

Edited by Chengxin Pan and David Walker

Australia and China:

Challenges and Ideas in
Cross-cultural Engagement

澳大利亚与中国：

跨文化的挑战与思考

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Participants at the Deakin conference



Discussion at the Deakin conference



Professors Christine Halse, Zhang Yongxian, Matthew Clarke and David Walker (at the table from the left) at the opening session of the Renmin conference in 2012



Deakin Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Gary Smith with Professors Zhang Yongxian and Douglas Kirsner at the Deakin conference



Professors Matthew Clarke and Zhang Yongxian at the Deakin conference



Professors Li Yao, Nicholas Jose, David Walker, Drs Sophie Loy-Wilson and Agnieszka Sobocinska at the Renmin conference



Professor David Walker speaks at the Deakin conference



Vice-Chancellor Professor Jane den Hollander delivers
keynote address at the Deakin conference



Professor Fethi Mansouri speaks at the opening session of the Deakin conference

Preface

The relationship between Australia and China is one of great interest to scholars, policy analysts, business leaders, and, of course, politicians. While the contemporary engagement between these two countries is usually dated to the early 1970s, there is of course a long history of migration, trade and investment well before then. As with all relationships there have been periods that have been difficult and periods that have been more fruitful and respectful. Gaining a great knowledge of how both countries understand one another is therefore of great importance and is what this volume seeks to contribute towards.

The current relationship between China and Australia is strong. Buoyed by close economic links, this crucial relationship appears to be healthy and growing. But is there room to further strengthen and develop this relationship? How could Australia and China better engage with each other in political, strategic, cultural, educational as well as economic realms? What are the opportunities and challenges that face this relationship in the new century?

Debating and understanding such issues and questions is vital to Australia's place in the "Asian Century". Equally, for China, understanding Australia's political and economic relationship with the United States and other regional powers is also vital as it navigates its own economic and political rise. Specifically, it is central to the development and implementation of a balanced, nuanced and responsive country strategy for both China and Australia in order to prepare for the rise of a dynamic and complex Asia. In this context, it is important that from the outset Australia and China should engage in closer and regular dialogue with one another for both how to understand their common challenges and how each country's strategies might take shape.

It is the purpose of this book therefore to contribute to this understanding by bringing together a focus on this engagement through the lens of the humanities and social sciences disciplines. The strength of the book is that it contains contributions from both Chinese and Australian scholars and thus allows this cross-fertilisation of perspectives

and insights.

Various chapters for this monograph were first presented at two conferences hosted jointly by the School of Foreign Languages, Renmin University of China and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin University. In 2012 the conference was held in Beijing, while Melbourne was the site of the 2013 conference. On both occasions staff from Renmin University of China and Deakin University shared panels and keynote presentations on improving our understanding of both countries.

Understanding the world is central to the study of humanities and social sciences and so it is fitting that China's leading University in this field and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University co-host these conferences. We have no doubt not only that the material in this volume will aid this endeavour but that the intellectual relationships borne from these conferences will also aid this understanding.

Professor Matthew Clarke
Deakin University

Professor Zhang Yongxian
Renmin University of China

Acknowledgements

This book has its cross-cultural origins in two conferences, “Cross-cultural Literacy: China and Australia in the Asian Century” and “Furthering Australia-China Engagement: Issues, Challenges and Ideas.” The first conference, held at Renmin University of China in Beijing on 15-17 October 2012, was motivated by three interrelated purposes: marking the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China, strengthening the fruitful links between Deakin University and Renmin University of China, as well as exploring the intriguing questions shared by the two editors of this volume: To what extent can we know another society and is Asia literacy achievable? It turned out that these questions were equally intriguing to our participants of this conference and many of the insightful ideas presented and debated there are now contained here.

The second conference, held at Deakin University in Melbourne on 3-4 October 2013, continued the constructive dialogue that was begun in Beijing one year earlier. The 2013 conference focused on how to meet the challenge of furthering Sino-Australia engagement in the wake of the newly elected Coalition government in Australia and the still fresh Chinese leadership after its transition from Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping. As befits the future-oriented conference theme, the delegate from Renmin University of China, Deakin University, and several other Australian Universities included not only leading scholars in the fields of Asian studies, Australian studies, China studies, and International Relations, but also younger, emerging scholars and postgraduate students, and again many of their thoughtful analyses at the conference are represented in this collective work.

