

# Dragon Tails 2015

Jade Dragon in the Tropics

[www.dragontails2015.org.au](http://www.dragontails2015.org.au)

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4th Australasian conference on overseas Chinese history & heritage  
Cairns Sheridan Hotel, Cairns, Qld, Australia 2-5 July 2015

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## Program - Timetable at a glance

### Thursday 2 July

**9.00 - 5.00** Pre-conference Tour - Atherton and Innisfail  
**5.30 - 7.30** Conference Opening Reception

### Friday 3 July

8.30 - 9.00 Registration  
**9.00 - 9.30** Welcome and Introduction  
**9.30 - 10.30** Keynote Presentation - Prof. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Brown University, USA  
10.30 - 11.00 Morning tea  
**11.00 - 12.30** Panel 1 - Racism and Resistance  
12.30 - 1.30 Lunch  
**1.30 - 3.00** Panel 2 - Retrieving Memories, Retrieving History  
3.00 - 3.30 Afternoon tea  
**3.30 - 5.00** Panel 3 - Journeys, Locations, Vessels  
Friday Dinner not organized but restaurant suggestions will be offered for delegates

### Saturday 4 July

8.30 - 9.00 Registration  
**9.00 - 10.30** Panel 4 - Temples and Geomancy  
10.30 - 11.00 Morning tea  
**11.00 - 12.30** Panel 5 - Currency, Numerals and Shopkeeping  
12.30 - 1.30 Lunch  
**1.30 - 3.00** Panel 6 - Remembering the "Departed"  
3.00 - 3.30 Afternoon tea  
**3.30 - 5.00** Panel 7 - Rural Workers, Rural Communities  
**6.00 - 7.00** Cairns Chinatown Walking Tour  
**7.00** Conference Dinner - Golden Boat Chinese Restaurant

### Sunday 5 July

8.30 - 9.00 Registration  
**9.00 - 10.30** Panel 8 - Politics and Inclusion  
10.30 - 11.00 Morning tea  
**11.00 - 12.30** Panel 9 - Art and Performance  
**12.30** Conference Close  
**1.30** Yum Cha Lunch - Cafe China

# Dragon Tails 2015 - Program - in detail

Thursday 2 July

## 9.00 - 5.00 Pre-conference Tour - Atherton and Innisfail

- **Atherton Tablelands:** Guided tour of Atherton Chinatown Heritage Precinct, Museum and Hou Wang Temple (1903)
- **Lunch** at Henrietta Creek, Wooroonooran National Park
- **Innisfail** - Guided tour of Lit Sing Gung Temple (1897)

## 5.30 - 7.30 Conference Opening Reception

*Welcome to Country* - **George Skene**, Yirrganydji Traditional Owner

*Lion Dance* - **Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc (CADCAI) Lion Dance Troupe**

*Opening Address* - **Cr Bob Manning OAM**, Mayor, Cairns Regional Council

Friday 3 July

8.30 - 9.00 Registration

## 9.00 - 9.30 Welcome and Introduction

## 9.30 - 10.30 Keynote Presentation

**Prof. Evelyn Hu-DeHart** (Brown University, USA) - *"Tristes Tropiques": Chinese coolie labor on sugar plantations in Cuba and other tropical islands*

10.30 - 11.00 Morning tea

## 11.00 - 12.30 Panel 1 - Racism and Resistance

**Natalie Fong** - *"A single voice may awaken many echoes": Chinese merchants as active citizens in the Northern Territory 1880-1920*

**Phil Griffiths** - *Who were their enemies? Chinese people and racism in late colonial Australia*

**Michael Williams** - *Heads-I-win-tails-you-lose - the test it was a criminal offense to fail*

12.30 - 1.30 Lunch

## 1.30 - 3.00 Panel 2 - Retrieving Memories, Retrieving History

**Janet Liu Terry** - *Through the brick wall and into a garden of infinite delight: Australian history in China*

**Jenni Campbell** - *"M'ho gong gor dee yeh, bi sai lo gor teng" ("Don't talk about these things, the children may hear")*

**Robert de Jong** - *Coolies and capitalists: The Chinese diaspora in South Africa*

3.00 - 3.30 Afternoon tea

## 3.30 - 5.00 Panel 3 - Journeys, Locations, Vessels

**Pauline Rule** - *Managing the journeys of Chinese immigrants to Victoria in the nineteenth century*

**Kevin Rains** - *Examining the overseas Chinese landscape of historic Cooktown, Queensland*

**Melissa Dunk** - *Double happiness: a collection of Chinese ceramics from Bendigo and North Queensland*

Friday Dinner not organized but restaurant suggestions will be offered for delegates

# Dragon Tails 2015 - Program - in detail

Saturday 4 July

8.30 - 9.00 Registration

## 9.00 - 10.30 Panel 4 - Temples and Geomancy

**Wing-Fai Wong** - *The significance of Lu Ban Jing, the carpenter's and builder's geomancy manual in Chinese Australian heritage conservation*

**Mary Low, Anne Kreger and Philippe Savidis** - *Cairns Lit Sung Goong Temple Collection*

**Gordon Grimwade** - *Preserving and reconstructing the heritage of Atherton Chinatown, Queensland*

10.30 - 11.00 Morning tea

## 11.00 - 12.30 Panel 5 - Currency, Numerals and Shopkeeping

**Paul Macgregor** - *Transactions and talismans: Using Chinese coins in Australasia and Southeast Asia*

**Ely Finch** - *A practical introduction to traditional Chinese Digits (and their use in traditional accounting etc.)*

**Joanna Boileau** - *Chinese laundries and Chinese fruit shops: Two current research projects in Aotearoa/New Zealand*

12.30 - 1.30 Lunch

## 1.30 - 3.00 Panel 6 - Remembering the "Departed"

**Jonathan Richards** - *Justice Department and police records of Chinese deaths in Queensland, 1860-1960*

**Jacinta Warland** - *Gilberton tombstone tales tell us personal history of forgotten Chinese miner*

**Meg Foster** - *More than "an odd footnote": on "finding" a Chinese bushranger in Australian history*

3.00 - 3.30 Afternoon tea

## 3.30 - 5.00 Panel 7 - Rural Workers, Rural Communities

**Barry McGowan** - *Farmers, labourers and land clearers: The contrasting experiences of the rural Chinese In North Queensland, the Riverina and Northeast Victoria*

**Margaret Slocomb** - *Celestial shepherds: Indentured labourers in the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts (Queensland), 1848 to c.1880*

**Juanita Kwok** - *From goldminers to gardeners: The Chinese community in the Bathurst Region, NSW, 1850s-1950s*

## 6.00 - 7.00 Cairns Chinatown Walking Tour

Hosted by **Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc (CADCAI)**

includes tour of Cairns Lit Sung Goong Temple Collection

## 7.00 Conference Dinner

Golden Boat Chinese Restaurant

# Dragon Tails 2015 - Program - in detail

Sunday 5 July

8.30 - 9.00 Registration

## 9.00 - 10.30 Panel 8 - Politics and Inclusion

**Leigh McKinnon** - *"A distinguished visitor": Liang Qichao in Bendigo, Victoria*

**Yuhao Wen** - *Legacy of Zheng He's voyages: Chinese-style mosques and the inclusive nature of Chinese-Indonesian muslims*

