 1930 the noted essayist Lin Yutang could describe the place as little more than a 'glorious village':

[I]ts little hills and undulations in the city topography, its cabbage fields and poultry yards, its horse carriages plodding

¹⁵⁷ Despatch no.49, 'The Truce Discussions: Some Reflections', 4 July 1946, pp.1, 4, NAA A4231, 1946/NANKING PART2.

drowsily along narrow alley-ways, and the general appearance of desolation and extreme rusticity inside the city limits.¹⁵⁸

By the time Copland arrived in Nanking, in May 1946, swathes of land within the ancient city walls were still devoted to agriculture. The Minister's official residence was located to the west of the city centre on a hill in a district known as The Hall of Returning Clouds, proximate to the Yangtze. It offered a vista of the surrounding countryside. As Copland wrote to his wife Ruth, who was still in Australia and would not arrive in Nanking for another year:

The sun is setting on Purple Mountain and there are low hills all around to the left and in between fields and trees, still green with leaves showing the first signs of losing their colour, and the corn fields taking on a yellow hue. The peasants are working in their fields and people are wandering aimlessly on the roads, and you would think that China was really the land so often described in books.¹⁵⁹

The residence (or, in official parlance, 'the Legation') boasted a swimming pool, where Copland's staff spent a lot of time during the blistering summer months, and a yard large enough to host garden parties and games of cricket with members of the British Embassy. But many visitors confused the Copland residence with the Chancery — the site of official diplomatic business, which was located in the main part of the city — including once guests for a dinner party that the Minister was hosting for local university professors: 'The four who turned up late [having gone to the Chancery by mistake] were from Ginling College, including the distinguished principal, Dr Wu Yi-feng, probably the most able woman in the land', Copland wrote to his wife. 'She had been here before and had had trouble [with the address] on that occasion'.¹⁶⁰ Copland's own commute between the Legation and the Chancery was unproblematic as he had a driver although, as he told his close friend and former teacher, the economist Lyndhurst Giblin, on most days he preferred the two-mile walk into town: 'it is across almost open country within the city walls and in these still Autumn days the landscapes are extraordinarily attractive'.¹⁶¹

In 1929, shortly after the Republican government had been installed in Nanking, urban planners began transforming the gracious, if down-at-heel, old town known to its residents as Chin-ling 金陵 ('Golden Hills') into a modern capital city, new suburbs of which were in part inspired by another planned city, that of Canberra. Some of the older suburbs to the west of the Drum Tower in the heart of the old city were demolished to make way for a 'High-Level Residential Zone'.¹⁶² There, grand mansions for officials, the wealthy and foreign diplomats were built in keeping with contemporary architectural trends and the latest standards of hygiene. An Australian Chancery

¹⁵⁸ Lin Yutang, 'The Little Critic', *The China Critic*, vol.III, no.49 (4 December 1930): 1165-1168, at pp.1165-1166.

¹⁵⁹ Letter, Copland to Ruth, 4 September 1946, NLA MS3800, Box 158.

¹⁶⁰ Letter, Copland to Ruth, 18 September 1946, NLA MS3800, Box 158.

¹⁶¹ Letter, Copland to Giblin, 12 October 1946, NAA A4144, 270/1946.

¹⁶² For details of Nanking's 'Capital Plan' 首都計畫, see Charles Musgrove, *China's Contested Capital*, pp.55-88.



Top: the first Chancery of the Australian Legation at 34 Peiping Road (now Beijing West Road), Nanking, c. 1947 (photograph by Max Loveday, courtesy Loveday family and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade); bottom: the second Chancery at 32 (previously 26) Yihe Road, now a private residence, in 2013. The building is one of many protected sites in the 'Yihe Road Republican Architecture Complex' 頤和路民國建築群. (Photograph by William Sima)

was opened in the heart of this district at 34 Peiping Road in June 1946, before moving to a second location in early 1948, at nearby Yi Ho Road. It was not just Eggleston who referred to the Melbourne suburb of Toorak as the standard for all things solid and upper class. 'We have the British Counsel next door and the Canadians at the end of the street', wrote Barry Hall in a letter home. It was 'just as if a large chunk of Toorak was liberally sprinkled with foreign diplomats of all descriptions'.¹⁶³

The mayor of Nanking, Shen Yi 沈怡, lived in a modern stucco house at 38 Peiping Road which was mockingly referred to as 'the White House' due to its resemblance to the presidential residence and workplace in Washington. Shen and his wife, 'first lady' Inyeening Shen 沈應懿凝, would become good friends of the Coplands following Ruth Copland's arrival in mid 1947. Inyeening Shen later wrote that she found the Australian couple 'affable and sincere, without the hypocritical politeness ... so often seen as the only social amenity of many of the other diplomats.' Copland, she also noted, 'frequently presented lectures in Nanking, at universities and other education institutions. He also took pleasure in going to other cities in China by invitation from local universities. We met more often in academic gatherings than at diplomatic functions'.¹⁶⁴

The Australians also made friends with the university lecturer, translator and *bon vivant* Yang Hsien-yi 楊憲益. Yang and his English wife Gladys (the daughter of a British missionary) lived nearby and were frequent guests at legation functions, including the celebration of Australia Day in 1948.¹⁶⁵ Yang Hsien-yi taught English and Byzantine history at two local universities. Despite this and as a result of rampant inflation, he only made the equivalent of eight dollars a month, an amount that could merely buy the equivalent of two sacks of flour.¹⁶⁶ Bill Hamilton, the mission's accountant, who later served as Bursar, then Registrar, of ANU, recalls that on one occasion he lent money to the Yangs, which Hsien-yi repaid with a set of Japanese woodblock prints.¹⁶⁷

Copland was naturally cordial in his dealings with members of the country's political establishment, but his real sympathies lay with the students and intellectuals protesting against the Civil War. Copland found the despotic and violent behaviour of the Nationalists — including the brazen assassination of the outspoken liberal poet Wen Yi-tuo 聞一多 in Kunming, in July 1946, after he likened Chiang Kai-shek to Hitler and Mussolini — as well as their corruption and lack of concern about inflation to be repugnant. One of his most prominent contacts was Soong Ching-ling 宋慶齡, the widely-respected widow of

¹⁶³ Letter, Barry Hall to his mother, 31 May 1946, provided to the author by Diana Hall.

¹⁶⁴ Jane Shen Schopf, ed., *My Years in Nanking: Reminiscences of Inyeening Shen*, Bloomington (Indiana): iUniverse, pp.90-91.

¹⁶⁵ Despatch no.15, 'Australia Day, 1948', Annex B, 'Informal Reception on Sunday, 25th January on the eve of the Australian National Day, at 26 Yi Ho Lu, From 5:30 to 7:30 PM', p.4, NAA, A4231, 1948/NANKING PART 1. Margaret Lundie (in *Never a Dull Moment in China*, p.108) notes that: 'We did get to know some Chinese well, notably Yang Hsien-yi and his China-born wife of English stock, Gladys. They lived quite close to us. In order to supplement their salaries, ravaged by inflation, they used to sell pottery and miscellaneous curios.' For an account of Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang's relationships with later generations of Australian scholars, and a tribute to Yang Hsien-yi following his death in November 2009, see *China Heritage Quarterly*, no.25 (March 2011), online at <http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/editorial.php?issue=025>.

¹⁶⁶ Yang Xianyi, *White Tiger*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, pp.152-154.

¹⁶⁷ Author's interview with Bill Hamilton, 21 August 2014, Canberra.



'Lunch with the Mayor', March 1948. From the left: Ruth Copland, Lady Stevenson, Inyeening Shen, Douglas Copland, unknown, Shen Yi, and Anujee Menon (wife of the Indian Ambassador, KPS Menon). (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

Sun Yat-sen (and sister of Chiang Kai-shek's wife, May-ling), who the Australian diplomat met in September 1946 after lecturing at the Shanghai Rotary Club. An outspoken opponent of the Civil War, Soong — a public figure who, despite her lofty status, was under surveillance as a Communist sympathiser — admired Copland's liberal opinions. 'Madame Sun will welcome you here,' Copland wrote to Ruth, shortly after that first encounter. 'She has been reading my address at the Rotary Club & said that she was pleased that I was a liberal — we had a talk about China & agreed that progress could only come through the adoption of a liberal policy'.¹⁶⁸

In September 1946, the British writer and historian Charles Patrick FitzGerald, who would eventually establish the Chinese Studies programme at ANU, arrived in Nanking to work for the British Council, which was also located on Peiping Road. He recalled with humour his first introduction to the Australians who lived over the road. The windows of the Australian Chancery did not have curtains, and FitzGerald caught sight of the Australians, Charles Lee, Barry Hall and Lionel Phillips, while they were undressing.¹⁶⁹

FitzGerald had been fascinated with China since his school days in London and, after having found himself a job in China at the age of twenty-one, had lived and travelled in the country for over ten years. During this first China sojourn, from 1923 to 1928, he studied Chinese

¹⁶⁸ Letter, Copland to Ruth, 30 September 1946, NLA MS3800, Box 158.

¹⁶⁹ Stephen Foster, 'Interview with Emeritus Professor CP FitzGerald', 2 May 1991, ANU Oral History Archive, online at: http://www.anu.edu.au/emeritus/ohp/interviews/cp_fitzgerald.html. See also Mirabel and Anthea FitzGerald, 'C.P. FitzGerald: A Memoir', in the volume 'In Memoriam: Charles Patrick FitzGerald', *East Asian History*, no.6 (December 1993): 1-6.

in Peking and worked as a depot clerk on the Peking-Mukden Railway. In 1927, while working at the International By-Products Company in Hankow — ‘the euphemistic name’, he said, for a company which turned pig guts into hot dog casings for export to America — he witnessed the siege and capture of that city by Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist forces during the Northern Expedition.¹⁷⁰

FitzGerald’s formal education, which later proved to be a matter of some contention among his prospective employers at ANU, consisted of a Diploma of Mandarin from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, which he completed in 1930 shortly after returning from his first stint in China. By the time FitzGerald met Copland and his fellow Australians in 1946, the British clerk and adventurer turned scholar had built up a formidable knowledge of the country and its history. He had also published three significant books: the first, *Son of Heaven*, a biography of the founder of the Tang dynasty, Li Shih-min 李世民, appeared in 1933 through Cambridge University Press; his second, *China: A Short Cultural History*, was published by Cresset Press in London in 1935 and was later translated into Chinese, Russian, Polish, Italian and German (it was used as a standard introductory text in high schools and universities up until the 1980s). The year after *China* was published, FitzGerald was awarded a Leverhulme Fellowship to study the language and culture of the Bai, or Min-chia ethnic minority in China’s southwestern Yunnan province. He pursued this project from 1936 to 1939 and published the resulting book, *The Tower of Five Glories*, in 1941.

FitzGerald and his wife Sara were soon enjoying frequent contact with the Australians and, like Inyeening Shen, they appreciated the informal friendliness of Copland and his staff. Sara FitzGerald commented that: ‘the Australians were much better at mixing with the Chinese than most of the embassies’.¹⁷¹ For his part FitzGerald remarked:

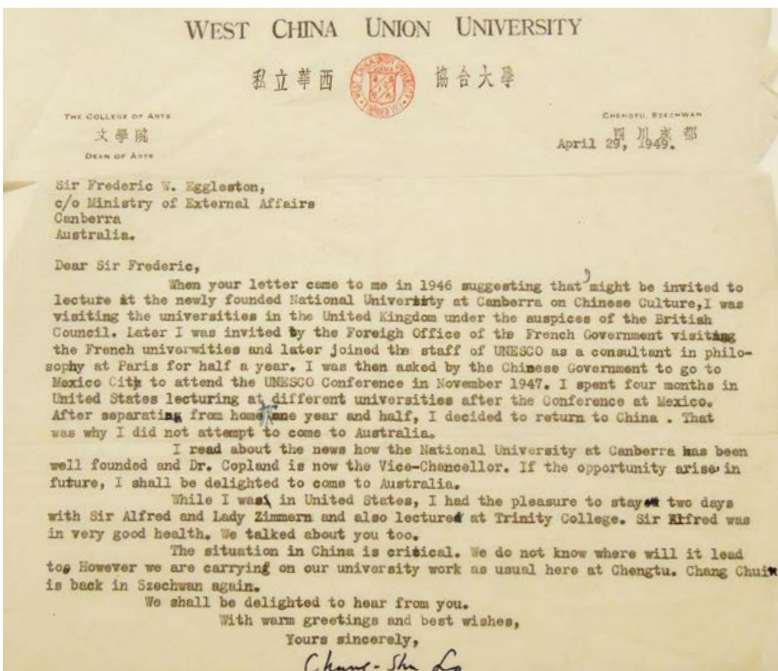
Chinese regarded Australia as in a different category from the leading nations of the West, the United States, Great Britain and France. ... Australia — even more than Canada — was seen as a ‘liberated’ country, which had shaken off colonial bonds. It was therefore treated with sympathy as a potential friend, and as Sir Douglas Copland developed his policy approach, a useful intermediary between the Chinese government and the embassies of the major Western powers. The Communists, who still in 1946 had a mission, headed by Chou En-lai ... also saw Australia in this light, and formed good relations with Sir Douglas.¹⁷²

FitzGerald might have been referring to an occasion in September 1946 when Copland received Wang Ping-nan 王炳南, an emissary from Chou En-lai, at the Australian Chancery. He told his wife Ruth that the Communists were ‘actually sounding me out as to whether there was not some form of international mediation that could be adopted to stop the civil war. I must say that I sympathised with them, but I could only say that I would call on

¹⁷⁰ CP FitzGerald, *Why China?: Recollections of China, 1923-1950*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985, p.85.

¹⁷¹ Lundie, *Never a Dull Moment in China*, pp.99-100.