For this, we would like to thank all of our contributors to this volume as well as many other presenters at the two conferences: Diao Keli, Du Ni, John FitzGerald, He Guanxiong, Jin Canrong, Nicholas Jose, Li Yao, Liu Shaoguang, Liu Shuang, Dominic Meagher, Jacky Sun, Sun Tongle, Tang Zhenying, Hayley Ward, Wu Di, Zhang Andong and Zhao Xinyu. Without their enthusiasm, dedication and hard

work, this book would not have come into existence.

Equally, we are very grateful to Head of School Professor Matthew Clarke (Deakin University), Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation Director Professor Fethi Mansouri (Deakin University), and Australian Studies Centre Director Professor Zhang Yongxian (Renmin University). Their confidence in and generous support for the two conferences have been instrumental to this project throughout the past few years. In particular, we would like to acknowledge that the 2012 conference received funding support from the Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University and financial and logistical support from the School of Foreign Studies and Australian Studies Centre at Renmin University, and that the 2013 conference received funding support from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin International Research Development Scheme (a University-wide competitive grant scheme), and the Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences also provided publication subvention and research assistance, which have been vital to a smooth editing and publication process.

Our thanks also go to Zhang Yongxian, Guo Qingmin, Zhang Lei, Zhao Xinyu, Liu Shaoguang, Douglas Kirsner, Lin Zheng, Sophie Loy-Wilson, Helen Andrew, Cayla Edwards, Hazel Tan, Emily Butcher, staff at Deakin University Melbourne City Centre, among others, who played an important role in organising and running the two conferences in various capacities and at various stages.

At the 2013 Deakin conference, Deakin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Jane den Hollander delivered the keynote address on Deakin's engagement with higher education in China and future directions, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Gary Smith delivered the opening address to the conference. In our preparation of the two conferences, we were also encouraged and supported by Pro Vice-Chancellor (Arts and Education) Professor Brenda Cherednichenko and Associate Dean (International) Professor Ian Robottom. To all of them, we express our appreciation and gratitude.

We are fortunate to have the confidence and support of China Social Sciences Press, one of the top publishers in China. We particularly thank Professor Liu Zhichang at the prestigious Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for his help and patience with the editing and publication of this book.

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Last but not least, the editors thank our families for their support and understanding during the perpetually hectic times.

David Walker and Chengxin Pan
Beijing, China, and Geelong, Australia, July 2014

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Introduction: New Perspectives on Cross-cultural Engagement

Chengxin Pan and David Walker

Why Cross-cultural Engagement?

On the face of it, if there are two countries that should have a reliably cordial bilateral relationship, they should be Australia and China. Sharing neither land nor maritime borders, the two countries are untroubled by high-stake territorial disputes that have often dogged China's relationships with some of its Asian neighbours. And perhaps no other two economies in the region are more complementary than those of China and Australia.^① Abundant raw materials in Australia have been fuelling the world's workshop. China, meanwhile, has been supplying Australian households with a wide variety of affordable manufactured goods. If all is needed for a cooperative relationship is shared material interests, then Australia and China could well lay claim to a special relationship.

Yet back in 1999, then Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer cautioned that "We should not succumb to any false notions that we have some kind of 'special' relationship with China." He instead characterised it as 'a mature and broadly based relationship.'^② But on many occasions even this more modest designation seems to be an overstatement. Immediately coming to mind is the stunning revelation that in 2009 the Mandarin-speaking Prime Minister Kevin Rudd confided to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that he was a "brutal realist on China" and that the West should prepare to "deploy force if everything goes wrong."^③ More recently,

① See Baogang He's chapter in this volume.

② Alexander Downer, "Australia and China—Partners for Progress" (address at the 1999 China Oration of the Australia-China Business Council), Sydney, 25 November 1999, http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/1999/991125_aust_china.html.

③ Daniel Flitton, "Rudd the Butt of Wikileaks Exposé," *The Age*, 6, December 2010.

almost echoing Rudd's tough stance, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said to Fairfax Media that "China doesn't respect weakness," citing the apparent lack of economic fall-out from China after Australia forcefully protested against China's declaration of Air Defence Identification Zone in the East China Sea in November 2013. Though with a brief nod to the importance of 'deeper engagement' with China, Bishop did not mince her words that "we're also clear-eyed about what could go wrong. So you have to hope for the best but manage for the worst".^① This sounds like hardly a vote of confidence in "a mature and broadly based" relationship. And what is remarkable is that the "clear-eyed" views came out of both Rudd and Bishop who are otherwise miles apart in their political persuasions.