**Hilda Maclean, Richard Martin & David Trigger** - *Chinese-Aboriginal identity, indigeneity and diaspora in northern Australia's Gulf Country*

10.30 - 11.00 Morning tea

## 11.00 - 12.30 Panel 9 - Art and Performance

**Tsan-Huang Tsai** - *From religious procession to cultural heritage: Bendigo's Chinese processional performances prior to the abolition of the "White Australia" policy*

**Anthony Ah Kee** - *Go Tak unmasked (Atherton Tableland, Queensland)*

**John Young** - *Imagining Worlds: Some considerations concerning the visual articulation of the history of the Chinese diaspora in Australia*

12.30 Conference Close

1.30 Yum Cha Lunch

Cafe China

# Dragon Tails 2015 - Abstracts and Speaker profiles

Anthony Ah Kee

**Artist, Melbourne**

*Go Tak unmasked*

From the 1860s thousands of Chinese entered a north Queensland without effective border controls to mine gold. After the finds petered out, many made their way to the rich alluvial soils of the Atherton tableland to farm maize and other crops. Most of these skilled agriculturalists worked collectively as a team for either themselves on leased land, or for Chinese farm operators. Settlers' children speak fondly of the old Chinamen who lived and died on their parents' property after the leases ended. One such Chinaman is Go Tak. His memorial is tangible – a road named in his honour and a variety of rose that is still grown around Ravenshoe today. The contribution of the Chinese to our culture can be exemplified by this man's legacy.

**Anthony Ah Kee:** My art and story telling reveal the hidden history of the exploitation of coloured Asian, Indigenous and Pacific Island labour by the Australian colonies and nation through, for example, an untitled art installation about the effects of the administration of the *Immigration Restriction Act* and the *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act* on the coloured workers and peasant farmers of north Queensland, using a simulated Federation penny arcade with re-imagined games. This is powered by research of over 120,000 National Australian Archives images and text, summarised in my <http://ColouredColonials.yolasite.com> web site.

Joanna Boileau

**New Zealand Chinese Poll Tax Heritage Trust**

*Chinese laundries and Chinese fruit shops: Two current research projects in Aotearoa/New Zealand*

This paper will report on two major Chinese heritage research projects in progress in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Both projects are funded by the Chinese Poll Tax Heritage Trust (CPTHT). The paper will begin with a brief introduction to the history and aims of the CPTHT and the variety of projects it funds. It will go on to discuss two current projects: one into Chinese laundries, which I am undertaking, another into Chinese fruit shops, co-ordinated by Ruth Lam. Laundry work was one of the three main occupations that Chinese immigrants to New Zealand took up after the gold rushes, along with market gardening and fruit and vegetable and grocery stores.

The aim of the laundries project is to research and document the history of Chinese-owned and operated laundries in New Zealand, from the first laundries in the 1890s to the 1970s when few remained. This involves documentary research and research within the Chinese community, including distributing questionnaires and conducting oral history interviews. The final product will be a publication on the history of Chinese laundries in New Zealand, covering as far as is possible all known New Zealand Chinese-owned and operated laundries and the people who ran them. The fruit shops project has similar aims and methodology, to document Chinese owned and operated fruit shops in New Zealand, and has an even broader timeframe. It will also result in a publication. The number of Chinese fruit shops in New Zealand over time is significantly larger than the number of laundries, and they endured for longer, so the scope of this project is correspondingly wider. Ruth Lam is co-ordinating a team of four other researchers around the country to carry out the project.

**Dr Joanna Boileau** has undertaken multidisciplinary research on the history of Chinese market gardening in Australia and New Zealand. She completed a PhD on this at the University of New England, Armidale in 2014. She is currently working as historian and heritage consultant in Auckland. Joanna has an MA Hons in archaeology and anthropology from the University of Auckland. She has worked in museums in New Zealand and Australia, including Auckland Museum, the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, and Tweed Shire Regional Museum in northern New South Wales. She has also worked at the Australian Heritage Commission and on community based heritage studies for local government.

## Jenni Campbell

### Cairns

"M'ho gong gor dee yeh, bi sai lo gor teng"

("Don't talk about these things, the children may hear")

I remember these words, uttered by my Por-Por (grandmother), as she spoke to my mother about her family, in particular as she explained about the 4 wives and extended family of her father, Kwong Sue Duk. He was a businessman and herbalist in Darwin, Cairns, Melbourne and Townsville and his life has previously been recorded as part of the Chinese history in Australia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lykin Lee Long (nee Kwong) was the eldest daughter of the third wife of Kwong Sue Duk. She was born in Darwin and lived in Herberton, Hong Kong briefly, and Innisfail. As well as outlining great grandfather's story, this paper is a personal reflection of my grandmother whom we remember as being greatly influenced by her father. The life of my Por-Por and the story of her father inspired me to visit the ancestral village in Toishan, China, in April this year. Por-Por, I think, would be bewildered but nevertheless chuckle, if she knew how much the story of her father has been the subject of many interviews, books, articles, videos, museum collections and of course the family tree. So much for "Don't tell the children!"

**Jenni Campbell:** At our first family reunion in 1982, I introduced myself as the only daughter of the sixth daughter of the eldest daughter of the third wife Yuen Yuk Lau, and Kwong Sue Duk. I am married with two daughters. As a third generation Australian, I grew up in North Queensland, in close contact with both grandmothers and much of the extended family. My maternal grandmother, Por-Por, lived with us so I heard about and met many of her siblings. My interest in our family history started then I guess. About five years after our first Kwong family reunion, I discovered Dorothy Jones' *Trinity Phoenix* in a bookshop in Townsville. At the first page I opened, I saw a reference to Dr Quong Sue Duk's daughter's marriage. I thought at first this was a reference to my Por-Por's wedding, but it turned out to be her sister, from the second wife of Kwong. Since then, I have researched Kwong's life in Cairns in preparation for the *Man of Family* video and attended many of the family reunions. In April, a group of cousins travelled to Kwong's birthplace in Toishan, China. We're hoping this will help "join the dots" of our family heritage.

## Robert de Jong

### Heritage Consultant, Townsville

*Coolies and capitalists: The Chinese diaspora in South Africa*

At the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century South Africa was a war-torn geographical region, recovering from the effects of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. Now finally in charge of the entire country, the British government was eager to get the goldmines around Johannesburg back online in an effort to rebuild the economy. Local labour shortage led to the importation of about 64,000 contracted mine workers from Mainland China between 1904 and 1910. Strong anti-Asian sentiments and a growing awareness about horrific working and living conditions eventually led to their repatriation. Apart from an estimated 5,000 unknown graves that are still being discovered by archaeologists and historians, this community left behind very little regarding tangible heritage. Sporadic and voluntary Chinese immigration began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and increased up to 1950, starting up again during the post-apartheid 1990s, with immigrants from Taiwan, Mainland China and Singapore. The result is one of Africa's largest Chinese populations, a permanent and prosperous Chinese community with a visible heritage.

**Robert C. de Jong** (born 1957 in Haarlem, the Netherlands) emigrated with his parents to South Africa in 1962. He studied at the University of Pretoria and was conferred a PhD in Cultural History in 1990, with a thesis on the Dutch employees of the Netherlands South African Railway Company (1887–1909). He completed a Post-Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies in 1979. From 1983 till 2005 he was employed as a museum specialist by provincial and national government agencies in South Africa. Since 2005 he has been a full-time heritage practitioner (consultant), specialising in heritage impact studies, heritage management planning and heritage training with projects in South Africa and Mauritius, and has continued this career after emigrating to Townsville, Queensland, in 2011.