¹⁷² CP FitzGerald, *Why China?*, p.211.



Top: CP FitzGerald shortly before his first trip to China, c.1923 (courtesy Mirabel and Anthea FitzGerald); bottom: letter, Lo Chung-shu to Eggleston, 29 April 1949. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

Chou early next week and have a further talk. Meanwhile I'll have to send a message to Canberra about the talk. I don't expect much response.'¹⁷³

As was so often the case, Canberra was unenthusiastic.

CANBERRA INTERLUDE

Later that same month, Copland was summoned to New York to support Norman Makin, the Australian Ambassador to the United States, at an early meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations which had been established the previous year. Before returning to China, Copland took a long detour and spent thirteen weeks in Australia. While there, he complained to Prime Minister Ben Chifley about Canberra's lack of attention to the Nanking Legation.¹⁷⁴ The Chinese, he said, 'had been a little disturbed that no response had come from Australia to their repeated suggestions that the status [of the Australian Legation] should be raised [to that of an embassy]'. Copland also told the Prime Minister that China's spiralling inflation had also placed a considerable financial burden on him and his staff.¹⁷⁵

By the time Copland arrived in Canberra in early 1947, Frederic Eggleston had been sitting on the Interim Council of ANU for some four months. He had already shared with the Council his enthusiasm about inviting a Chinese scholar to lecture in Australia in the hope that such a prominent visitor would help advise the university on the development of Chinese Studies. He now asked Copland to pursue the matter on his return to China. At this stage, Eggleston had still not heard back from Lo Chung-shu, the British-educated philosopher to whom he had extended an invitation to visit Australia at the time of ANU's inauguration the previous August (Lo was travelling overseas and Eggleston's letter went missing; he would not receive a reply for another two years).

In response to Eggleston's request, Copland suggested four possible candidates: Hu Shih, President of Peking University; the evolutionary biologist and eugenicist, Quentin Pan, then at Tsinghua University in Peiping, who, as another outspoken critic of the Nationalist government, Copland admired as a 'person of strong personality, a good sense of humour and great courage'; and one 'Professor Li, whose full name I forget, of St. John's University, Shanghai, [who] would be able to deal with Economics and Political Science'. The fourth was Wu Yi-fang, who held a PhD in biology from the University of Michigan. In 1927, Wu had been appointed head of the Ginling Women's College in Nanking, becoming China's first female university president.¹⁷⁶

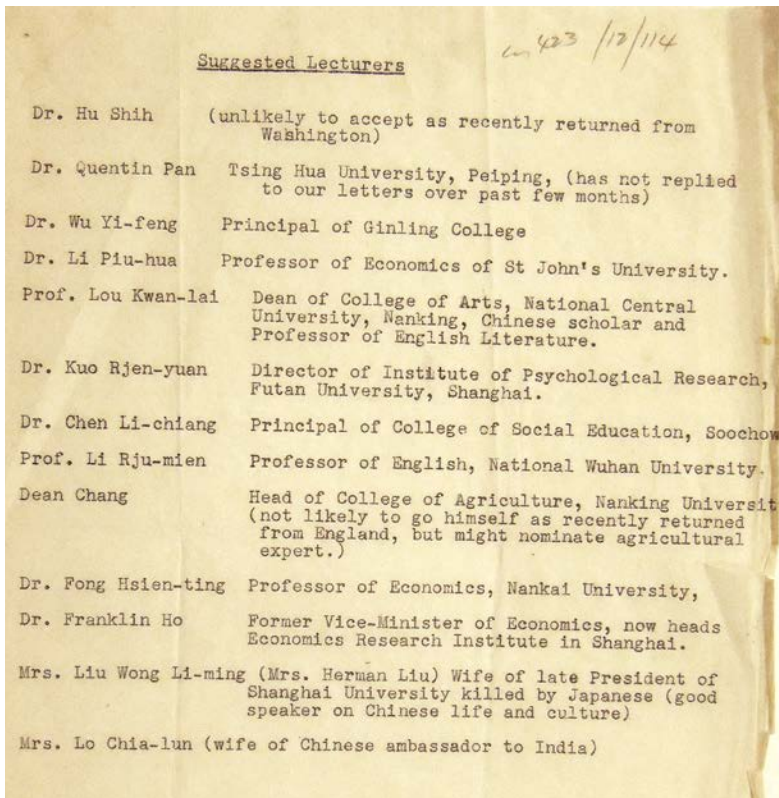
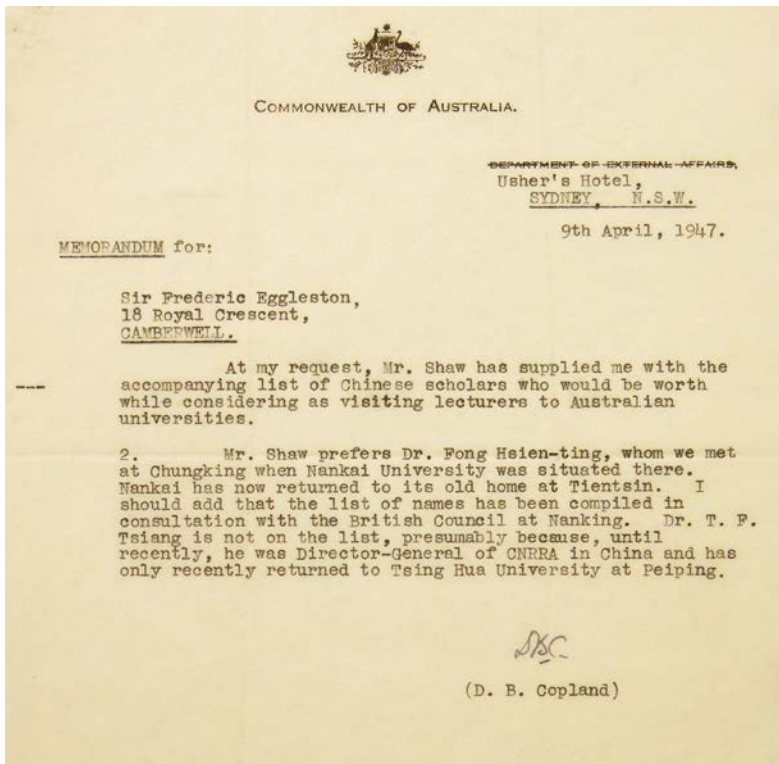
Eggleston approved of extending an invitation to Hu Shih, a prominent cultural figure and political thinker since the 1910s. He also suggested Tsiang Ting-fu 蔣廷黻, a Columbia University educated historian of Ch'ing-era and modern China, who had

¹⁷³ Letter, Copland to Ruth, 18 September 1946, NLA MS3800, Box 158.

¹⁷⁴ Marjorie Harper, *Douglas Copland*, pp.292-300.

¹⁷⁵ Copland, summary of 'An interview with the Prime Minister on January 8th', 10 January 1947, NLA MS3800/Box 148.

¹⁷⁶ Letter, Copland to Eggleston, 18 February 1947, NLA MS423/12/98.



Letter from Copland to Eggleston, 9 April 1947, including the names of Chinese scholars to be considered by the Interim Council. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

supervised John King Fairbank at Tsinghua University in the 1930s. Tsiang had abandoned academic life in 1935 to join the Nationalist government, convinced that China needed strong, dictatorial government in the face of mounting Japanese aggression.¹⁷⁷ Eggleston submitted both Hu's and Tsiang's names for consideration to the ANU Interim Council during its seventh meeting, in March 1947.¹⁷⁸ Meanwhile, after consulting with the British Council in Nanking, Copland's Chargé, Patrick Shaw, provided a list of thirteen other potential candidates, which was sent to Eggleston in April. These thirteen included Copland's original suggestion of Wu Yi-fang, a person whom Copland had come particularly to admire.

He pursued this quest as the situation in China continued to deteriorate. Copland remarked to a friend that the city to which he had returned on 20 May 1947:

was a very different Nanking from the one I had left. In the interim, the civil war had gone wrong, as it was bound to. There was a tremendous increase in prices and no end of the inflationary movement in sight, and political unrest was boiling up to a crisis. None of my Chinese friends could offer any hope of any improvement, and very few of them actually wanted to talk about it.¹⁷⁹

The US envoy George Marshall had left China, having declared his mission to broker a truce between the Nationalists and the Communists a failure. In July, the Nationalist government issued a General Mobilisation Order, in effect a declaration of full-scale civil war that cast aside even the pretence of the ceasefire agreements which had been the hallmark of American mediation since 1945. Copland reported to Canberra that a page of cartoons by the artist Loh Han-ying 樂漢英 which overtly lampooned Nationalist politicians, scholars and military leaders for their corruption, venality and incompetence had appeared in the newspaper *Tieh Pao* 鐵報. It was 'one of the few pleasing things' Copland found on the Chinese political scene at the time. As a result of the increasingly paranoid Nationalist regime of censorship, *Tieh Pao* was soon banned, but the English newspaper *China Weekly Review* soon reprinted the satirical material.¹⁸⁰

Copland had by now developed strong sympathies for the anti-Civil War movement led by students and liberals. While continuing to support Eggleston's search for suitable academics to lecture in Australia, the communications between the two men in the second half on 1947 reveal a distinctly different approach to the task. Eggleston, driven by an obsession with perceived 'intellectual eminence', was adamant that Hu Shih should be invited to Australia; Copland had his doubts. Certainly, he had approved of the 'dignified statement from the leading scholar of China, Dr. Hu Shih' when, in May, Hu condemned Chiang Kai-shek for his attacks on anti-war student protesters as Communist stooges. In defence of the students, Hu cited examples of student protests

¹⁷⁷ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, 26 February 1947, NLA MS423/12/103; see also John King Fairbank, *Chinabound: a Fifty-Year Memoir*, New York: Harper & Row, 1982, pp.85-103.

¹⁷⁸ ANU Interim Council, Minutes of the Seventh Meeting, 14 March 1947, ANUA 198, Box 2.

¹⁷⁹ Letter, Copland to Bernard Foster, 7 July 1947, NLA MS3800, Box 153.

¹⁸⁰ Despatch no.67, 'The Cartoonist in China', 7 June 1947, p.2, NAA A4231, 1947/ NANKING PART 2.



Two cartoons from the *China Weekly Review*, 31 May 1947. Top: Hsueh Tieh-wu 宣鐵吳, the Commander of the Shanghai Garrison, is shown 'beating tigers and catching flies' 打虎捏蒼蠅 — a euphemism for an anti-corruption drive against high- and low-level government officials. Working under Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo 蔣經國, Hsueh was in charge of stamping out racketeering involving government loans that had been given to Shanghai rice producers to stabilise market prices; bottom: Hu Shih, doyen of the 1919 May Fourth intellectual movement, editor of the 1930s journal *Independent Review* 獨立評論 and President of Peking University, sits in front of a blackboard on which the words 'education first' are written.

from Chinese history. However, by July, Hu had changed tack entirely, coming out in support of Chiang's General Mobilisation Order against the Communists.¹⁸¹ Chinese liberals, Copland wrote to Eggleston, were 'beginning to entertain some doubt as to whether [Hu] can be sufficiently independent to maintain any semblance of liberal influence.' By contrast, he found the female university president Wu Yi-fang inspirational:

One of the most independent persons is Dr. Wu Yi-feng [sic] of Ginling College. Her comment on the Mobilisation Order was that you could never settle the Communist question by military means. There are stories concerning her that, at a private party during the last meeting of the PPC [People's Political Conference], she tackled the Gmo [Generalissimo] on his repressive measures against the students. That is a pretty brave thing for an academic person to do. ... I would have as much confidence in her integrity of mind as I have almost any Chinese I have met. As soon as I hear from Hu Shih, I shall cable you, and, if he does not respond, I shall make another suggestion.¹⁸²

Eggleston knew Wu from his time in Chungking: 'She seems to me one of the nicest looking people I have ever met, but whether she has any intellectual eminence I couldn't make out,' he responded to Copland, politely rejecting his suggestion that they invite her to Australia.¹⁸³



Wu Yi-fang, one of only four women to sign the Charter of the United Nations, at the UN San Francisco Conference, June 1945. (Courtesy UN Photo)

¹⁸¹ Despatch no.70, 'The Reign of Repression', 9 June 1947, p.3, NAA A4231, 1947/ NANKING PART 2.

¹⁸² Letter, Copland to Eggleston, 24 July 1947, NLA MS423/12/149.

¹⁸³ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, 8 September 1947, NLA MS423/12/163.

It would appear that Eggleston had made little effort to find out just how 'eminent' Wu Yi-fang was, and his comment on her appearance, rather than pursuing the issue of her intellectual acuity, is telling. Although Wu was prominent enough to be one of the first female signatories of the UN Charter, Tsiang Ting-fu, the second candidate on Eggleston's wish-list, had been appointed as the Republic of China's representative to the United Nations. 'I am glad to see this but, in another way, I am sorry', Eggleston wrote to Copland, 'because I believe that this will mean he will not be able to come to Australia.' Thereupon, Eggleston instructed Copland to approach Hu again, in the hope that he might be able to come to Canberra in 1948 — 'any time from March to July would do.'¹⁸⁴

ANU CALLING

For Copland these were by no means the only frustrations he experienced in China. The decaying political situation deeply depressed him while at the same time he was increasingly disillusioned about the value of his reports to Canberra. He felt that he was merely 'beating the air', especially since External Affairs still showed no sign of elevating the status of the Legation. The Department had also failed to attend to his requests regarding staff salaries and permanent accommodation for the Mission. Moreover, his wife Ruth and daughter Rosemary were finding it difficult to cope with Nanking's stifling summer heat (the city is one of the country's notorious 'Three Great Furnaces' 三大火爐), and the Coplands were concerned to place Rosemary in an appropriate school back in Australia.¹⁸⁵ At the end of July, he wrote to Eggleston:

You probably know that I am not particularly well pleased with Australian relations with China, and I don't think I could afford to mark time here much longer than the end of the year. With the dead weight of a return to Kuomintang dictatorship, there is neither life nor inspiration in Nanking, and by the end of the year I certainly think I shall have exhausted all the reporting I think will be worth while. I should very much like to get up north, not only in the cities held by the Government but out into the Communist area. However, that will be impossible because I am sure the Chinese Government would frown upon it and I don't think my friends in Canberra would think that they would have a particularly good political asset in my roaming around among the Communists in China. I continue to hear reports of the effectiveness of the Communists' war effort and the efficiency of their administration compared with that of the Government, and I would very much like to see it on the spot.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, 20 June 1947, NLA MS423/12/140. The minutes of the Interim Council (Eleventh Meeting, 11 July 1947) recorded correspondence from Copland, advising that 'as Tsiang Ting-fu is unable to accept, he [Copland] is inviting Dr. Hu Shih to visit Australia on the National University's behalf'. See ANU A198, Box 2.