True, going back at least to John Howard, new Australian governments tend to have an initial rough ride in dealing with China, but the fact that it is often in relation to China testifies to the chronically fragile nature of this relationship. As the relationship continues to grow in scope and importance, it is imperative that we understand what factors are responsible for its volatility. If material interests, however important, are not adequate in helping build trust between the two countries, what alternative avenues are available to improve this relationship? If such avenues are not currently in place, how can they be created?

On the eve of the 40th anniversary of Australia-China diplomatic relations, Australia's first ambassador to the People's Republic of China Stephen FitzGerald launched a sweeping yet incisive attack on the state of Australia's strategy towards China. Lamenting that Australia runs a deficit of leadership on ideas, FitzGerald urges that "We have to have that stretch of the imagination; we have to be able to imagine a different kind of relationship and *a different concept of China* to establish that political trust."^② In a similar fashion, the ANZ Bank CEO Mike Smith stresses the importance of paying greater attention to "an over-arching view of the Australia-China relationship."^③

① John Garnaut, "Australia Will Stand up to China to Defend Peace, Liberal Values and the Rule of Law: Julie Bishop," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 July 2014.

② Stephen FitzGerald, *Australia and China at Forty: Stretch of the Imagination*, Canberra: The Australian National University, 2012, available at: <http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/2012/fitzgerald/a-chinese-stretch-of-the-imagination.pdf>.

③ Peter Trute, "Embrace China Relationship, ANZ CEO Warns," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 2012, available at: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-business/embrace-china-relationship-anz-ceo-warns-20120720-22exe.html>.

FitzGerald's and Smith's calls for re-imagining and developing an over-arching view of the Australia-China relationship are both timely and significant. Thus far, despite the increasingly important ties between the two countries, there continues to be a lack of systematic attempt to critically reflect on this topic. Confucius said that "at forty I had no more perplexities."^① But now well over forty, Australia-China relations continue to be fraught with perplexities.

Of course, commentaries and analyses on the difficulties and complexities of the relationship abound in the media. Meanwhile, there is no shortage of often insightful studies and policy advice on how to better manage this delicate relationship, particularly against the backdrop of the Australia-US alliance.^② Among 250 submissions on the former Labor government's "Australia in the Asian Century Strategies," 47% were either wholly or partially related to China.^③ Several recent books on Australia-China relations are particularly noteworthy.^④ For example, Hugh White's *The China Choice*, based on his *Quarterly Essay* article "Power Shift", sheds important light on the danger of a China-US

① *Analects* 2: 4. The translation is from Wing-tsit Chan (trans. and ed.), *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 22.

② See for example, Hugh White, "Power Shift: Australia's Future between Washington and Beijing", *Quarterly Essay*, No. 39, September 2010; Alan Dupont, *Living With the Dragon: Why Australia Needs a China Strategy*, Lowy Institute Policy Brief, June 2011; Linda Jakobson, *Australia-China Ties: In Search of Political Trust*, Lowy Institute Policy Brief, June 2012; *Australia and China: A Joint Report on the Bilateral Relationship*, Canberra: Australian Centre on China in the World; Beijing: China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, 2012, http://ciw.anu.edu.au/joint_report/CIWCICIRJointReport-Australia_and_China-Feb2012.pdf; FitzGerald, *Australia and China at Forty*; and a special issue on the trilateral relationships among Australia, the US and China guest-edited by Lowell Dittmer and Baogang He, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 54, No. 2, 2014, pp. 215 – 417.

③ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Asian Century Country Strategies Submissions," 4 April to 31 May 2013, <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/141666/20131015-1509/www.dfat.gov.au/issues/asian-century/submissions/index.html>

④ Hugh White, *The China Choice: Why America Should Share Power*, Collingwood, VIC: Black Inc., 2012; James Reilly and Jingdong Yuan eds., *Australia and China at 40*, UNSW Press, 2012; Yi Wang, *Australia-China Relations Post 1949: Sixty Years of Trade and Politics*, Farnham, VT: Ashgate, 2012; David Uren, *The Kingdom and the Quarry: China, Australia, Fear and Greed*, Collingwood, VIC: Black Inc., 2012; Colin Mackerras, *China in My Eyes: Western Images of China since 1949*, Beijing: Renmin University of China Press, 2013.