Melissa Dunk

**University of Queensland**

*Double happiness: A collection of Chinese ceramics from Bendigo and North Queensland*

Chinese artefacts, in the context of Australia, are physical objects left behind by Chinese people, during the nineteenth and early twentieth century; Chinese artefact collections are typically made up of historical photographs, documents, clothing, religious material and artefacts such as ceramics and glass. Ceramics that were brought to Australia by the Chinese are today generally kept in museums, heritage laboratories, archaeological catalogues and private collections. This paper focuses on a sample of items in Dennis O'Hoy's collection of Chinese ceramics in Bendigo, Victoria, with comparison of similar Chinese ceramics discovered from archaeological assemblages in North Queensland. This paper discusses the relevance of oral history associated with Dennis' collection, which is usually lacking in excavated Chinese archaeological assemblages.

**Melissa Dunk** is an MPhil candidate at University of Queensland and is currently studying overseas Chinese Archaeology, specifically the relationship between the overseas Chinese and their material culture in maintaining Chinese identity. She studied her Bachelor of Archaeology (Honours) at La Trobe University on the artefact assemblage of Atherton Chinatown. Melissa works as a cultural heritage advisor for a national gas pipeline company. She is also passionate about Chinese history and heritage as well as Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Ely Finch

**Melbourne**

*A practical introduction to Chinese digits (and their use in traditional accounting etc.)*

When *The Blind Banker* screened in mainland China a few years ago, the strange Chinese symbols featured in it caused interest amongst many Chinese viewers, to whom they were entirely foreign. *The Blind Banker* was the second episode in the 2010 series *Sherlock*, a BBC modern re-make of the Sherlock Holmes stories, and the Chinese symbols featured in it were Suzhou numerals. Some Chinese viewers were able to learn something of these numerals from parents or via the Internet, but, in mainland China especially, ignorance of them is widespread, and one can still see occasional stories in regional Chinese newspapers reporting the discovery of old ledgers or the like that contain strange symbols, which have experts baffled.

However, Suzhou numerals are still in limited use in Hong Kong, and in some other outposts of traditional Chinese culture, although their use is waning, and very few people still have the ability to interpret more complex expressions made using them. Suzhou numerals, or Chinese digits, are not Chinese characters, but rather a native Chinese equivalent to the so-called Arabic numerals used in the West, which have largely replaced them within recent history in China too. They were in widespread use amongst the members of the Chinese diaspora upwards of fifty to a hundred years ago, and can still be seen in letters, newspapers, ledgers, price lists, insurance policies, invoices, signs, as street numbers, in dates on gravestones, in exchange rates, and in all manner of other written material from that period.

This presentation aims to give some introduction to the history of these symbols and the contexts within which they were and still are used, and to equip the audience with the ability to read them, and prices and other values written with them. Audience members with a knowledge of Chinese should also gain the ability to recognise complex expressions written with Suzhou numerals. The presentation will start by introducing each symbol and how it is written. Simple examples of how the symbols are combined will then follow, before a brief historical overview. A large number of images will then be shown, providing real examples of their use, and explanations of the intricacies of their usage will accompany the show. Throughout the presentation, members of the audience will be asked to identify the figures shown in the images, and will thus be actively engaged in learning how to read and interpret them.

**Ely Finch** is a pharmacist with a private passion for Chinese languages and Chinese literature. A speaker of Cantonese and Mandarin, who has some familiarity with Teochew, he is interested in various branches of Chinese linguistics, including phonology, etymology and dialectology, as well as Chinese calligraphy, history, culture, and pre-twentieth-century writing of virtually all genera and time periods. In recent years, he has begun to translate various historical documents and inscriptions, particularly ones pertaining to the nineteenth-century Chinese diaspora. These have included calligraphic inscriptions of poetry, an 1865 grocery invoice, letters, pages from a traditional ledger, the preface to a nineteenth-century phrasebook, and the personal account of Australian-Chinese journalist Helene Chung's grandfather. He has just completed *A Transcription and Translation of the Chinese Advertiser, and the English and Chinese Advertiser*, a translation of all remaining copies of Australia's earliest Chinese-language periodicals, a series of weekly advertising sheets disseminated in the gold-rush town of Ballarat during the 1850s. This year he participated in an interview with SBS Cantonese radio to promote an exhibition of the *Advertisers*.

*Natalie Fong*

**Griffith University**

*"A single voice may awaken many echoes": Chinese merchants as active citizens in the Northern Territory, 1880–1920*

As commonly remarked by historians, in the Northern Territory during the period 1880–1920 the Chinese significantly outnumbered the Europeans, as many as six to one (Stone and Steele 1995). Yet as Ganter notes, a "top down" approach that values their contribution to Australian history is rarely taken (Ganter 2006). And while there are studies more broadly on the Chinese in Darwin (Inglis 1967, Hutchings 1983), in the Northern Territory (Jones 2005), or in Northern Australia (Ganter 2006), no extensive study has yet focused on the significant role of the Chinese merchants in the territory.

Far from being apolitical sojourners, the merchants acted as patriarchal community leaders organising aspects such as labour, finance, sociocultural activities, philanthropy, even instigating protests against discrimination. Such protests were often made in English – a foreign language. Auerbach (2009), Ganter (2006) and Stephenson (2005) argue that the success of this organisation was a major contributing factor to the *Immigration Restriction Act* and related legislation.

Drawing on Rasmussen's methodology in her enlightening study of the Bendigo Chinese and their involvement in civic and community life (Rasmussen 2009), this paper will explore ways in which key NT Chinese merchants spearheaded protests on issues of local and national importance (immigration, opium importation, labour), as well as petitioning on behalf of individuals, thus giving a fuller picture of their organisation, active participation and response to discrimination.

**Natalie Fong** is completing her MPhil in History at Griffith University, focusing on the roles played by Chinese merchants in organising the NT Chinese during the period 1880–1920. She is descended from two prominent NT Chinese patriarchs – Wing Wah Loong and Low Dep Chitt. Natalie also teaches secondary English and History part-time at Citipointe Christian College, Brisbane.

*Meg Foster*

**University of New South Wales**

*More than "an odd footnote": on "finding" a Chinese bushranger in Australian history*

NSW in the 1860s saw bushranging at "its most acute stage". The refrain "bail up!" was a dreaded, but well known expression that swept along the roads and through the bush of the colony. While this period also saw thousands of Chinese immigrants come to NSW, they rarely feature in bushranging histories. Except for the odd remark when "Chinamen" were the victims of these "gentlemen of the road", Chinese people are largely absent from bushranging tales. At the same time as Johnny Gilbert and Ben Hall, John Dunn and Thunderbolt, however, there was a Chinese bushranger named Sam Poo.



This paper will explore Sam Poo's exploits and their relationship to colonial history. Far from an "odd footnote" deserving merely "a moment's attention", Sam's story engages with some of the most pressing issues of the colonial period and remains a controversial topic to this day. While there are clear connections between Sam and white bushranging, he cannot simply be added as an interesting sideline to the well-known narrative. This paper examines how ideas of bushranging, crime and justice were affected by the perceived difference of Chinese culture and race. It illustrates the messy and ambiguous relationship between Sam Poo and colonial expectations, and highlights the need for detailed analysis to understand bushrangers as more than simply Australian Legends.