¹⁸⁵ Letter, Copland to John Burton (Secretary, Department of External Affairs), 12 August 1947, NLA MS3800, Box 148.

¹⁸⁶ Letter, Copland to Eggleston, 24 July 1947, NLA MS423/12/149.

Despite his misgivings about Nationalist government disapproval, Copland did travel north for a second time. From 19 September to 7 October, he visited the grand, if deliquescent city of Peiping. He stayed in the courtyard house near Coal Hill 煤山 in the centre of the city where Barry Hall lived while attending language classes. The Communist-held areas that he was so keen to visit now included much of Manchuria:

It is not stretching one's imagination too far to say that if the Communist campaign in Manchuria is successful, the fortunes of the Government armies to the north of the Yellow River will be seriously affected.¹⁸⁷

Despite his reservations about Hu Shih, Copland met with him on a number of occasions during his stay in Peiping. The day before he left the city, he attended a banquet with Hu who, 'in a half serious vein', suggested that the Australian diplomat 'be appointed adviser to the Chinese Government on how to check inflation'.¹⁸⁸ As Copland reported to Mills and the Interim Council of ANU, on this occasion Hu told him that if he were to accept an invitation to Canberra, he would only be able to stay for a month. It was the same for Tsiang Ting-fu who, he said, 'was really quite upset that he could not accept the invitation [to visit Australia]'.¹⁸⁹

Copland found a letter from Eggleston waiting for him upon his return to Nanking:

I really can't quite get your idea that the Communists have something to contribute. So far as I can see, they are only running around in circles picking up bits of railway line wherever they come across it. ... I hope you do not leave the Service at the end of the year unless you have something much more worth your while and valuable to the public of Australia. Would you like to be Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University at Canberra? I have no authority in the matter, but I would know what to do.¹⁹⁰

Copland replied the next day to say he would be interested in the position.¹⁹¹ Thereupon, when addressing the Interim Council, Eggleston argued strongly in Copland's favour. The economist's qualities, Eggleston declared: 'included proven administrative capacity, a flair for publicity, vast energy, and a determination to take no nonsense from anyone who might offer it'.¹⁹²

The Council approved the appointment that same month. In March 1948, one week before leaving China, Copland received a letter from CP FitzGerald, who now headed the British Council office in Peiping:

¹⁸⁷ Despatch no.72, 'Military Situation in China — Manchuria', 14 June 1947, p.2, NAA A4231, 1947/NANKING PART 2.

¹⁸⁸ Despatch no.8, 'Visit to Peiping', 17 October 1947, Annex D, 'Diary on Visit to Peiping', p.14, NAA A4231, 1947/NANKING PART 3.

¹⁸⁹ Letter, Copland to Mills, 30 September 1947, NLA MS423/12/169.

¹⁹⁰ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, 8 September 1947, NLA MS423/12/163-164.

¹⁹¹ Letter, Copland to Eggleston, 9 October 1947, NLA MS423/1/466.

¹⁹² Foster and Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, p.31.

S.S.

Dear Prof. Copland:

I am enclosing two complimentary tickets to the Ball for you and Mrs. Copland. I cannot tell you how happy I am that you both could attend it. Sir Ralph and Lady Stevenson, as well as Dr. and Mrs. Sun Fo and others from the Government will be happy indeed, when they find you both at the same table. It will be an enjoyable affair I think, and that you will be interested.

My office informs me that the Australian Consulate is one of the few Consulates that fail to get tickets from us, whenever there is a show on. So I am sure that if the members of the staff could go, it will be an encouragement to the members of the Ball Committee. I am, therefore, sending four tickets for them. If more are needed, I shall be able to supply them at once.

With kindest regards and looking forward with great pleasure to welcoming you and Mrs. Copland at the Canidrome on the 10th.

Yours very sincerely,
Sung Ching Ling
 (Mrs. Sun Yat-sen)

45 Tsing Kiang Lu,
 4 Nov. 1947
 Telephone 71051

Answered - 27.3.48 D.C.

Dear Prof. Copland,

Here is a little souvenir for you and Mrs. Copland. I cannot tell you how sorry I am that I shall be in the country on Saturday to show some foreign friends the different children's centres here. But I shall try my best to be at the air field on Sunday to wish you a bon voyage.

All the best!

Yours sincerely,
Sung Ching Ling

75 Hope you've rec'd Louis Adamic's book Oct 9
 sent via your banking Embassy last week -

26 4 1948.



Above: Soong Ching-ling in 1958 (from *Commemorating Comrade Song Qingling* 纪念宋庆龄同志, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1982); (opposite) top: letter from Soong to Douglas Copland, 4 November 1947; bottom: letter dated 26 March 1948, the day Copland left Nanking. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

When I last saw you in Nanking you will remember that you asked me to give you a short note on my career. I enclose this on a separate sheet, with apologies for the delay. We are all very sorry that you should be leaving China, and China will lose a candid friend — of which she has too few. On the other hand Australia will be the gainer by your return, and I feel sure that at Canberra you will find work after your own heart.¹⁹³

The letter came accompanied by a copy of FitzGerald's curriculum vitae.

¹⁹³ Letter, FitzGerald to Copland, 19 March 1948, NLA MS3800, Box 149. On 22 March, Copland responded to FitzGerald: 'Thank you for your reference to "the candid friend". It is not always easy to get away with, but I must say that my Chinese friends have been most charming and are now showering gifts on me. I leave Nanking on the 26th to catch a plane from Shanghai on the 28th, and I hope to be in Sydney on April 2nd in time to be present at the closing stages of discussions between the University and the academic group who have come from England to discuss the basic plans for the University. I shall certainly let you know in due course what these plans are. Meanwhile, I think I shall envy you your time in Peiping, particularly from now until the end of June. If I had not been leaving, I think I would have paid another visit before the summer.' (Letter, Copland to FitzGerald, 22 March 1948, NLA MS3800, Box 149.)

CHAPTER 4

FAR EASTERN HISTORY: 1948–1954

By the time Douglas Copland returned to Canberra to take up the position of vice-chancellor at The Australian National University in April 1948, the George E Morrison Lectureship, established in 1932 in the memory of the famed Australian China correspondent, was itself little more than a distant memory. The oration had suffered a number of setbacks: the passing of William Ah Ket in 1936 and Colin MacKenzie in 1938 deprived the enterprise of two of its founders and key proponents. From the late 1930s, the selection of prospective speakers, a task originally entrusted to the permanent committee of Liu, Ah Ket, the Director of the Institute of Anatomy, the Minister for Health and the Chinese Consul-General, had fallen solely upon William Liu. Were it not for Liu's efforts to keep the Morrison Lecture alive throughout the 1940s, there is little chance it would have survived to become a noted annual event in the Chinese Studies calendar at ANU.

The advent of the Pacific War severely curtailed Canberra's public life, including the annual Morrison Lecture. 'It would seem that so many people here [in Canberra] are so intently engaged in wartime activities that they have not the time nor the inclination to attend public meetings or addresses', read a letter to Liu from Frederick Clements, MacKenzie's successor as Director of the Institute of Anatomy, in August 1944. 'Thus I believe it wiser to again defer the Lectureship.'¹⁹⁴ Not deterred, each year the indefatigable William Liu suggested possible speakers, with Clements then contacting them and arranging publicity for the event. But, after William G Goddard presented the Tenth Morrison Lecture under the title *The Min Sheng: A Study in Chinese Democracy* on 5 June 1941, there was a lengthy hiatus in the series until Douglas Copland delivered the first post-war oration on the subject of *The Chinese Social Structure*, on 27 September 1948.

THE SECOND MORRISON

In 1941, Goddard had been Liu's second choice to present that year's Morrison Lecture. His preference was for a far more well-known Australian, a man Liu called 'Australia's second Morrison in China': the Lithgow-born newspaperman William Henry Donald.¹⁹⁵ It was the result of a cruel irony that Donald would be unavailable to speak in a series in part dedicated to a clear-eyed understanding of Japanese imperial designs: out of sheer disgust with Australia due to its appeasement of Japan, Donald had pledged never to return to his homeland.

In many respects, WH Donald's career in China mirrored

¹⁹⁴ Letter, Clements to Liu, 3 August 1944, ML MSS6294/5.

¹⁹⁵ Letter, Liu to Clements, 18 January 1941, ML MSS6294/5.

that of George Morrison (in Peking the two enjoyed a close friendship). In 1902, Donald was a journalist with the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* when Petrie Watson, on a head-hunting mission for Hong Kong's *China Mail*, called in at the newspaper's offices. Impressed by Donald's enthusiasm for Asian affairs, and by his sobriety — Donald was a lifelong teetotaler, making him a desirable asset in Hong Kong's booze-addled journalistic circles — Watson suggested that the *Mail* hire him. Having accepted the offer, Donald arrived in Hong Kong in May 1903. Further details of this period are unclear and, as Craig Collie notes in his biography of the journalist, this and much else of WH Donald's life remain shrouded in mystery.¹⁹⁶

In 1911, Donald encountered Charlie Soong 宋嘉樹, a wealthy missionary and businessman who was the principal backer of the revolutionary Sun Yat-sen; he soon found himself acting as an adviser to Sun himself. Donald was in Nanking on 1 January 1912, when Sun was sworn in as Provisional President of the new Republic of China. Over the following days, he drafted the English-language text of the 'Manifesto from the Republic of China to All Friendly Nations' which was issued under the name of the president and his foreign minister as an appeal for recognition and support for the fledgling republic.

'While Morrison was giving good advice to Yuan Shih-k'ai [a military leader and competitor with Sun for presidential power] in Peking,' writes Morrison's biographer Cyril Pearl, 'another Australian newspaperman, WH Donald, was performing a similar service for the Republicans in Shanghai.'¹⁹⁷ Both Australians soon found themselves disillusioned with the leaders they were advising; this led to a brief falling-out between the two when Donald let slip in an interview with the *New York Herald* the following: 'I see Dr. Morrison daily, and he does not know whether to be tired of his job or not. He has a hard time of it. Advice is easy to give: the Chinaman listens to advice, but will do what he thinks he wants to do.' Morrison was enraged by the comments, though Pearl notes that: 'the imminent breach between the two Australians — who had a great regard for each other — was averted when Donald explained very apologetically that he had never intended his casual observation to appear in print.'¹⁹⁸

Through a series of chance encounters in the early 1930s, Donald had managed to become an advisor to the warlord Chang Hsueh-liang. He helped 'the Young Marshall' overcome a notorious opium habit and was influential in convincing the warlord to align himself with Chiang Kai-shek's new Nanking government. During the Sian Incident of December 1936, in which the Young Marshall and agents of the Communist Party kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek to broker a second United Front of the Nationalists and Communists against the Japanese, Donald played a key role in negotiations that led to Chiang's release. By the late 1930s, Donald was again advising a republican Chinese president, this time it was Chiang Kai-shek; he was also personally friendly with the president's wife, Soong May-ling, one of Charlie Soong's daughters whom he had known since she was a girl. In 1940, Donald fell out with the Generalissimo over the latter's

¹⁹⁶ In this section I have relied on Craig Collie, *The Reporter and the Warlords: An Australian at Large in China's Republican Revolution*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2013.

¹⁹⁷ Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, p.236.

¹⁹⁸ Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking*, p.280.



Top: WH Donald with Soong May-ling in Shanghai, 1935; bottom: Donald in discussion with the 'Young Marshall', Chang Hsueh-liang, 1936. (Xinhua Net)

policy towards Germany, which Donald believed was too pro-Nazi. Later that year, he left China for Tahiti where he hoped to recover from a series of health problems. Donald was a significant figure at crucial junctures in modern Chinese history. As the journalist Rowan Callick observes: 'a case might be made that he had more influence over more lives than any other Australian since Federation.'¹⁹⁹

On 18 January 1941, William Liu proposed that the journalist be invited to deliver the Tenth Morrison Lecture, with Goddard as a second preference. Liu would have been aware from reading *The Sydney Morning Herald* that Donald was already in New Zealand and preparing to leave for Tahiti. He would need some persuading to return to the country of his birth as it was well-known that the writer 'deeply resent[ed] Australia's friendly and helpful attitude toward Japan and her lack of assistance to China'. As he told reporters in Auckland:

I am not going back to Australia ... I left there 38 years ago, and have never been back. With Australian politics as they are, I shall not go there. ... If it had not been for the stand which China has made ... Japan by now would have carried out her programme of southward expansion. The Chinese feel very bitterly about the attitude of the democracies.²⁰⁰

William Liu, ever the optimist, remained hopeful: 'He has just passed through Auckland on his way to Tahiti where he will remain for a while to write his memoirs', he wrote to Clements. 'In my early correspondence with the late Sir Colin MacKenzie, I referred to Mr. Donald as Australia's second Morrison in China. An invitation from you may influence Mr. Donald to visit his native land Australia on his way back to China.'²⁰¹ For his part, Clements doubted that the Chinese Consul-General would agree: 'Dr. Pao has always been most emphatic that the Morrison orator should refrain from discussing politics', he replied to Liu, noting Donald's 'close association with the central government in China and his general attitude on Eastern politics.'²⁰² But, by early February, Pao had agreed to the idea of inviting Donald, and Clements arranged to contact him.