**Meg Foster** is a PhD candidate in History at the University of New South Wales. Under the supervision of Grace Karskens and Lisa Ford, Meg is investigating the "other" bushrangers (those who were not white men) in Australian history and memory. After completing her honours thesis on Indigenous Bushrangers in 2013, Meg has worked as a researcher with the Australian Centre of Public History at the University of Technology, Sydney. She is also the author of "Online and Plugged In?: Public history and historians in the digital age" featured in the *Public History Review* (2014).

Phil Griffiths

**University of Southern Queensland**

*Who were their enemies? Chinese people and racism in late colonial Australia*

In 1978, the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History published (in conjunction with Hale and Iremonger) *Who are our enemies?*, a major attempt to understand the history of working class racism at a time when anti-Asian attitudes were still dominant. The book delivered a sustained critique of the politics of the leadership of the labour movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and argued that the discrimination and abuse directed towards Chinese and Pacific Islander people in particular had never been in the interests of Australian workers.

It is time to ask the same question from the standpoint of Chinese immigrants in late colonial Australia. Who were their enemies...their real enemies?

The flip side of the idea that White Australia was a victory of and for the working class was the idea that the only people prepared to defend the rights of Chinese immigrants were to be found among the elite. And it was to the rich and powerful, the politicians and editors and governors, that the leaders of the Chinese community directed their appeals for "British justice", most significantly in the pamphlet, *The Chinese Question in Australia* by Lowe Kong Meng and others (1879).

In this paper, I will question this approach, and argue that White Australia was not only legislated by the elite, but was driven in large part by their fears about the consequences of significant Chinese immigration. Critics who denounced the "capitulation" of legislators to "mob violence" allowed the perpetrators to pretend to be respecting the wishes of the people. The identification of elite interests with supposed support for Chinese immigration served to strengthen, rather than challenge, working class racism. One of the achievements of historians of the Chinese community in Australia has been to illustrate a significant level of integration by Chinese people in Australian society at all levels. This in itself challenges the dominant narrative of unrelieved and unrelenting anti-Asian racism.

In this paper, I will discuss both the high politics of national strategy and some real-world events that invite us to view the official policy of White Australia differently, and to question the strategy adopted by merchants who led the Chinese community.

**Phil Griffiths** lectures in Political Economy at the University of Southern Queensland. He researched the history of ruling class agendas behind the adoption of White Australia for his PhD thesis (ANU 2006), and has published a number of articles challenging the dominant interpretation of that history. This work is part of a larger project looking at the making of the so-called Australian settlement in the early years of federation, and its dismantling in the 1970s and 1980s.

## Gordon Grimwade

### Archaeologist, Atherton

*Preserving and reconstructing the heritage of Atherton Chinatown, Queensland*

Although there were once well over one hundred rural temples/joss houses constructed of readily available local materials across Australia and New Zealand, the Hou Wang temple in Atherton is the only timber and iron structure remaining in Australasia and is still largely "as built". The acquisition of the building in the late 1970s by the National Trust of Queensland marked a new beginning for what was fast becoming a dilapidated-looking structure. Conservation works have been wide ranging, over nearly four decades although, inevitably, more remains to be done. This paper outlines some of the key works that have been effected: reconstruction of the pagoda deck, structural modifications to prevent racking during severe weather, site archaeology, artefact conservation and reassembly of the interior to name a few. It explains some of the philosophy that has gone into the work and a few of the issues faced in the process.

**Gordon Grimwade** is an archaeologist and writer based in Far North Queensland. He has maintained a continuing interest in the temple and its material culture since undertaking postgraduate studies on the site several decades ago. His interest in comparative studies of temple forms, the artefacts and functions has taken him to China and New Zealand at various times and resulted in various publications and papers. He is currently working on the reconstruction of the temple pig roasting oven at Atherton as part of his interest in Chinese Australian religious practices and, some say, obsessive desire to roast a whole pig without burning it beyond recognition.

## Evelyn Hu-DeHart

### Brown University, USA

*"Tristes Tropiques": Chinese coolie labor on sugar plantations in Cuba and other tropical islands*

Leaving their homes in the muggy Pearl River Delta to a comparably hot and humid Cuba, to cultivate and harvest sugar cane, a crop that they were intimately familiar with, might not seem too far-fetched to imagine, after all, except for some small details: in Cuba, they worked under 8-year contracts on huge commercial estates called plantations alongside African slaves, who were bonded for life and whose children were born into life-long servitude. Similarly, contracted laborers were scattered throughout the islands of the British and French West Indies. Simultaneously, friends, brothers and co-villagers were bound for the stinking off-shore guano islands (hardened, nitrate-rich bird droppings) of coastal Peru. Later in the 19th century, still more from the same origins wound up in plantations of the US Pacific islands of Hawaii, while others found themselves toiling in rubber plantations and tin mines of the islands of the British Straits colonies of Southeast Asia. Almost all these labor migrants were men, almost all of them hailed from coastal Guangdong and Fujian provinces of tropical south China, and almost all toiled in tropical plantations and mines. Throughout the world where they found themselves, they were tagged with the pejorative label of "coolie". This big picture begs many questions, including the following: What is the connection to tropical climes on both the sending and receiving end? What is the relationship of Chinese male bonded labor to slavery and free labor? What is the impact of human contact between this imported, foreign, alien, ethnically and racially distinct group with others in their environment on identity and community formation?

I will lay out my research on Chinese coolies in Cuba and respond to some of these questions I have raised, while inviting conference participants to share their research and insights of coolie experiences elsewhere in the tristes tropiques.

**Professor Evelyn Hu-DeHart** is Professor of History, American Studies and Ethnic Studies at Brown University, USA, and Director of the Consortium on Advanced Studies in Cuba (2014–Fall 2015). From June 2015 to June 2016, she will be Visiting Professor in the History Programme, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. She received her BA in Political Science from Stanford University and her PhD in Latin American/Caribbean history from the University of Texas at Austin. She has written and edited 10 books, on three main topics: indigenous

peoples on the US-Mexico border; the Chinese diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean; and race relations and minority politics in the U.S. In addition to English, she publishes in Spanish and Chinese (Taiwan and PRC). Select publications on the Chinese diaspora include these edited volumes: *Across the Pacific: Asian Americans and Globalization* (1999; e-version 2010); *Asians in the Americas: Transculturation and Power* (2002); *Voluntary Associations in the Chinese Diaspora* (2006); *Asia and Latin America* (2006); *Afro-Asia* (2008); *Towards a Third Literature: Chinese Writings in the Americas* (2012). She is currently co-PI on two international collaborative research, public humanities and digital humanities projects:

"Asia Pacific in the Making of the Americas: Towards a Global History" at Brown University (<http://www.brown.edu/conference/asia-pacific/home>); and

"Chinese Railroad Workers of North America" at Stanford University (<http://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/wordpress/>).

Juanita Kwok

**Charles Sturt University**

*From goldminers to gardeners: The Chinese community in the Bathurst region, 1850s – 1950s*

My dissertation is researching the Chinese community in the Bathurst region in this period and assessing the role of the Chinese in the Bathurst community with particular regard to their role in agriculture. It will examine the extent to which the Chinese community were engaged in the local economy and civic life of Bathurst and their interconnectedness with regional, national and transnational Chinese Australian business and social networks. It will also examine how the changing political landscape in both Australia and China affected the lives of the Chinese community of Bathurst.

Bathurst is the oldest inland city in Australia, celebrating the bicentenary of its establishment this year. Bathurst was close to the site of the discovery of payable gold in Australia at Ophir in 1851 and it became the hub of the Western Goldfields districts. A small number of indentured labourers from China were first reported in Bathurst in 1849, while large-scale migrations of Chinese commenced in 1856. In the 1860s a Chinatown developed in Bathurst which supported goldminers and increasingly Chinese market gardens in many locations in and around Bathurst. The Chinese were the dominant force in market gardening in the last few decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. While there are some Bathurstians who can claim a Chinese ancestor, the Chinese community as such disappeared when the last of these gardens folded in 1953 following the demolition of the Chinese Masonic Lodge in Bathurst.

I am currently in the first phase of my data collection, a goal of which is to map where the Chinese lived and worked in Bathurst over this period. This paper will introduce the preliminary findings based on my ongoing 100 year (approximately) Trove search of Bathurst newspapers for articles referring to the Chinese. Some of the themes to emerge are the persistence of the Chinese market gardeners from the 1860s to the mid decades of the twentieth century, their dominance in vegetable production, the reactions and responses of the white community to this dominance and land leasing patterns.

**Juanita Kwok** is a PhD candidate at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst campus, researching the history of the Chinese in Bathurst. Her honours dissertation was written on the subject of the representation of the Chinese in Australian cinema of the White Australia era. Juanita holds a BA from the University of Sydney and a Post Graduate Certificate in Audio Visual Archiving from Charles Sturt University. Juanita co-founded and directed the Sydney Asia Pacific Film Festival 2000–2002. She is co-author of *Film Asia: New perspectives on film for English*, which won the National Award for Best Reference Resource for Secondary Teachers in 2003. Juanita has lived in Bathurst with her family for the past seven years.

Janet Liu Terry

**Independent Researcher, Cairns**

*Through the brick wall and into a garden of infinite delight: Australian history in China*

It is not seldom that one reads the sentence: And here we hit a brick wall. This sentence encapsulates the dead end of frustration when researching the background of Chinese individuals who emigrated to Australia from the mid-19th century. There are tomes and articles with the names of Chinese emigrants on board ships that brought them to this large southern land. The names, transliterated, often incorrect and incomplete, yield very little of value to the researcher except for date, gender, age and port of embarkation and debarkation. Once on shore the immigrant leaves behind most of his history and his past except for the few individuals who stood out for their success and achievement. It is with these individuals that a more detailed and nuanced history of their past that can be salvaged from the search and research of Chinese genealogical records known as *Jia Pu* (家譜) or *Zu Pu* (族譜). The writer examines what *Jia Pu* and *Zu Pu* are. She then gives examples of Chinese sense of history, the habits of repatriated migrants to China, and the significance of studying *Jia Pu/Zu Pu* to Australian history IN China. A list of resource material and research connections will end the paper.

**Janet Liu Terry** was born in China, and lived in India, East Pakistan, Hong Kong, Britain and Jamaica. She migrated to Cairns in 1992 where she has lived since. She has an abiding interest in Chinese history and now reads with enthusiasm the history of Chinese people in Australia. In her professional life, she had been in academic editing and publishing at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. She was script writer and producer (with Shandy Whitaker) of the short film, *Chinaman Creek*, 2012.

Mary Low, Ann Kreger and Philippe Savidis

**Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc (CADCAI)**

*The Cairns Lit Sung Goong collection*

The Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc (CADCAI) is custodian of one of the nation's hidden treasures, the Cairns Lit Sung Goong Collection. This nationally significant collection of over 240 artefacts from the LSG temple which operated in Cairns from 1886–1964, is an outstanding example of the material culture of Chinese Australian religious practices, and one of the few tangible links to what was a successful and thriving Chinese community in Cairns and more than a century ago. The Lit Sung Goong collection is integral to Australia's multicultural history, the pattern of Chinese migration and settlement in Australia and the Chinese contribution to the post-European development of north Queensland. Its provenance, ownership and use is well documented, and it offers great research opportunities for the study of Chinese religions, symbolism, art, culture, social structure and history. Considered one of the most complete and virtually intact collections of Imperial Chinese temple furnishings in Australasia, the artefacts include the ornately carved altar and canopy, deity statues, carved decorative panels, paintings on glass, printing and fortune telling paraphernalia, processional items and timber furniture.

The journey of the Lit Sung Goong furnishings has been long and precarious. Most of artefacts were originally imported from China in 1886 to adorn the Lit Sung Goong, the first Chinese temple established in Cairns. For more than a generation the temple was central, serving the social, cultural and spiritual needs of the early community. Its importance slowly declined and in 1964 the Lit Sung Goong was demolished. The temple furnishings were salvaged but they consequently lingered in various storage locations for more than 30 years, almost forgotten until 2002 when CADCAI was re-connected with the collection and assumed formal custodianship. Since then CADCAI Heritage Group volunteers have worked tirelessly to manage and preservation needs of the collection and to promote its significance within the community. This paper describes the history of the collection, the work of the CADCAI Heritage group to preserve the collection for future generations, and how the collection has impacted on CADCAI and the broader Australian Community. Supported by the local Queensland Museum Development Officer, CADCAI heritage volunteers have developed and implemented a collection management plan to collate, store and the preserve the collection into the future. Preservation and training projects include: the restoration of six paintings on glass; the repair of metal

objects; a timber and cleaning workshop and preservation project. A major public exhibition of LSG temple artefacts, "Inspirations from the Past – Celebrating the Chinese Community in Cairns", was held in 2006.

**Mary Low** is past CADCAI president and founding member and co-ordinator of CADCAI Heritage Group. **Ann Kreger** and **Philippe Savidis** are members of the CADCAI Heritage Group.

The **Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc (CADCAI)** is a non-profit community organisation dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Chinese culture and heritage in North Queensland. Its mission is to share and celebrate Chinese culture, protect the region's Chinese heritage, and enrich the cultural, social and economic diversity of the community. CADCAI was formed in 1978 primarily to support new Chinese migrants and Australian Chinese families in the Cairns area, and was incorporated in 1986. Since its formation, CADCAI has experienced considerable change and growth as the leading Chinese community arts and heritage organisation in Far North Queensland. Important changes to CADCAI's constitution in 2004 opened the membership to all, including non-Chinese with an interest in furthering the goals of the organization. This has resulted in increased participation and interest in CADCAI performing arts programs such as lion and dragon dancing, drumming, and Chinese language learning. The CADCAI performing arts group (mostly school-aged students) have participated in cultural exchange visits to Bendigo in Victoria and Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, Cairns's sister city in China, and are in high demand at local community events. CADCAI also stages the annual Chinese New Year festival which has become a major annual event in North Queensland. The event, now held in the historical Chinatown precinct (Grafton St), is associated with the growing Chinese tourism in the region.