By this time, however, the journalist cum-political advisor had placed himself far beyond the reach both of his erstwhile employers in China and of his loathed homeland. 'Unsettled and aimless, Donald found Tahiti a dreary paradise', writes Collie. 'Some of his fading health was recovered swimming in the crystal Pacific water and cycling around the island. It was quiet and restful, but he couldn't make any inroads into his book. A letter from Madame [Chiang] asked him to fly back [to Chungking], and he replied that he needed four to six months to book a steamship.'²⁰³ In November, Donald arrived in Honolulu, intending to return to China via Hong Kong. But his ship, the *SS Robert Dollar*, was rerouted to Manila when Pearl Harbor, then Hong Kong itself, fell under attack from the Japanese. Manila was captured three weeks after he arrived. After William Goddard delivered the Tenth Morrison Lecture, in June

¹⁹⁹ Rowan Callick, 'China Writ Large and Small', *The Australian*, 8 February 2014.

²⁰⁰ 'Australia and Japan: WH Donald Criticises Friendship', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 January 1941, p.8.

²⁰¹ Letter, Liu to Clements, 18 January 1941, ML MSS6294/5.

²⁰² Letter, Clements to Liu, 5 February 1941, ML MSS6294/5.

²⁰³ Collie, *The Reporter and the Warlords*, p.290.

1941, William Liu remained anxious that the Lectureship should continue throughout the war years, but despite the best of intentions it was not to be. In May 1944, he suggested a joint oration to Clements with the recently returned Frederic Eggleston taking to the podium with the Chinese Minister Hsu Mo:

Combining the two Ministers' Orations would fittingly cover 1943 and 1944, two-in-one publication this year. As 1942 was a critical year for us all, it could be mentioned as the reason for 'the pause' for that year. Otherwise, our lectures have been continuous since 1931.²⁰⁴

Eggleston's sudden appointment to Washington, however, ruled him out, while Minister Hsu declined an invitation to speak as he was worried that he would be addressing an empty house: 'After careful consideration', Hsu told Liu, 'Dr. Clements frankly made it known to me that ... owing to various conditions the attendance at my proposed lecture might be embarrassingly small, and intimated that as he could not guarantee the presence of a sufficient number of listeners to give me that inspiration which was desired by every public speaker, the matter might, to our mutual advantage, be dropped for the time being.'²⁰⁵ Liu was quietly furious with Clements for putting thoughts about possible lacklustre attendance in the Chinese Minister's mind; then, in a lengthy appeal addressed to Hsu Mo, he replied:

Yes. I am naturally disappointed that you could not, as yet, see your way clear to help us revive the lectureship this year. All the more is this unfortunate, because the honour of having you, as the first Chinese Minister in Australia, to deliver a message, so warmly awaited since your arrival, having been put off so long. There should really be no fear of a lack of interest as all the previous Morrison Lectures were so well received. So many residents of Canberra wishing [*sic*] to hear about China from Consul-General Dr. C.J. Pao (Sixth Lecture – 4/5/1937) that all attending could not be accommodated with the Lecture Theatre of the Australian Institute of Anatomy. ... Visualise how much more interest would it be for Officials at the Capital to have a message from the Chinese Minister, especially at such times as we have been passing through during the past years.²⁰⁶

Neither this, nor Liu's suggested compromise to Hsu Mo — 'a Paper from you instead of the Oration to cover 1944 ... issued in the usual high grade brochure' — eventuated.

Finally, in 1947, it seemed possible that the Australian Minister for External Affairs, HV Evatt, would be available to present the long-delayed annual oration, and he even drafted a lecture titled *The Life of Morrison*. Given Evatt's hectic official schedule, preparations were all very last-minute. William Liu received an invitation less than two weeks before the proposed date, it came with an apology from Clements 'for the delay in advising

²⁰⁴ Letter, Liu to Clements, 're. Morrison Lectureship 1944', 22 May 1944, ML MSS6294/5.

²⁰⁵ Letter, Hsu to Liu, 28 August 1944, ML MSS6294/5.

²⁰⁶ Letter, Liu to Hsu, 9 September 1944, ML MSS6294/5.

you about this Oration but only to-day did I received confirmation from Dr. Evatt that the 25th June would be suitable to him.²⁰⁷ Liu was nonetheless ecstatic, all the more so because it would offer an opportunity to honour the memory of WH Donald, who had passed away in Shanghai the previous November. Liu immediately got in touch with Donald's brother, Herbert: 'I am trying to see if I can find some way to include brother WH in our "GE Morrison Lecture in Ethnology" in which I had taken part to establish in 1931'. He suggested they go together:

I'm trying to go up to Canberra by the regular plane on the 25th instant to save the tedious train journey. Dr. Evatt delivers his address at about 8 pm that night. Come back following day or day after if we find enough interest to keep us there. I say — we — as I am hoping that you may also make the trip for obvious reasons. You could say so much of interest during my discussions with Dr. Clements about perpetuating the memory of brother W.H. through the Lectureship at Canberra — and I believe we could find a very nice way of doing it, and, as I said in enclosed copy letter, by joining to two [sic] great Australians together in such a Lectureship, it should be a great advantage to Australian and Chinese students and diplomats and worthy of the memory of W.H.²⁰⁸

In the event, Evatt's oration was cancelled at the last minute, as he was required to attend hearings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo (that is, the Tokyo War Trials).²⁰⁹ Yet again, the impetus for the lecture series petered out, although Evatt did finally deliver his address, *Some Aspects of Morrison's Life and Work*, but not until December 1952.

On 12 May 1948, Douglas Copland, who spoke and wrote frequently about China following his return to Australia, addressed the United Nations Association at the Trocadero Theatre in Sydney. It was on that occasion that he first met William Liu and, following some correspondence, Liu proposed to Clements that, since Copland would now be in Canberra as the vice-chancellor of The Australian National University, he 'would be an ideal person to favour us our next Morrison Oration, as I suppose the question of Dr. Evatt's delivery is still uncertain.'²¹⁰ Clements agreed with alacrity, adding a note that he had always been uncertain as to why Colin MacKenzie had established the Morrison Lecture under the auspices of the Institute of Anatomy — 'a biological institute' after all, 'concerned with the study of human health and disease'. He went on to suggest to Liu that the endowment for the Lectureship be transferred to the new university:

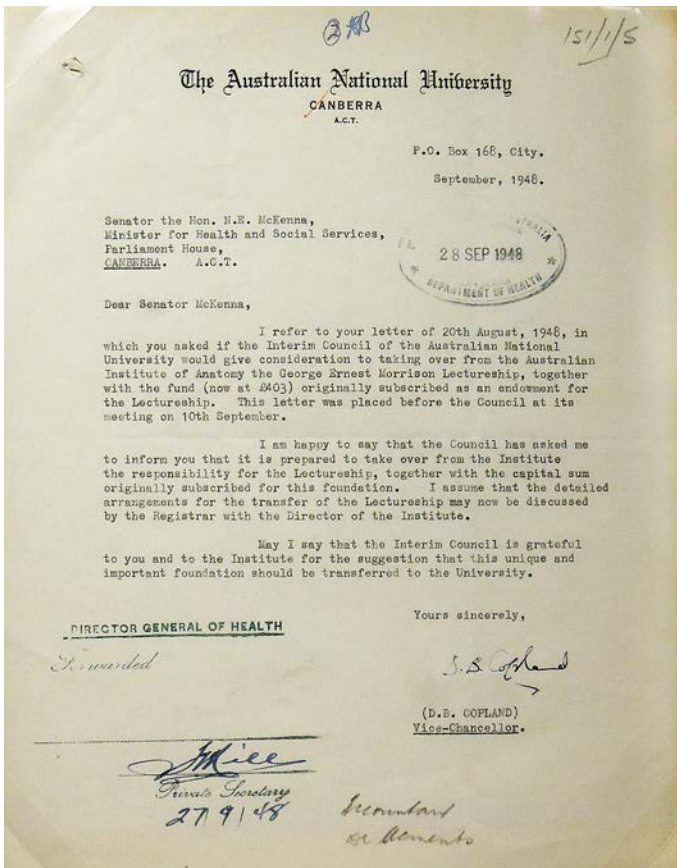
You have probably seen in the press reports of the establishment of the Australian National University in Canberra with its four major research departments, namely, medical science, physical science, social studies and Pacific studies.

²⁰⁷ Letter, Clements to Liu, 13 June 1947, ML MSS6294/5.

²⁰⁸ Letter, Liu to 'Don' (Herbert Donald), 17 June 1947, ML MSS6294/5.

²⁰⁹ Telegrams, Clements to Liu, 20 and 21 June 1947, ML MSS6294/5.

²¹⁰ Letter, Liu to Clements, 24 May 1948, ML MSS6294/5.



Top: Vice-Chancellor Douglas Copland in his office at ANU, late 1940s (courtesy ANU Archives); bottom: Letter from Copland to NE McKenna (Minister for Health and Social Services) confirming the transfer of the George E Morrison Lecture in Ethnology from the Australian Institute of Anatomy to ANU, September 1948. (Courtesy National Archives of Australia)

The last named discipline offers an excellent background for the Morrison Oration in that they propose to study Australian relationships to the Pacific as a whole extending up as far as China.²¹¹

Clements promised to 'not communicate officially with the National University' until Liu had conferred with his colleagues in the Australian-Chinese community. Thereupon, Liu contacted SY Woo, who had succeeded Chun-jien Pao as China's Consul-General, CM Yuen, editor of the *Chinese Times*, and WJ Lee, a barrister and the son of one of the original benefactors of the Morrison Lectureship. 'I am pleased to report', he wrote to Clements, 'that they also join me in supporting your suggestion for the transfer of the Morrison Lectureship to the National University.'²¹²

On 27 September 1948, Copland duly delivered the Eleventh George E Morrison Lecture in Ethnology under the title *The Chinese Social Structure*, the first since the war brought the orations to a halt in 1941. The following day, the ANU Interim Council agreed that the Morrison Lectures should have a new home at the university. Although ANU formally accepted the Morrison endowment in 1948, the lectures continued to be held at the Institute of Anatomy until ANU's University House, opened by the Duke of Edinburgh in February 1954, offered a more appropriate venue.

EASTER MEETINGS

In April 1948, a crucial series of discussions between the Canberra-based ANU Interim Council and the four members of the Academic Advisory Committee who had flown to the Australian capital from England were held at the Institute of Anatomy. Known as the 'Easter Meetings', this was the only occasion on which the two groups met. The task before them was consequential: to finalise the formal titles and intellectual parameters of the four Research Schools named in *The Australian National University Act*.²¹³ The *Act* allowed for considerable flexibility regarding the make-up of the four schools. Each would consist of sub-disciplinary departments, but what these might be, and who would staff them, were still matters for discussion. In light of the university's mandate as a research institution established to advance the national interest, the Council and the Committee had to

²¹¹ Letter, Clements to Liu, 25 June 1948, ML MSS6294/5.

²¹² Letter, Liu to Clements, 25 June 1948, ML MSS6294/5. Liu added that: 'In answer to your query why the Oration was originally brought under the auspices of the Institute of Anatomy — seeing that it is a lectureship in ethnology, as Sir Colin gave birth to the idea of providing a channel to promote Sino-Australian understanding through the annual Orations, he was keen to ensure its progress and permanency, and found it most convenient to deal with the matter at the Institute. There were no other organizations in Canberra sufficiently interested in the subject at the time of the foundation in 1931, and Sir Colin, with some anxiety regarding the then tense developments in the Far East — our Far North as he used to say — felt the urge to provide some means to bring about closer thought between the Australian and Chinese peoples. Sir Colin, apparently, found points of common interest in the study of biology and ethnology. He found, as it were, an inking of the human structural make-up with the deeds of mankind generally.'

²¹³ 'The Australian National University, Conference between the Interim Council and the Academic Advisory Committee, Easter 1948', 30 April 1948, ANUA18, Box 10.



Participants at the Easter Conference meeting convened to discuss Pacific Studies on the steps of the Australian Institute of Anatomy, 4 April 1948. Among the group are: Raymond Firth, Academic Advisor for Pacific Studies (front row, on the right); Keith Hancock, Advisor for Social Sciences (second row, fourth from the left); and, Frederic Eggleston (at the back, to the left of the column). John Crawford (second row, far left) later served as Dean of the Research School of Pacific Studies (1960-1967), and was the fourth Vice-Chancellor of ANU (1968-1973). (Courtesy ANU Archives)

decide just what was expected of ANU. It was an issue that was debated with constant reference to the *Act*. The two bodies also had to decide how ANU would cooperate with its sister institution, the undergraduate Canberra University College (CUC).

Regarding Pacific Studies, Eggleston conceded that two of his earlier enthusiasms — diplomatic studies and languages — might ‘infringe on the principle that the Australian National University does not touch under-graduate studies’, but he was adamant that geography and history, disciplines covering not just the Pacific Islands but East Asia as well, should still be included in the university’s programme.²¹⁴

The Easter Meetings pitted Raymond Firth, the Academic Advisor for the School of Pacific Studies, squarely against Eggleston. As the historians of ANU, Stephen Foster and Margaret Varghese, note, the two men approached the school from different angles; they were ‘almost literally, oceans apart’. Firth advocated a ‘Pacific studies approach’ that emphasised an anthropological stance, while Eggleston championed a ‘Pacific affairs approach’ that favoured what could be called an in-depth multi-disciplinary view.²¹⁵

Acknowledging the ambiguity of the term ‘Pacific’, and the capacious set of

²¹⁴ Eggleston, ‘Note on Professor Hancock’s Letter’, 3 September 1947, p.1, ANUA18, Box 10.