*Paul Macgregor*

**Melbourne Chinese Studies Group**

*Transactions and talismans: Using Chinese coins in Australasia and Southeast Asia*

Qing dynasty-era cash coins have commonly been found on Chinese archaeological sites in Australia and New Zealand. There has been much speculation as to why they were brought out from China. Possibilities include: currency for internal exchange mining camps, loose change in pockets of immigrants that had no use once overseas, and tokens for gambling. Usually the quantities found have been small, a maximum of a few dozen per site. A large cache of thousands, found on the Palmer River in the 1970s, was atypical, and its authenticity has been doubted. Recently, a single 18th century coin found on Elcho Island in the Northern Territory has generated considerable discussion on social media regarding proof of early contact between Chinese and Aboriginal societies.

This paper will seek to locate these speculations in a wider geographical and social context. Chinese coins were used in Southeast Asian societies as currency for several centuries until the early 20th century. While often associated with trade by émigré Chinese merchants, these coins became standard currency in many of the islands of what is now Indonesia, circulating independently of Chinese merchant interactions. The kingdoms of Bali in particular imported large quantities of the coins direct from China. Within Chinese traditional society, these coins also had spiritual and ritual uses. Tied together with string to form elaborate shapes – notably as charms for protecting young children, or as "sword" shapes for use in temples – coins became powerful talismans of good fortune and wealth attraction. This may be a key reason why Chinese coins came to Australasia. Such ritual usage was also adopted in Southeast Asia, and in Balinese traditional religion they are still used in offerings at temples, and as talismans in households – so popular that an industry of reproducing these coins thrives to this day.

**Paul Macgregor** is an historian and heritage consultant who was curator of Melbourne's Chinese Museum from 1990 to 2005. He has published widely, organised many conferences and exhibitions, engaged in archaeological excavations and worked on several major research projects, all on Chinese Australian history. He is currently researching the material culture heritage of Chinese in Australia as part of a wider investigation of the nineteenth and early twentieth century co-evolution of European and Asian societies in Australasia, China, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. His most recent

publications include: "Chinese Political Values in Colonial Victoria: Lowe Kong Meng and the Legacy of the July 1880 Election", in Sophie Couchman and Kate Bagnall (eds), *Chinese Australians: Politics, Engagement and Resistance*, 2015; and "Joss Houses of colonial Bendigo and Victoria" in Mike Butcher (ed), *An Angel by the Water: Essays in honour of Dennis Reginald O'Hoy*, 2015.

*Hilda Maclean, Richard Martin & David Trigger*

**University of Queensland**

*Chinese-Aboriginal identity, indigeneity and diaspora in northern Australia's Gulf country*

Studies of identity in Australia have begun to focus on the complex negotiations of ancestry and heritage involving Aboriginal people and settlers, particularly in the north Australian setting. Indigenous identity can no longer be simply contrasted with settler identity, nor with histories of mixing, mobility and diaspora. Nevertheless, the impact of Chinese and other broadly Asian influences on Aboriginal people in Australia is under-researched, particularly as such influences impact on the politics of post-colonial recognition. In this paper, we discuss Chinese-Aboriginal interactions in the Gulf Country which complicate existing understandings of indigeneity and diaspora in Australia. Many Chinese-Aboriginal families with histories in the region are notable for the lengthy journeys they undertook between China and Australia, as well as subsequent histories of movement both within and outside the Gulf Country. We present indicative case studies that not only demonstrate these movements but also highlight the richness of the publicly available archival resources.

**Hilda Maclean** is a PhD Candidate at the University of Queensland in the field of Historical Archaeology. She is currently engaged by the University of Queensland Culture and Heritage Unit on a variety of projects encompassing genealogical and archival research.

**Richard Martin** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow and Consultant Anthropologist at the University of Queensland. His research is focused on the history and society of northern Australia's Gulf Country, where he has worked since 2007.

**David Trigger** is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Queensland and has published widely in academic and applied research focused on cultural identity in Australia.

*Barry McGowan*

**Australian National University**

*Farmers, labourers and land clearers: The contrasting experiences of the rural Chinese in North Queensland, the Riverina and Northeast Victoria*

The prowess of the Chinese as market gardeners in urban and rural Australia is very well known. So too is their role as land clearers and farmers in North Queensland, thanks largely to the pioneering work of Cathie May in her book *Topsawyers: The Chinese in Cairns 1870 to 1920*. Chinese farmers in the Cairns district of North Queensland and on the Atherton Tableland dominated the growing of bananas, fruit, vegetables and maize. Here, the European landowners took up non-agricultural occupations and leased their land to the Chinese, a process that endured for decades. As pastoral labourers the Chinese were the main land clearing work force in the Riverina, and arid NSW. They were also the main labour force in the vineyards of Northeast Victoria. The economic value of the Chinese pastoral labourers was undisputed, for they were preferred to Europeans because they were steadier and more reliable. In the vineyards the Chinese workers were found to be more skilled, and more dependable when in proximity to intoxicants, than European workers.

Many Chinese were also farmers on land rented from European landowners and some Chinese merchants, who helped set up their farms, insure their crops, and bargain with the landowners and buyers. They played an extremely important part in the development of the tobacco and hops industry in the King Valley and elsewhere in Northeast Victoria, and in the Tumut-Gundagai region in the Riverina. Most station owners were very happy with them because they were "industrious, honest,

and above all, because their rents were always paid on time". In my paper I discuss these differing rural experiences, and suggest that the role of the Chinese in rural Australia needs to be brought to the forefront of our studies of the Chinese Diaspora in Australia. The Chinese dominated their respective industries, and, as labourers and land clearers, brought about important changes to the physical, social and economic landscapes, lasting well into the 20th century. Their presence was not ephemeral, and still resonates today.

**Dr Barry McGowan** is a Canberra-based heritage consultant and historian, and a Visiting Fellow at the College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University (ANU). His main fields of interest are Australian mining history and the history and heritage of the Chinese in Australia. He is the author of eight books, the best known of which are *Australian Ghost Towns*, *Fool's Gold: Myths and legends of gold seeking in Australia*, *Dust and Dreams: Mining Communities in South-East New South Wales*, and *Tracking the Dragon: A History of the Chinese in the Riverina*. From 2008–2012 he worked with the Museum of the Riverina on an exhibition on the history of the Chinese people in the Riverina, and is currently working on a study of the rural Chinese in Northeast Victoria. In November 2012 he presented papers on the Chinese in Australia at Wuyi and Jinan universities, Guangdong Province, China.

*Leigh McKinnon*

**Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo**

*"A distinguished visitor": Liang Qichao in Bendigo*

Liang Qichao rose to prominence as a brilliant scholar and reformer in the 1890s, and was second only to Kang Youwei as a leading light of the movement to reform the Qing Empire that was begun under the auspices of the Guangxu Emperor in 1898. Forced into exile following the Empress Dowager's "coup", Liang made several visits to overseas Chinese communities in the following years to garner support for reform in China. This included a six month tour of Australia in 1900–1901, an early part of which was a three day visit to the central Victorian city of Bendigo. In this short time he was active in meeting and addressing leaders and members of both the town's well-established Chinese community and of the broader, mainly European population. Likewise he seems to have been warmly received and given opportunities to speak by a number of the different groups in Bendigo. In this paper I will look at some of these groups and personalities who were involved in the Chinese reformer's visit to the goldfields city, paying attention to their attitudes towards and possible motives for engagement with Liang Qichao and his cause. Also, where apposite, comparisons will be made with the receptions given to other high profile visitors from China who came to central Victoria in the decades immediately before and after Liang Qichao's visit, as well as with the reformer's visits to other localities during his Australian sojourn.

**Leigh McKinnon** is a local historian based at Bendigo's Golden Dragon Museum where he works on researching, interpreting, and cataloging stories, photographs and artefacts relating to central Victoria's rich Chinese heritage. He also has a research background in classics and medieval intellectual history, in which he was employed at Monash University for a number of years. A native Bendigonian who studied the Chinese language at La Trobe University and South China University of Technology as an undergraduate, he feels that his current work brings together many longstanding personal and research interests.

Kevin Rains

**Council of the City of Gold Coast**

*Examining the overseas Chinese Landscape of historic Cooktown*

In 1873 alluvial gold was discovered on the remote Palmer River in Cape York Peninsula and this initiated a rush of miners and businesses into the area, with Cooktown being established on the coast as a supply port. The influx included a large number of Chinese and the Palmer River gold rush was to be a major event in Chinese migration into Queensland.

Within Australian history narratives, overseas Chinese have been subject to stereotypes portraying them as transient, insular sojourners with little socioeconomic connection with the host country. They have been perceived as communities isolated from broader society by their cultural conservatism and desire to return to China, as well as the experience of European racism. Perspectives of the overseas Chinese in northern Queensland have been limited further by the promotion of a European history that stigmatizes or ignores the Chinese participation in colonial expansion. More recent studies have, however, begun to recognize the diversity, social complexity and dynamism within the Chinese Diaspora, and to highlight the important roles Chinese played in the socioeconomic development of Australia.

It is within the context of this new approach that this paper is presented. It adopts a framework based on current theories of social networks, power and landscapes to look at overseas Chinese social relations. The social landscape of Cooktown is examined, from data collected from archival material and an analysis of the physical landscape, including archaeological deposits. What emerges is a social landscape of many complex and layered relationships between the Chinese, European, Indigenous and other communities of the region.

**Dr Kevin Rains** is an archaeologist based in South East Queensland and who has worked in the fields of archaeology, history and cultural heritage management. The topic of his doctoral thesis is the history and archaeology of the Chinese community of Cooktown and the Palmer River Goldfield, Far North Queensland, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He maintains an active interest in researching the early Chinese community of Queensland, presenting and publishing a number of papers and being a founder and organiser of the biennial Rediscovered Past conferences in Cairns. Recently he has published a book, *Cedars of the West*, a biography of the Ah Foo family in central Queensland.

Kevin has worked for the University of Queensland on various archaeological projects, including the salvage of the historic Brisbane Burial Grounds at the Suncorp Stadium, and the late 19th century goldmining town of Paradise on the Burnett River. He has also managed the Cairns office of the Cultural Heritage Branch of the Queensland Environmental Agency, where he was responsible for the care of buildings and archaeological sites in Far North Queensland that are entered on the Queensland Heritage Register. Since 2006 he has been managing the heritage unit for the Council of the City of Gold Coast, running a diverse program of work that includes research, public education and assistance in relation to local history and heritage.

Jonathan Richards

**University of Queensland**

*Justice Department and police records of Chinese deaths in Queensland, 1860–1960*

The Chinese diaspora and sojourners in Australia continues to attract interest (especially among descendants and students), highlighting the huge gaps in our knowledge. The Chinese were the largest non-European migrant group in colonial Queensland, yet we still, despite much work, do not know many details such as accurate inwards and outwards numbers, motivation, and internal frictions and politics. For example, what actually did happen at the so-called Battle of Lukinville, on the Palmer River, in 1878? And why did so many Chinese congregate in Clermont, west of Rockhampton, at the end of the nineteenth century? How many Chinese businesses and families existed in each Queensland city or town? Even more basic demographic questions remain unanswered. What were



the major causes of death amongst Chinese communities in Queensland, and how well were these deaths recorded and investigated? How can we properly identify Chinese individuals in the records, especially those with European names?

The best solution is the systematic appraisal of archival records, allowing a “mineable” database to be compiled. This is a reasonably accurate and useful methodology. Using inquest and police records in this way, I gathered details of recorded deaths between the Palmer River and Cooktown, revealing 16 drownings, 8 “killed by blacks”, 7 sunstroke deaths, 6 suicides, 6 deaths from “unknown causes”, 4 fever deaths, 4 disease-related deaths. Many of these were Chinese, and none showed the cause of death as “eaten by cannibals”. This paper uses data from the research in progress to allow some preliminary conclusions to be drawn about causes of death, and the place of Chinese people in colonial and post-colonial record-keeping. Work like this will give us more reliable information that can be shared with interested parties.

**Dr Jonathan Richards** is a professional historian, specialising in archival research into records relating to death and violence. He is currently an honorary Research Fellow with the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry at the University of Queensland, and is working on several projects, including the ARC-funded digital mapping of frontier violence throughout Australia. His doctoral thesis, the first scholarly analysis of the notorious Queensland Native Police, was published in 2008 as *The Secret War*.

## Pauline Rule

### Independent Historian, Melbourne

*Managing the journeys of Chinese immigrants to Victoria in the nineteenth century*

This paper will consider the conditions under which Chinese passengers travelled from Hong Kong to Melbourne and their return journeys. Popular commentary on the Chinese travelling to the goldfields frequently assumes that these journeys were difficult with many dying on board ship. This paper will argue that it was only during the period around 1854–5 that significant suffering by Chinese passengers occurred. This was due to unscrupulous sea captains using any available ship to take advantage of the demand for transport to Port Phillip.

British and Hong Kong shipping acts regulated conditions on ships so that most Chinese passengers travelled safely. Weather conditions were probably the greatest cause of danger and illness. The journeys of Chinese travelling to Port Phillip were different from those of Chinese coolies shipped from Macau to Cuba and Peru. Increasingly, travel was standardised through management of the journeys by Chinese trading firms specialising in the movement of people as well as goods. The replacement of sail by steam also regularised travel making it easier for Chinese later in the century to make a life out of repeat journeys; working in the colony for several years, returning home for a lengthy visit and then returning to work again in the colony.

The paper will also evaluate popular conceptions of how the Chinese financed their journeys and comment on the “Credit Ticket System”. Most Chinese borrowed to finance their journey to Australia but colonial commentators saw the existence of debt as a sign that the Chinese were akin to bonded labourers. The paper will argue that the use of debt and the movement of people in groups along the various stages of their journey was not a sign of people trafficking but a pragmatic provision of a service by some Chinese for other Chinese unfamiliar with a new language and new surroundings.

**Pauline Rule** undertook doctoral research in the social history of Calcutta under the British Raj. She has researched the experiences of Irish women in colonial Victoria, publishing in the proceedings of Irish-Australian history and the *Australian Journal of Irish Studies*. More recently she has written about Chinese men and women in colonial Victoria and Hong Kong including “The Transformative Effect of Australian Experience on the Life of Ho A Mei, Hong Kong Community Leader and Entrepreneur” in *Chinese Australians: Politics, Engagement and Resistance* (Brill 2015).

For five years, between 1848 and 1853, around three thousand indentured labourers were imported to the colony of New South Wales from Fujian province in southern China, chiefly as pastoral workers on the vast sheep runs that stretched from Port Philip in the south to the newly proclaimed districts of Burnett and Wide Bay in the north. The strongest demand for this sort of labour was in the Northern Districts, including the rich squattages of New England and the Darling Downs, where perhaps half of all these Chinese men (there were no women among them), colloquially termed Celestials, were indentured on five-year contracts that did not include return passage.