²¹⁵ Foster and Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, p.40.



academic specialisations that were called for to study it, Firth concluded that, in an ideal world and 'with unlimited resources', the school could encompass a range of disciplines 'starting at geology and comprising meteorology, pedology, botany and other divisions of biology, history, demography, economics, anthropology, and the other human sciences.' But, he concluded, reasonably enough, that as the Council had invited him, an anthropologist, to be the School's Academic Advisor, 'the emphasis of the Pacific School ... should be on anthropological studies.' In response to Eggleston's call for a focus on East Asia, Firth argued:

Research should also be done in the wider field, including not only the Pacific colonial territories but also the fields of Chinese and Japanese affairs. But this should be oriented towards the effects of movement in these bordering countries on Australia and the Pacific island territories rather than to analysis of conditions in these countries per se.²¹⁶

The historian Keith Hancock, who sided with Firth, felt that the limited

²¹⁶ Raymond Firth, 'Memorandum on School of Pacific Studies', 30 January 1948, p.2, ANUA 18, Box 10.



A session of the Easter Conference, Australian Institute of Anatomy, April 1948. Clockwise from the front: CS Daley and Robert Garran (with their backs to the camera), Frederic Eggleston, EH Clark (assisting the Registrar), Douglas Copland, RG Osborne (Registrar), RC Mills, HC Coombs, AS Brown, HK Goodes, RD Wright, ALG McDonald (ANU Librarian). The four Academic Advisors, Howard Florey (John Curtin School of Medical Research), Mark Oliphant (Physical Sciences), Raymond Firth (Pacific Studies) and Keith Hancock (Social Sciences) are seated together on the right. (Courtesy ANU Archives)

resources available to Australian scholars would make it impossible to produce internationally outstanding historical research worthy of ANU's mandate. Responding to Eggleston's push for diplomatic and political history, he warned that: 'in studying such a thing as the partition of China, for instance, a good deal more than official political documents would be required. Such things as the reports of railway companies would be necessary and numerous sociological aspects would have to be considered.' Much of this source material would only be available elsewhere — 'Paris, London, Berlin, Moscow'. Hancock argued that the Research School of Pacific Studies should limit its purview and contain its aims within a 'manageable area', and 'accept some geographical limitation and realize that, although individuals would have to be free to go outside the area in some cases, the School could probably make its best contribution to knowledge by concentrating on the South Pacific'. Eggleston responded that Hancock's remarks betrayed a lack of daring; why not be more courageous and act like 'the stockbroker who spent his life making decisions on insufficient evidence and ended up by being a millionaire'?²¹⁷ Elsewhere he would observe:

I think Professor Hancock will realise that we in Australia are acutely conscious of the lack of academic amenities and the rather thin content of our cultural life. The lamp of culture no doubt burns as brightly in Australia as elsewhere, but, owing to our dispersion of population, it is difficult to get a sufficient number of people willing to organise cultural institutions. The

²¹⁷ 'The Australian National University: Conference on Research School of Pacific Studies, Canberra, 3rd and 4th April 1948: Summary of Discussions', pp.10-11, ANUA 18, Box 8.

result is that we tend to lose a great many of our best men who go to places where these institutions are more easily organised. ... What we ask is that Professor Hancock and his colleagues will recognise it is a matter of profound importance in which they will be pioneers.²¹⁸

In the end, Eggleston got his way. Conceding that the Easter Meetings failed to reach a consensus regarding the structure of Pacific Studies, the Interim Council allowed Eggleston, with the support of the Vice-Chancellor, to develop a plan for the school along the lines he had suggested. In February 1949, the Interim Council 'received with regret' a letter from Raymond Firth, who was back in England, in which he resigned from the Advisory Committee. He also turned down the directorship of the School of Pacific Studies. In any case, Firth wrote, both he and his wife were 'culturally European' and they did not wish to relocate to Australia.²¹⁹

In March, Eggleston redrafted the statement for the School of Pacific Studies and included three directives in it: first, to 'give less immediate emphasis to Geography and more to History and Political Science'; second, 'to seek as Director of the School a Political Scientist or Historian'; and, 'to make provision for a study of Linguistics, possibly by the appointment of a Reader'. He conceded that 'Australian policy in New Guinea will rely considerably on anthropological research', but dispensed with what he called Firth's 'microcosmic approach', with its primary emphasis on anthropology, and proposed six departments: Geography, Demography, Political Science, History, Anthropology and Economics.²²⁰ Despite his misgivings, Firth did return for a stint at ANU but only to administer a Research School of Pacific Studies based on Eggleston's ideas.

Eggleston had successfully dispatched Firth's 'microcosmic approach' to Pacific Studies but, in regard to China, he maintained a 'microcosmic fixation' on Hu Shih. Despite Douglas Copland's suggestions regarding any number of other Chinese scholars, Eggleston still insisted that Hu Shih, and only Hu Shih, be invited on a lecture tour and to advise the university on the development of Chinese Studies. On 10 December 1948, at the Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Interim Council, Douglas Copland reported that 'no further information had been received' from Hu Shih regarding his intentions to visit Australia. At the Council's Twenty-Sixth Meeting in February 1949, Copland said that 'advice had been received from the Australian Embassy in Nanking to the effect that Dr. Hu Shih regrets that the situation in China prevents him visiting Australia this year.'²²¹

Hu had more pressing problems than international travel. As the Communist army tightened its grip on Peiping, laying siege to the city in November 1948, the President of Peking University had fled south to

²¹⁸ Eggleston, 'Notes on Professor Hancock's Letter', 3 September 1947, p.4.

²¹⁹ ANU Interim Council, Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Meeting, 11 February 1949, p.1, ANUA 198, Box 2; and, Foster and Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, p.41.

²²⁰ 'Report of Committee on School of Pacific Studies', 11 March 1949, p.1, ANUA 18, Box 6; and, 'Memorandum prepared by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with Sir Frederic Eggleston in accordance with a resolution of the Interim Council at its 27th Meeting', 16 March 1949, pp.1-2, ANUA 77, Box 1.

²²¹ ANU Interim Council, Minutes of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting, 10 December 1948, p.6; and, the Twenty-Sixth Meeting, 11 February 1949, p.12, ANUA 198, Box 2.

Nanking in a plane sent by Chiang Kai-shek, leaving behind much of his library, his manuscripts and letters. Not long after, he went to Shanghai and then into exile in the United States.²²² In August 1949, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party Mao Tse-tung denounced the country's preeminent intellectual figure as a 'running dog of imperialism':

But imperialism and its running dogs, the reactionary governments of China, could control only a part of these intellectuals, and finally only a handful, such as Hu Shih, Fu Sze-nien and Chien Mu; all the rest got out of control and turned against them. Students, teachers, professors, technicians, engineers, doctors, scientists, writers, artists and government employees, all are revolting against or parting company with the Kuomintang.²²³

Had Eggleston entertained the likelihood of Communist victory on mainland China with more gravity, as Copland had suggested he do, and agreed to cast the net a little wider in terms of potential visiting scholars, also as Copland had suggested, Chinese Studies at ANU might have had a very different beginning. But, by this time, Copland had taken matters into his own hands. Having received the 'candid friend' letter from CP FitzGerald just days before leaving Nanking in March, Copland resolved to contact the historian in late December 1948.

As Foster and Varghese note, FitzGerald's was 'probably the only appointment in the history of the ANU that was foretold with the help of a horoscope — or, to be precise, the visit to Australia which immediately led to his appointment was accurately foretold.'²²⁴ In his memoir, *Why China?*, FitzGerald recalls visiting Ma Lun, an fortune-teller whom he had frequently consulted, during the Peiping siege:

'In the sixth month of next year (by the lunar calendar, equivalent to July in the solar calendar) you will go overseas on a long voyage'. 'To my home country?' I asked. 'No; to a far-off country which you have never visited.' 'Alone or with my family?' 'Alone: and after three months you will return to Peking.' 'What about my wife and children?' 'They will remain in Peking while you are away.' He had already given some details of past experience I had had, in China, and in London during the war, which although strikingly accurate, were not unusual: 'a period of great danger', etc., such as could have been of anyone who had lived in the war zones of the recent conflict. But this prediction about a long sea voyage to a distant country I had never visited, alone, was stunning.²²⁵

²²² See Howard Boorman and Richard Howard, eds, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, vol.2, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, p.173. For a discussion of the Communist occupation of Peiping, see Dai Qing's 2007 Morrison Lecture, '1948: How Peaceful was the Liberation of Beijing?', available online at: http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=014_daqing.inc&issue=014.

²²³ Mao Tse-tung, 'Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle', 14 August 1949, in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Peking: Foreign Language Press, p.427.

²²⁴ Foster and Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University*, p.52.

²²⁵ CP FitzGerald, *Why China?*, pp.228-229.

LONG VOYAGES

The far-off country was Australia. Copland and the ANU Registrar Ross Hohnen organised a three-month lecture tour for the historian from early August 1949. During a trip that took him to Canberra, Armidale, Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide FitzGerald delivered sixty-seven public lectures. Most of these addressed university audiences, although in his report on the tour FitzGerald noted that he also spoke to senior high school classes, including students at Cranbrook in Sydney, at Wesley and Scotch colleges in Perth, as well as to public audiences at branches of the Australian Institute of International Affairs and the United Nations Association.

FitzGerald came to Australia expecting to speak about Chinese history, his own area of expertise; some of what he called the 'more sophisticated' members of the audience, in particular those at universities and members of the public service in Canberra, did indeed show an interest in the subject. However, he soon discovered that most interlocutors quickly changed the subject to focus on contemporary events, and understandably so: on 1 October, during the Melbourne leg of the lecture tour, Mao Tse-tung proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China. FitzGerald reported that:

It was extremely interesting — and encouraging — to observe that although what I had to say was often to my audiences unexpectedly favourable to the Chinese Communists and very little in accord with their political inclinations, I always found that the questions asked were objective and discerning, rarely displaying a blind prejudice or closed mind.²²⁶

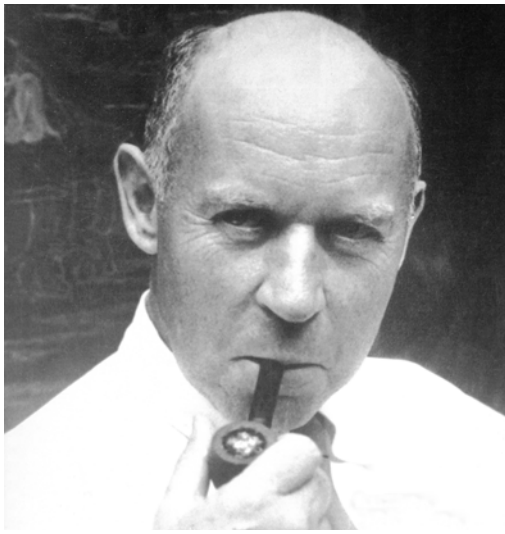
Frequently, audiences expected him to know something of Australia's former enemy: 'the fixation was still all with Japan', he recalled. 'You'd give a lecture about the Chinese revolution, and the question "do you think Japan is going to invade us again?" was inevitable every time.'²²⁷

While it appears that no copies of FitzGerald's lectures are extant, the substance of what he had to say is clear from a number of media interviews he gave at the time and an article he published during the tour. In August, he told Perth's *Daily News* that the Communist successes were due to the desire of the Chinese people to see an end to the Civil War; 'the efficiency and discipline of their armies' and the 'honesty of their administration' in comparison with the Nationalist government, he argued, turned public opinion 'from passive acceptance to open support'.²²⁸ The following month, he published an article on the Communist revolution in Brisbane's *Courier Mail*. Now that China had at last achieved strength and unity, he charged — quoting the words of US President Truman on the eve of the Marshall Mission to China in December 1945 — it was the duty of the Western powers to recognise the new regime:

²²⁶ CP FitzGerald, 'Lecture Tour, July — October 1949', p.1, ANUA 18, Box 11.

²²⁷ Stephen Foster, 'Interview with Emeritus Professor CP FitzGerald', 2 May 1991, transcript online at: http://www.anu.edu.au/emeritus/ohp/interviews/cp_fitzgerald.html.

²²⁸ 'War Weariness Helps Reds in China', *Daily News* (Perth), 26 August 1949, p.6.



A famous authority, just out of Peking, says— THIS IS WHAT RED CHINA IS GOING TO MEAN TO US

By C. P. FitzGerald

DURING the past 50 years, when the statesmen of the Western world made their rather infrequent declarations of policy towards China, they were wont to declare that they hoped to see the "emergence of a strong, united and independent China."

They have now seen their hopes fulfilled, but not, perhaps, quite in the way they expected.

In the past few months the Chinese Communist Party and its Red Army have after 22 years of civil war, gained complete victory, and must before long achieve the total mastery of the whole country.

It may be taken for certain that no force inside China remains which is capable of overthrowing the Communist regime, or even of maintaining opposition on the mainland. The civil war is drawing to a close, and the Communists have won it.

This result creates an entirely new situation in the Far East, which, to Australia, is the Near North. The fall of Japan had left a power vacuum in eastern Asia. It has become clear in the past three years that Nationalist China, although invested with the international status of a Great Power, was not in fact able to master the Communist movement inside the country, and therefore was still less able to assume the authority of a Great Power in world affairs.

Now this Communist movement has obtained full power in the country, and will, therefore, before long, speak for China on the international stage. A new force has arisen in eastern Asia, with which the rest of the world will henceforth have to deal. For it is certain that Communist China has come to stay.

Movement confined to the interior

VERY little was or would be, known about its future development of a movement which had, until recent months, been confined to the interior of the country. Now that the new regime controls the main cities and the most populous provinces, it is possible to assess its aims, and study its methods, and thus to form conclusions about its future development.

The leadership of the Communist Party is in the hands of men who are convinced followers of Marx and Lenin orthodox Communists, but differing from the Communist leadership of the eastern European states in that the

Mr C. P. FitzGerald, who wrote this article specially for *The Herald*, is one of the greatest living European authorities on Chinese affairs. His home is in Peking, now the Communist capital, which he left a month ago. He is in Australia to lecture for the National University.

Mr FitzGerald, who is 47, has lived in China for nearly 30 years. From 1946 to 1948 he was in Nanking, then the seat of the National Government. He is the author of "Son of Heaven" and other well-known books. At present he is representative in Wellington of the British Council.



MAO ZHE-TUNG

all China is formally brought into being. The new regime has not yet entered into diplomatic relations with any foreign state, not even with Soviet Russia. The official explanation of this aloof attitude, which extends even to the comports of foreign Powers, is that no such relations are possible until a Government has been established.

It is therefore the wish of the Communists themselves that has so far placed them in isolation. On the other hand, several declarations have been made stating that when the central Government is formed, it will welcome normal diplomatic relations with any foreign Power which is prepared to treat China on terms of equality, will refrain from giving

material assistance to the enemies of the Communist regime, and will withdraw any and all military, naval and air forces now stationed in the territory and territorial waters of the Chinese Republic.

The interpretation of this last very important condition clearly presents wide possibilities. The Chinese will certainly consider Formosa to be part of China, even though the legal transfer of sovereignty from Japan cannot be made until a peace treaty has been signed.

The territory of the Republic of China might also be interpreted to include the leased territories now administered by the British colony of Hongkong. These words would also conceivably apply to Dalien and Port Arthur in Manchuria, now occupied by Soviet Russia under the terms of the Yalta Agreement.

There is some reason to think that these diplomatic questions, however important, are yet not so important to the new regime as the fulfilment of the programme of social reconstruction on which the movement is bent, and to achieve which it came into being. The Communists do not pretend to conceal that the ultimate aim of their policy is the building of a Communist community, but they recognise that, in China, there is a long road to travel. The first step, as announced and formulated in the writings of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, is the establishment of New Democracy, which may be said to be well under way in the liberated areas.

New Democracy is a relatively mild policy intended to speed up the industrialisation of the country, which in turn is regarded as an essential prerequisite of Socialism, and therefore of Communism. Under New Democracy small capitalists are not only tolerated but encouraged, mentioned private enterprise is permitted, it is valuable for the industry of China,

and only large-scale enterprises connected with the ruling group of the Nationalist regime—what the Communists call "bourgeois capitalism"—are nationalised straight away.

There is therefore no discrimination against one particular social class; the general poverty which overcame China as a consequence of the Japanese invasion has indeed brought all classes near to a common level and, except in such cities as Shanghai, the Chinese intellectuals and former wealthy business classes were in fact living on a very low standard.

For these reasons, and also because the new regime has found the warmest support among the intellectuals and university students, the application of New Democracy has created less apparent change in social life than, for example, the consequences of war and rationing in Great Britain.

The membership of the party is recruited from the universities as much, perhaps more, than from the workers or peasants. These classes indeed are of course favoured and encouraged, but they are also encouraged to work hard and long. They have responded to these demands, and the reconstruction of the railways in a few brief weeks is a striking proof of the support which the industrial workers have given to the regime. The peasants will consent to the discipline of the People's Liberation Army, and at the honesty of the civil administration, will voluntarily give their massive, if largely ill-informed, support to the regime.

Support of the intellectuals

NOW, it is a historical fact that new dynasties or regimes in China have only succeeded when they have obtained the support of both the intellectuals and that of the peasants. The Communists have the support of these two classes. Honesty and efficiency have won the Chinese Communist support, more than any very general understanding of their policies or plans.

But none the less these plans exist, and the party is determined to carry them out. The Communists intend, as far as possible by consent, to effect a peaceful revolution in the Chinese social system.

They mean to eliminate the ancient clan or family system and create a far more modern type of society from within, and as they say only from within, and as no society can be built. The task is vast, and will need more than one generation to complete, and it is on this task, rather than upon foreign adventures, that the mind of the Chinese Communist Party is set.

Top: CP FitzGerald in China, late 1940s (courtesy Mirabel and Anthea FitzGerald); bottom: 'This is What a Red China is Going to Mean to Us', *The Herald* (Melbourne), 7 September 1949. Written in the middle of FitzGerald's lecture tour, just weeks before the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October, this article appeared as an 'exclusive' in several major newspapers.

During the past 50 years, when the statesman of the Western world made their rather infrequent declarations of policy towards China, they were wont to declare that they hoped to see the 'emergence of a strong, united and independent China.' They have now seen their hopes fulfilled, but not, perhaps, quite in the way they expected. ... This result creates an entirely new situation in the Far East, which, to Australia, is the Near North.²²⁹

Recognition of a new Communist regime in Asia was a thorny issue at a crucial time in Australia's political life. A Federal election was due to be held in December and Ben Chifley, prime minister of the incumbent Labor government, was reluctant to press the issue of recognition. Widespread fear of Communism in the context of the emerging Cold War was one of the defining issues of the election campaign. Chifley's attempts to nationalise Australia's banking system, and a coal miner's strike in the middle of the year, played squarely into the hands of his conservative opponent, Robert Menzies. Although Chifley had sent the army in to break the strike, Menzies was able to portray the Labor Party as being 'soft on Communism' — a theme he repeatedly returned to, after winning the election, during his seventeen years in power.

Due to his support for Australia's recognition of the People's Republic of China — and later, his opposition to the Vietnam War — the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) placed FitzGerald under close surveillance; the monitoring would continue until 1975. The first entry in his ASIO dossier dates from October 1949 when, during a talk at the Physics Lecture Theatre of Adelaide University, FitzGerald claimed that: 'the Chinese Communist Government wanted peace and the Australian Government should recognise the new regime.'²³⁰

While FitzGerald's lack of academic qualifications would prove something of an obstacle to his appointment to ANU, the positive response to his lecture tour was enough to convince most members of the ANU Interim Council and its Academic Advisory Committee that he was a good candidate to establish Chinese Studies in Australia — the one exception being Frederic Eggleston. William Macmahon Ball, the Professor of Political Science at Melbourne University wrote that FitzGerald was:

extraordinarily generous with his time and effort ... his talk to the Institute [that is, the Australian Institute of International Affairs] here was the best in our memory. People who attended the staff seminar we arranged, together with the honours and pass students to whom he has lectured, all seem to have been most deeply impressed with his scholarship, his precision, his exceptional skill in exposition, and his humanity.²³¹

In South Australia, FitzGerald's host was Garnet Vere Portus, a historian at the University of Adelaide. Portus suggested that FitzGerald should have 'the opportunity of meeting the Prime Minister, because it would appear of

²²⁹ CP FitzGerald 'What a Red China Means to Us', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 16 September 1949, p.2.

²³⁰ See 'Charles Patrick FITZGERALD' — Volume 1, NAA A6119/674.

²³¹ Letter, Macmahon Ball to Copland, 6 October 1949, ANUA 18, Box 11.

such importance that Australian relations with the new Government should be fostered, particularly as FitzGerald indicates we are held in favour by the Commos up there.²³² Similar praise was expressed by William Mitchell, the former Chancellor of Adelaide University, and CS King of the University of Tasmania's history department. John Gifford and G Greenwood, both of the University of Queensland, were similarly effusive about the visitor, details of which Copland submitted for the Council's consideration in November.²³³

The first Australian Ambassador to the People's Republic, Stephen FitzGerald (he is unrelated to CP), later wrote that CP FitzGerald was 'more identified with China in the public mind than anyone else in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s'. His main public intellectual enterprise during those decades 'was at base a challenge to Australians to come to their senses and consider who they were and where they were and how they should express that, and the touchstone was China.'²³⁴

Frederic Eggleston, however, was sorely disappointed with FitzGerald. He complained to Copland that the English historian seemed 'much more interested in Chinese politics' than in history,²³⁵ and he reiterated his longstanding belief that an 'Oriental' was needed at ANU:

All I know is that if we do not appoint Orientals to positions of this kind, one of my dearest wishes when I suggested the School, [we] will be disappointed. Your objections to the appointment of Chinese today are political and just as irrelevant as my opinion on FitzGerald's propaganda for the recognition of the People's Government. It struck me that one who recommends recognition just as one would decide putting on one's overcoat ignores all international practice and principle and indicates a somewhat low intellectual quotient. We do not know whether the People's Government is governing or can govern China. The latest news is that they are seriously considering liquidating Shanghai, that is, removing half the population to the country on the grounds that they cannot provide for them in the city.²³⁶

Copland stood firm and told Eggleston that he was 'not sanguine' about attracting a Chinese scholar 'in the near future':

Those who would be available would probably not be persona grata with the Chinese authorities in the new regime and we do not want to take any unnecessary steps that would complicate our relations with the Chinese Universities. I would not feel very happy about the work of anyone who was sponsored by the new regime in its early days and I thought, therefore, that we would be much better served by a person like FitzGerald.²³⁷

²³² Letter, Portus to Copland, 17 October 1949, ANUA 18, Box 11.

²³³ See 'Extracts from Letters', 14 November 1949, ANUA 18, Box 11.

²³⁴ Stephen FitzGerald, *Is Australia an Asian Country?*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997, pp.16-17.

²³⁵ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, no date, probably late September or early October 1949, NLA MS423/12/414.

²³⁶ Letter, Eggleston to Copland, 14 October 1949, ANUA 19, Box 17.

²³⁷ Letter, Copland to Eggleston, 7 October 1949, NLA MS423/12/422.

Eggleston countered by seeking outside expert opinion on the quality of FitzGerald's scholarship, specifically suggesting that ANU approach George Sansom, a British former diplomat and historian of Japan, who at the time was engaged in establishing Japanese Studies at Columbia University in New York. In response to the query, Sansom cabled Ross Hohnen: 'I CONSIDER FITZGERALD VERY SUITABLE AS READER ORIENTAL STUDIES APPROPRIATE COLLEAGUE CONSULTED SHARE MY OPINION.'²³⁸ Hohnen also contacted John King Fairbank at Harvard University, but no response is contained in the ANU Archives. In a letter thanking Sansom for his reference, Copland wrote that: 'We are almost certain to appoint [FitzGerald] for a period of three years to a Readership in Oriental Studies. ... For my part, I see no reason to reject a man because he has not had a formal University training. It is his scholarship that really matters, and FitzGerald has a most interesting story.'²³⁹

It was also inevitable that the Council consider Firth's advice on the matter. Initially, Firth had his doubts: '... as an anthropologist [FitzGerald] is hardly systematic enough by modern standards to carry very great weight'. But, after conferring with Professor Evangeline Edwards, the Chair of Chinese at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, Firth changed his mind. In a letter to the Council, he quoted Edward's remarks:

[E]xcept the *Tower of Five Glories*, [FitzGerald's books] have been written for the general public and therefore are not annotated, but they are of a good standard. He knows China really well and is intensely interested in the Chinese, and understands better than most the Chinese mind. I would not call him brilliant but I would certainly describe him as sound all round, and from what I know of the Australian attitude to Far Eastern studies I can think of no-one better suited than C.P. FitzGerald for the post. ... He is also very sound on language and so far as I know his work has been based on original sources. He has just finished a book on the Empress Wu of the T'ang dynasty and is embarking on that other great figure Ming Huang.²⁴⁰

In the report on his lecture tour that CP FitzGerald submitted to the ANU Interim Council, he raised a crucial point, one which amidst the deliberations about the structure of Pacific Studies at ANU and the question of Chinese visitors, had been entirely absent to that point. He said that no university library in Australia had any Chinese books, 'with the exception of Sydney, which has one of the sets of photostatic reproductions of classical works presented by the later Chinese Government.' As mentioned in the prologue to this study, these were the books donated to ANU in November 1948, which were subsequently given on loan to the University of Sydney at the request of its new Chair of Oriental Studies, John Rideout. FitzGerald now advised the

²³⁸ Telegram, Sansom (East Asian Institute, Columbia University) to RA Hohnen, 9 November 1950; and, letter, RC Mills to RA Hohnen, 10 November 1949, ANUA 18, Box 11.

²³⁹ Letter, Copland to Sansom, 21 December 1949, ANUA 18, Box 11.

²⁴⁰ Letter, Firth to Copland, 19 September 1949, ANUA 18, Box 11.



Cover and pages from *Incantation of the Jubilant Buddha-Corona* 佛頂尊勝總持經咒, Peking, 1608. The elongated format of the text meant it could easily be held in one hand as the practitioner intoned the chants. (Courtesy Menzies Library, ANU)

Council that: 'at least the basic historical and classical books of China, and a wider selection of modern literature' would be essential to develop work related to China at ANU 'either as a language, or as a medium for the study of Far Eastern Culture.'²⁴¹

In December 1949, FitzGerald was appointed as a Visiting Reader in Oriental Studies. It was the first of a number of titles bestowed upon him that were slightly at odds with the Australian context, and ANU. FitzGerald was not really 'visiting' (in fact, he spent the year 1950 outside Australia); and his primary academic task was not to 'read', but to call on centres of Sinology in Europe and America on a Rockefeller Grant that had been arranged by Douglas Copland, as well as to start building, from scratch, the first collection of Chinese books at any Australian university.

In the first half of 1950, FitzGerald visited scholars of China in the US and Europe, including Jan Duyvendak at Leiden University in the Netherlands, and Bernhard Karlgren at Stockholm University in Sweden. One of Karlgren's students, Hans Bielenstein, would soon prove to be an important figure in setting up the School of Oriental Languages at ANU's undergraduate sister institution, Canberra University College. Later in the year, FitzGerald turned his attention to acquiring books for the ANU library. He arrived in Hong Kong in September with the intention of travelling on Peking. But, in spite of Copland's efforts to secure him a visa — in October, the Vice-Chancellor urgently requested the assistance of the Department of External Affairs and he also cabled the British Embassy in Peking — the onset of the Korean War created a tense diplomatic situation between China and the West, leaving FitzGerald stranded in the British colony.²⁴²

This proved to be fortuitous. 'I have found that, for the most part it is now almost impossible to get into China — British Embassy personnel have been applying without success for entry permits', he told EH Clark, ANU's Administrative Officer in the UK. But, he noted:

I can, and am, getting all the books I need for the University right here in Hong Kong. Having got in touch 'through information received' as the police say, with a small firm (literally back room boys) who have connections with China (i.e. are, or are associated with smugglers). I find that they, all very well educated Peking university men, can get me any book, including all those which one would not be allowed to take out of China. I have already been able to make some remarkable good finds, including a Ming copy of one of the great histories, in about sixty volumes, dated 1509, and stamped with the seal, on each copy of the Imperial Library. A beautiful book.²⁴³

In much of this painstaking work, FitzGerald was aided by Yang Tsung-han 楊宗翰, a Mongolian Bannerman and scholar from Peking who had relocated to the British colony.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ CP FitzGerald, 'Lecture Tour, July — October 1949', pp.2-3.

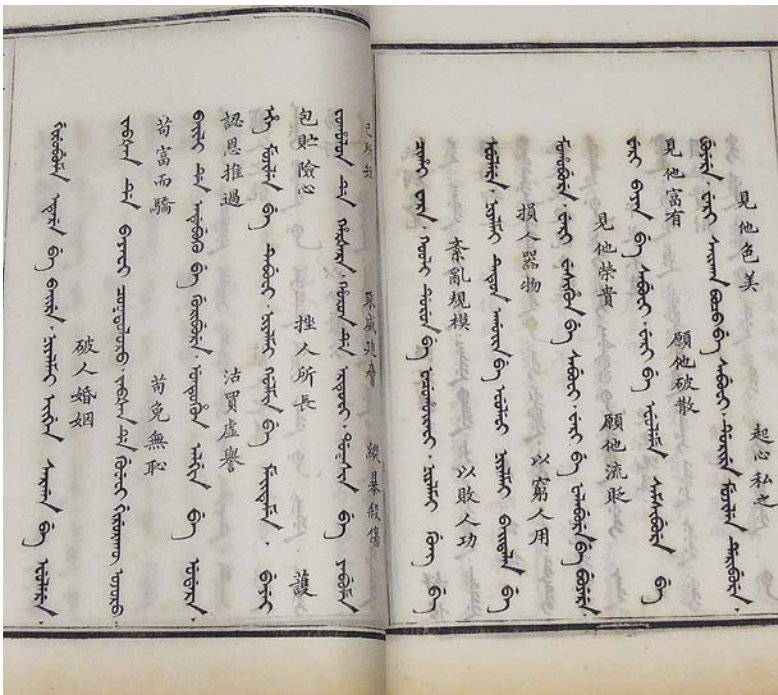
²⁴² Letter, Copland to The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 23 October 1950, ANUA 18, Box 11.

²⁴³ Letter, FitzGerald to EH Clark (ANU Administrative Officer in the UK), 27 November 1950, ANUA 18, Box 11.

²⁴⁴ Selections of Yang's translation of the Manchu Bannerman Lin-ching's *Tracks in the Snow* 鴻雪因緣圖記, edited by John Minford, features in a commemorative volume of *East Asian History*, 'In Memoriam: Charles Patrick FitzGerald', *East Asian History*, no.6 (December 1993): 105-142.



Hsu Ti-shan in 1939. (From *The Collected Works of Hsu Ti-shan* 許地山全集, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1951)



A page from the *Imperial Exhortations* 御製勸善要言 (Manchu title: *Han-i araha sain-be huwekiye-bure oyonggo gisun*), Peking, 1655. This guide to ethical behaviour was printed under imperial commission shortly after the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty established itself in Beijing in 1644. Ascribed to the Shunzhi 順治 emperor (Aisin-Gioro Fulin) it features a parallel text in Manchu and Chinese. Qing emperors made strenuous efforts to project themselves as righteous rulers and to that end issued exhortations to promote morality and the social good. (Courtesy Menzies Library, ANU)

The minutes of a meeting of the ANU Interim Council held in December 1950 record that 'on Mr FitzGerald's strong recommendation he [Copland] had approved the expenditure of approximately £2,500 for the library of the late Professor Hsu [Ti-shan 許地山] which contained a rare and valuable collection of Chinese classics.'²⁴⁵ Of the 20,000 books that FitzGerald shipped back to Canberra shortly thereafter, some 15,000 were from the private collection of Hsu, a scholar of religions, in particular Buddhism, who had been Head of the Chinese Department at Hong Kong University until his death in 1941 at the age of forty-eight. There were also many religious tracts in the collection. The oldest among them, which is still the oldest book in ANU's library, was a 1411 edition of the *Dhāraṇī of the Jubilant Corona* 佛頂尊勝陀囉尼經. There was also a first edition of Fung Yu-lan's 1939 *New Rational Philosophy* 新理學, a signed copy presented to Hsu by Fung himself, and a Chinese translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* by the late-Ch'ing dynasty reformer Yen Fu 嚴復.²⁴⁶

After returning to Australia on 1 January 1951, FitzGerald's first task was to unpack this formidable collection. In one of the Old Hospital Buildings on Acton Peninsula, near the site of what is now the National Museum of Australia, which was then serving as a holding site for much of ANU's early library acquisitions, FitzGerald took to the packing boxes containing the books with a hammer and chisel: 'That was the level of what had to be done, and so, at least, we started off that way — at least you knew what there was', he later reflected.²⁴⁷ The first ANU student to avail himself of this collection was Noel Barnard who began his doctoral research in 1952 and, in 1957, became ANU's first PhD graduate in Chinese Studies with the completion of his thesis, *Forgery of Archaic Chinese Bronze Inscriptions: a preliminary investigation of the extent of forgery amongst inscribed bronze ritual vessels of the Western Chou period*.

FitzGerald was Barnard's supervisor, although this was at a time when ANU had yet formally to establish a department devoted to the study of China, and when FitzGerald's own position at ANU was as yet undecided. In 1952, he was made 'Reader in Oriental Studies' — the word 'Visiting' in his previous title was dropped — but his lack of academic qualifications remained an uncomfortable issue for ANU, as the fledgling institution sought to establish a reputation for outstanding research. At the end of 1952, FitzGerald received an offer of an associate professorship at SOAS in London. The invitation prompted Mark Oliphant — who was acting vice-chancellor following Douglas Copland's recent appointment as Australia's High Commissioner to Canada — to concentrate on developing the Chinese programme. FitzGerald wanted to stay at ANU, but not just as a Reader: he asked Oliphant if he could be made a professor, and if the university could establish a department dedicated to the study of things Chinese.

²⁴⁵ ANU Interim Council, Minutes of the Forty-Sixth Meeting, 8 December 1950, p.5, ANUA 198, Box 2. The amount of £2,500 in 1950 is equivalent to approximately \$120,000 in 2015.

²⁴⁶ 'Xu Dishan, Additional 线装 [cloth-bound] books found on open shelves by Associate Professor Cheuk Yin Lee', March 2008. I thank Rebecca Wong and Friederike Schimmelpfennig for providing me with these unpublished notes and other material on the Hsu Ti-shan collection.

²⁴⁷ Stephen Foster, 'Interview with Emeritus Professor CP FitzGerald'.



The 'Old Library Building' in 1963. Located between University House and the John Curtin School of Medical Research, this temporary library housed the Hsu Ti-shan Collection until the completion of the Menzies Library in 1963. (Courtesy ANU Archives)

In early 1953, the ANU Board of Graduate Studies asked CP FitzGerald to formulate a name for his new department head. He advised against using the term 'Oriental Studies': the University of Sydney had followed this nomenclature, which was also the name of his own 'Readership' but, FitzGerald contended, the connotations of the term were too narrow and brought to mind 'the Near East, India and Middle Eastern parts of Asia and the languages and cultures, living and extinct, of that region.' Considering the department names used at other leading universities — Columbia University had an East Asian Institute and Harvard a Department of Far Eastern Languages — and in light of the historical focus of the work unfolding at ANU, he suggested that 'Department of Far Eastern History' would be the most appropriate name.²⁴⁸ The Board of Graduate Studies approved the suggestion, and Oliphant wrote to Copland informing him of this development. Copland was overjoyed:

The decision to appoint FitzGerald to a Chair is clearly right. Everywhere I go I hear praise of FitzGerald's work. It is at one and the same time recognized as being a scholarly work and a piece of rather good English prose. Of course, there will be critics who think that no good should be said of the new China but a scholar has to accept that sort of thing, especially when he writes on matters that touch the prejudices of some sections of the public.²⁴⁹

When the Department of Far Eastern History was formally established in the new year of 1954, it consisted of four research staff. CP FitzGerald (now Professor and Chair) was engaged in work on Empress Wu Tse-tien

²⁴⁸ Far Eastern History: Item Two of Agenda of Board of Graduate Studies Meeting of 27th February, 1953; 23 February 1953, ANUA 284, Box 1.

²⁴⁹ Letter, Copland to Oliphant, 11 August 1953, NLA MS3800, Box 70.

of the Tang dynasty, which he published as *The Empress Wu* with Cresset Press in London in 1956. The Department's Senior Research Fellow, the Dutch Sinologist Gerrit Mulder, was focusing on the marriage system of the Han dynasty. In addition, the Department had two Research Fellows: BC McKillop, whose area was Neo-Confucianism, and the Japan specialist Joyce Ackroyd, who had studied under Arthur Sadler at the University of Sydney and would go on to become a key figure in establishing Japanese Studies at ANU. She worked on Tokugawa history. All four had the linguistic abilities necessary to conduct research in their respective fields but, as the university's Annual Report for 1954 observed:

Language qualifications are obviously of the highest significance and it has proved necessary to make provision for further instruction in Chinese for two of the Department's five students: this has been arranged at Canberra University College, where the co-operation of Professor H Bielenstein is much appreciated by the Department.²⁵⁰

ORIENTAL LANGUAGES IN CANBERRA

From the earliest days of the Walker Committee, the relationship between Canberra University College and ANU had been a topic of discussion. ANU was envisaged as a dedicated post-graduate institution with no room or programmes for language instruction. In the case of Chinese and Japanese studies this presented a problem: Australia had very few graduates or scholars with sufficient language proficiency to undertake postgraduate research. In the early years this is why ANU was closely linked to the University College which, in 1952, established a 'School of Oriental Languages'. FitzGerald's Department of Far Eastern History and the College's School of Oriental Languages shared library resources; there was also a commingling of staff — FitzGerald and other ANU scholars frequently taught College undergraduates. When, in 1960, ANU and the College were amalgamated, the undergraduate school became the 'Department of Oriental Studies' under the auspices of a School of General Studies, while Far Eastern History continued as part of the postgraduate School of Advanced Studies.

²⁵⁰ 'The Australian National University: Report of the Council for the period 1 January 1954 to 31 December 1954', Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 1955, p.32. Another appointment to the academic staff of the university familiar with China, and Chinese, was Michael Lindsay. Lindsay taught economics at Yenching University in Peiping before fleeing the Japanese-occupied city with his wife, Hsiao Li, to live in Yen-an where, working as a radio engineer, writer and broadcaster, he made the acquaintance of such Communist luminaries as Mao, Chou En-lai and Chu Teh 朱德. Lindsay was invited to ANU in July 1949 by Walter Crocker, who would soon head the Department of International Relations. The two men had known each other since their student days at Balliol House, Oxford University. A man with important insights into international policy and Australia's place in Asia, Lindsay was frustrated by the young university's old-style bureaucracy and he left Canberra under a cloud in 1958. See James Cotton, *International Relations in Australia: Michael Lindsay, Martin Wight, and the first Department at the Australian National University*, Canberra: ANU, 2010; and, Hsiao Li Lindsay, *Bold Plum: With the Guerrillas in China's War against Japan*, Morrisville (North Carolina): Lulu Press, 2007.



07 JULY 1953.

She Works A Chinese Typewriter

IF anyone thinks that the English typewriter is a formidable piece of mechanism, let him take a short, sharp look at its opposite Chinese number, with its 4,248 characters, enormous roller, complex machinery and weight that requires two people to lift.

But it presents no horrors about it is that all the characters are upside down; you don't look at them in the same way as you do with an English typewriter; and you use only one hand to pick them out; the other is kept for working the machine.

Miss Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff, a research assistant in the Oriental Studies Department at the Australian National University, whose tolerant affection she has for her modern blue plastic Mah Jongg set, to whose delight she is initiating all her Canberra friends at Saturday night sessions.

Miss Rimsky-Korsakoff, who arrived here eight months ago, believes she is the only girl in Australia who can work the Chinese typewriter.

"I had to teach myself," she says, with the blithe assurance of someone who has just learned to use a vacuum cleaner. "Although I went to a typists' school in China, I only learned to use an English machine; I little thought I would ever have to use the Chinese kind."

"Then this one arrived in Australia, after I did. I set myself to learn 30 characters a day—and there are plenty more characters in a box as well as the 4,248 on the type-

lers are upside down; you don't look at them in the same way as you do with an English typewriter; and you use only one hand to pick them out; the other is kept for working the machine.

Miss Rimsky-Korsakoff's main work at the University is translating Chinese articles from magazines into English for use of people in the University. She also does some private teaching, and two of her students are now in Japan.

University Graduate

A graduate of the Peking University, where she made a special study of languages and literature, the 21-year-old Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff was persuaded to come to Australia by Mr. Fitzgerald, a reader in Chinese history at the National University.

"When the Communists took over the University, they made very little difference to our life; but they have made

Top: Landscaping works to the south of the newly constructed Oriental Studies building (left), August 1965. The site of the Australian Centre on China in the World (established in 2010), is located behind the poplar trees to the right (courtesy ANU Archives); bottom: An article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 March 1953, describing Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff's life in China, arrival in Australia and early work cataloging Chinese books at ANU.

As Dani Botsman observes in his searing analysis of the story of Japanese Studies at ANU, the reasons behind the establishment of the School of Oriental Languages at Canberra University College in 1952 were similar to those that informed the creation of a Japanese language programme at Duntroon in 1917: a fear of the oriental Other and national security. Similar to Duntroon, the School was set up at the suggestion of the departments of External Affairs and Defence, both of which expressed concern about the national need for army and diplomatic cadets to be trained in Asian languages. The three languages initially taught at the School were Chinese, Japanese and Russian, the latter sitting somewhat awkwardly under the rubric of the 'Oriental'. As Bostman notes: 'The inclusion of Russian suggests that instead of "Oriental Languages" it could just as appropriately have been called the School of Enemy Languages.'²⁵¹

As the Asian languages programme was being built up, CP FitzGerald again proved to be pivotal, this time in the recruitment of language instructors. It was at his suggestion that Hans Bielenstein was invited to head the School and, in 1952, the Swedish scholar introduced the teaching of modern and classical Chinese. Another FitzGerald appointment was Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff (known to her later students as Vieta Dyer), who would teach generations of ANU scholars, including Stephen FitzGerald and Geremie R Barmé, until her retirement in 1991 — although at the time of writing she was still teaching Chinese to mature-aged students in Canberra.

Grandniece of the composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff, Svetlana was born in the northeastern Chinese city of Harbin, her parents being among the millions of Russians who had fled their homeland in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Trilingual in Russian, English and Chinese (which she spoke with an elegant northern accent), in the late 1940s Svetlana had become acquainted with many members of Peiping's foreign community, including a young student of Chinese literature, later the noted translator David Hawkes, as well as his future wife, Jean, for whom she proved to be a valuable guide. During the Peiping siege of 1948, Svetlana, who was studying at Fu-jen University in the city, lost contact with her parents who were teachers at Tsinghua University in an area outside the city walls which was under Communist control. When her father managed to send some money to her via the British Consulate, located inside the walls, it was FitzGerald who sought her out in her university dormitory.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Dani Botsman, 'Deconstructing the Past to Redefine the Future', p.241.

²⁵² Author's interview with Vieta Dyer, 11 December 2013, Canberra. See also 'The China Connection', *ANU Reporter*, vol.18, no.10 (10 July 1987), pp.4-5; and, Vieta Dyer, 'The Money-Lender and the Pit: A Crime Story for David', in Rachel May and John Minford, eds, *A Birthday Book for Brother Stone: for David Hawkes, at Eighty*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003, pp.259-261.

S E C R E T

The following persons are known to have accepted the invitation :-

- (1) Professor Charles Patrick FITZGERALD -- Professor of Far-Eastern History at the Australian National University (leader).
- (2) Professor P. H. PARTRIDGE -- Professor of Social Philosophy at the Australian National University.
- (3) Professor A. R. DAVIES -- Professor of Oriental Studies at Sydney University.
- (4) Dr. L. COX -- Honorary Curator of the Oriental Section of the Melbourne Museum.
- (5) William DOBELL } Artists.
- (6) Elaine HAXTON }
- (7) G. F. LEWERS -- Sculptor.
- (8) William Allen MARSHALL -- Writer.
- (9) David CAMPBELL -- Poet.
- (10) Dorothy HELMRICH -- President of the Arts Council of Australia.
- (11) Alexander Douglas LINDSAY -- Secretary of the New South Wales' Branch of the Australia-China Society.

~~Professor FITZGERALD, LINDSAY and MARSHALL are recorded in this Office, Professor FITZGERALD and LINDSAY by reason of their activities in the Australia-China Society, and MARSHALL by reason of his activities with the Realist Writers' Association. From 1945 to 1950 MARSHALL was also associated with the Eureka Youth League, and the Peace Council.~~

The daily papers in several States have given considerable publicity to the tour and the delegates comprising the party.

The New South Wales' Branch of the Australia-China Society held a Summer School at the Newport Fitness Camp over the weekend 2nd--4th March, 1956.

S E C R E T

In May 1956, FitzGerald led the first Australia cultural delegation to the People's Republic of China. This redacted ASIO file lists the academics and artists believed to be joining the delegation. (Courtesy National Archives of Australia)

EPILOGUE

MEASURING THE LANDSCAPE

On 19 March 1951, CP FitzGerald presented the Thirteenth George E Morrison Lecture in Ethnology under the title *The Revolutionary Tradition in China*. A larger, and more popular, venue than the Institute of Anatomy was needed for the occasion and Albert Hall was chosen. Named after the Royal Albert Hall in London and the Consort of Queen Victoria, the British monarch who had proclaimed the Commonwealth of Australia, Albert Hall had been opened by Prime Minister Stanley Bruce in 1928. Located on Commonwealth Avenue between Commonwealth Bridge and what is now the Canberra Hyatt Hotel, the hall was the only major indoor venue for large public gatherings in the city until the Canberra Theatre was completed in 1965. It was an ideal location for FitzGerald's lecture: the previous year, a seventy-eight-year-old Bertrand Russell had told a capacity audience of seven hundred that:

I think we should recognise that the enemy is not Communism, but Russian imperialism. If a country chooses to be Communist, that is its own affair and we have no right to object. ... I think the British Government was entirely right to recognise the Chinese regime in China, and it is absurd that U.N.O. should be disrupted by insistence on retaining the Chinese representative of Chiang Kai-shek's fallen Government.²⁵³

In addition to Morrison, FitzGerald dedicated his lecture to WH Donald, and to Morrison's son Ian, also a journalist, who had recently been killed covering the Korean War for his father's newspaper, the *London Times*. 'As a tribute to the memory of father and son', he told his audience, 'I am going this evening to endeavour to examine the underlying causes of this great upheaval [the Chinese Revolution] and trace the thread of the Chinese revolutionary tradition from earlier times up to the critical moment at which we find ourselves today.'

FitzGerald's thesis was that the Communist revolution accorded with a cycle of dynastic rise and decline that had 'lived for centuries' both in the Chinese historical imagination and political practice. 'Yet this revolution was not made by the Communists', he told the audience:

[I]t was the work of the peasants and the scholars, the combination which had been necessary to all great changes throughout Chinese history. In 1948 the Communists, by offering land to the peasants and peace and good government to the intellectuals, were able to align this combination on their side. The result was not secured because the opposition was Communist, but rather in spite of that fact, but so long as the peasants and scholars of China obtain from a new regime satisfactions which were formerly denied to them, their allegiance to this government, Communist though it may be, is

²⁵³ 'Ferment in Asia Surveyed by Bertrand Russell', *The Canberra Times*, 20 July 1950, p.4.



A photograph of the cultural delegation meeting with Premier Chou En-lai, Peking, 19 May 1956. From the left: William Allen Marshall, William Dobell, Elaine Haxton, Gerald Lewers, unknown, AR Davis (Professor of Oriental Studies, University of Sydney), unknown, Percy Partridge, CP FitzGerald, Chou En-lai. (Courtesy Mirabel and Anthea FitzGerald)

assured. If in the future the pursuit of Communist ideological aims leads to the new regime into courses which alienate the peasants or the scholars, then, and not till then, the regime will be in danger of internal opposition.

To men of Dr. Morrison's generation the future course of the Chinese Revolution would have seemed incredible and repugnant; to his son Ian, who saw at first hand the final stages, it appeared rather as an inevitable explosion generated by forces which had long been gathering strength, and which no individual or group could hope to control. It is useless to argue whether a volcanic eruption is good or bad; it has to be accepted with all its violence and senseless destruction. After the eruption has subsided one may draw near across the hot and quaking earth to measure the changes in the landscape produced by so vast a convulsion.²⁵⁴

The Communist government that had come to power in China, therefore, was likely to remain in power for the time being, and to recognise the People's Republic was simply to recognise a new reality. After hearing FitzGerald's Morrison Lecture Douglas Copland told *The Canberra Times*

²⁵⁴ CP FitzGerald, 'The Revolutionary Tradition in China', reprinted in *East Asian History*, no.11 (June 1996), pp.3-16, at p.16.



that: 'the Australian National University could do nothing more important than to present to the people of Australia a true interpretation of the Orient in the troublesome times.'²⁵⁵ The lecture marked the inauguration of a tradition at ANU to 'measure the changes in the landscape' occasioned by the vast convulsion in China that continues to this day.

²⁵⁵ 'Revolutions in China: Lessons from the Past' and 'Canberra Culture Contrasted with Chinese', *The Canberra Times*, 20 March 1951, p.4.

新生的中華人民共和國，別無選擇。一九七二年珊珊來遲的中澳建交終於實現了費氏的願望，也證實了這一觀點的必要。

朱亞雲 孫萬國 合譯

此外，高伯蘭又舉薦英籍學者兼作家費子智出任國立大學的首位中國學專家。費氏原為高伯蘭在南京的舊識，一九四九年他在澳洲各大學巡回講學後，發現偌大的澳洲，竟然「無一大學收藏中文圖書」。為此，他在國立大學的首要任務就是致力於中文書籍的蒐集。一九五〇年他跋涉香港，有幸購得著名作家并佛教學者許地山的私人藏書。這批書籍，包括有若干明代的善本，也就成了國立大學孟席思東亞圖書館中文部裏的核心典籍，在此後澳洲的中國研究領域裏發揮了關鍵性的作用。

隸屬於太平洋研究院的遠東歷史系在一九五四年組建成立，成為澳洲國立大學第一個中國研究的正式單位。出任系主任的費子智除了學術研究外，還為中華人民共和國與澳大利亞正式邦交的建立奔走陳情，不遺餘力。然而由於冷戰時代初期澳洲奉行聯美反共的外交政策，費教授的主張和努力飽受政界人士的非議。澳洲安全情報組織甚至認為他「同情共黨」，對他進行了嚴密監視。

費子智終究不是共產黨。他只不過認為一九四九年的中共革命，應合了中國亘古以來世代興衰與王朝更迭的歷史現象和政治局現實。他在一九五一年莫理循講座上，就是把這一場革命描繪成民情積怨的「火山爆發」。他進而論述：「從道德立場爭論火山爆發的善惡好壞，徒然無益；不如正視與面對火山帶來的暴力與摧殘。」不論眾人的政治取向如何，澳大利亞除了承認

澳大利亞開始在華盛頓和東京設置公使館，更於一九四一年七月任命高等律師及亞太時事資深評論人費雷德里克·艾格斯頓為澳洲駐中華民國的首任公使。

艾格斯頓前往戰火蒼夷的陪都重慶赴任不足兩月，日本偷襲珍珠港。一夜之間，迫使西方列強不再袖手旁觀時已長達四年的中國抗日戰爭。艾格斯頓對英美輕忽太平洋戰場的態度深感沮喪，但在呈送給堪培拉的諸多報告中，他屢屢敦促澳洲當局領悟亞太地區的重要性，並為戰後中國的崛起做好準備。艾格斯頓篤信中國正處於「偉大復興的前夜」。為此，在一九四六年他加入澳洲國立大學草創理事會后，便大力提倡漢學和中國學，使之成為新建的澳洲國立大學太平洋研究院（即今日的亞太學院）的第一大學術特點。

繼任的駐華公使，乃經濟學家道格拉斯·高伯蘭。一九四六年國民政府還都至一九四八年期間，他出使南京。雖值中國國內戰之際，高伯蘭仍協助艾格斯頓與澳洲國立大學的創辦理事會，尋覓漢學高人，以期出掌國立大學的中國學研究。通過艾格斯頓之力薦，高伯蘭被邀請出任國立大學首任校長。高氏於一九四八年三月歸國后，便汲汲於國立大學的創建。在其履新的第一年九月，高伯蘭便恢復了因太平洋戰爭而中斷七年之久的莫理循講座，並將之納入新生的國立大學麾下。

學者、行者與使者：澳洲國立大學的中國緣

司馬偉所著學者、行者與使者：澳洲國立大學的中國緣一書旨在探索澳大利亞漢學和中國研究發展中的風雲人物，鉤沉往事，特別是回顧上世紀四十年代末及五十年代初澳洲國立大學中國研究的發軔歷程。

澳洲國立大學草創於一九四六年八月一日。但早在一九三一年九月，藉莫理循講座之設立為契機，澳洲政府便已開始關切中國大陸的事務。此一講座的開設，適逢中國發生九一八事變，旨在紀念澳洲吉朗邑人喬治·厄內斯特·莫理循（一八六二至一九二〇）。莫氏生前為英倫泰晤士報駐華記者。袁世凱當政時，曾出任引人爭議的總統顧問一職。他在北京發出的一系列觀察銳利的報導中，詳實記錄了日本于二十世紀之交在地緣政治上從事東亞擴張的種種企圖。

莫理循所察日本對華侵略的預見，果然在三十年代的中國得到了證實。隨着一九三七年的七七事變，中日兩國爆發了全面戰爭。接着又是德國希特勒在歐洲的大舉擴張。這使得澳洲政府開始意識到，不能再單單憑借英國的外交使節與情報資源。一九三九年羅伯特·孟席斯首相明白指出：「英國人視之為遙遠東方的遠東，就澳大利亞而言，却是安危切身的近北。」一年後，