From station journals, Bench and court records, and especially from colonial newspapers, it was possible to identify around two hundred of these men who fulfilled their contracts in the Wide Bay and Burnett, and to follow the lives of several of them, post indenture, to around 1880 when the pastoral industry gave way to other commercial imperatives in the region, especially mining and sugar cane cultivation, and also to land laws concerning closer settlement.

The indenture experience varied markedly, which is surprising given that all the squatters in a district like the Burnett knew each other and, no doubt, each other's business. On at least one run, the Chinese were paid incentives and bonuses that brought their contracted wage up to levels not very different from that of the "free" workers. On others, men complained to the Bench, when they could, about poor rations and non-payment. On some runs, there was proof in court of severe physical abuse. The *Master and Servants Act*, in its various reformulations, although always an instrument of employer power and control, did offer a degree of protection when a Chinese labourer could approach the court and could make himself understood. It is fair to say that on those occasions, the courts were ready to act on the complainant's behalf. The memory of extreme cruelty in the convict system and the fear of labels of slavery both helped the unfortunate Chinese indentured labourer to survive.

On completion of contract, these men were able to put their valuable acquired skills to work on the free labour market. In none of the available journals is there any evidence that Chinese labourers were paid less than any other labourer for the same job. Nowhere was this more evident than in shearing where Chinese recorded tallies as high as that of any white shearer in the Burnett district. So many of them were naturalized that it is tempting to suppose that the local police magistrate and town worthies encouraged them to do so. They were then able to invest in property, hotels, general stores, and butcher shops. Several of them married European women, and at least two of them entered local (council) government. Others took up market gardening or other small business. Not all prospered, but on balance it is fair to say that this labour experiment in the Wide Bay-Burnett resulted in successful immigration.

**Margaret Slocomb, PhD:** I spent most of my professional life in East and Southeast Asia. My first overseas job was in a Sarawak town that was almost exclusively Fuzhou-Chinese. Colleagues there urged me to go to China. Eventually, in 1981, I went to Shanghai as an exchange lecturer and two years later to Beijing for a further two years. Taking jobs when and where they were offered, I spent a year in Hanoi in the mid-1980s, and later in Vientiane. Most of my career, however, was spent in Cambodia whose modern history is my special field. This includes a study of indentured Vietnamese labour on French colonial rubber plantations there. My Chinese studies, interest in the history of indentured labour, and curiosity about my mother's grandfather (the shadowy Amoy shepherd, Tan Chan), among other things, led me to research and record this small history about a labour experiment in my home districts.

## Tsan-Huang Tsai

### **Australian National University**

*From religious procession to cultural heritage: Bendigo's Chinese processional performances prior to the abolition of the "White Australia" policy*

Studies of the "White Australia" policy, from 1901 to 1973, generally present the Chinese as experiencing racial discrimination and restrictions on their living conditions and migration. In this paper I investigate the soundscape and performances of the Chinese lion/dragon dances that have been a feature of the Bendigo Easter Fair since the late 19th century, using Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to analyse how Chinese communities deployed their traditional art forms to improve their social conditions in Australia. Since the 1880s, the spectacular Chinese cultural and music displays featuring lion/dragon dances, musical ensembles and processional regalia, have become one of the main attractions at the Easter Fair and have raised significant funds for charitable purposes. The musical performances and the material objects obtained from Guangzhou and Hong Kong have enabled the Bendigo Chinese to become an essential part of these major local charitable Easter activities. Three stages in the transformation of the procession from a Chinese religious procession to a performance of Bendigo's cultural heritage are outlined; these hint at a dynamic, bi-directional relationship between white Australians and Chinese that predates the "White Australia" policy and continued throughout the era. The case offers reconsiderations of several issues in the study of Chinese transnational communities, namely the importance of culture in establishing transnational networks, and the role of music in maintaining cultural identity.

**Tsan-Huang Tsai** is an ethnomusicologist interested in musical cultures of Taiwan and China. He taught for three years in Taiwan (Nanhua University, 2004–2007) and six years in Hong Kong (Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2007–2013). In 2013, he joined the Australian National University as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Australian Centre on China in the World (between August 2013 and January 2015), and as a senior lecturer at the Department of East Asian Studies (from February 2015). His research covers a wide range of disciplines, including ethnomusicology, organology, anthropology and Chinese studies. His scholarly awards include an Australian Endeavour Fellowship, a Visiting Fellowship at the Australian National University, a Research Fellowship at the International Institute for Asian Studies (Netherlands), a PhD Fellowship of the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (Taiwan), and the Gribbon Award of the American Musical Instrumental Society.

## Jacinta Warland

### **On Common Ground Archaeology Services, Townsville**

*Gilberton tombstone tales tell us personal history of forgotten Chinese miner.*

For a very long time the short yet impressive history of Gilberton as a mining town, and the relationship that the Chinese miners had on the development and improvement of conditions on the Etheridge gold fields in North Queensland, has been buried under the greater story of the gold rushes and the nostalgic yarns of pioneering European land settlement. In recent years, a sustained and growing interest in the hidden lives of the Chinese miners has garnered a collection of research derived from primary sources, and supported with anecdotal recollections. My paper focuses on a single artefact offered for translation by the landholders, a tombstone written in archaic Chinese, difficult to translate, however the result may shed some light on the life and role of this individual, in the mining town of Gilberton. The questions I posed for this piece of Chinese Australian history:

- Who was he?
- Why was he buried in Gilberton, when many were sent home to be buried with their ancestors?
- What role did he play in the very short and dangerous life of Gilberton?

The tombstone is believed to have been hewn from granite for a Chinese man who died on the Gilberton gold fields. It does not say how old he was when he died or when or why, it simply states his name, his village and his state. He is a silent testament to the Chinese miners and associated workers, who perished on the remote and heavily contested country called Gilberton.

**Jacinta Warland:** A recent convert to the world of historical research, my background is in archaeology, and more recently alternate dispute resolution practices. My work is usually around Aboriginal heritage sites, and supporting groups to fight for the protection and management of those sites. I was encouraged to write about the archaeology of the Gilberton area, by the landowners and the Traditional Owners of the area. This original interest in our common history led me to find many interesting historical stories about the lives of the people gone before, stories that really needed to have some factual support. After being shown the tombstone, and understanding the reason it wasn't left as it should be, marking the gravesite, I went looking for the name of the gentleman whose resting place, his grave, had been destroyed by the actions of irreverent miners in the early 1980s. I felt that he at least should be named and possibly his descendants could have some peace about where he was finally buried. As a research newbie, I was guided by the extraordinary patience of the special collections staff in James Cook University, who assisted me to find the gems hidden in the back rooms of the library. This furthered my background understanding, leading me to refine the written works on the lives and possible reasons for death which afflicted so many Chinese miners, in Gilberton, the town that flashed like gold in the river then just as quickly disappeared from our history.

*Yuhao Wen*

**Australian National University**

*Legacy of Zheng He's voyages: Chinese-style mosques and the inclusive nature of Chinese-Indonesian Muslims*

Between 1405 and 1433, imperial court of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) of China launched a series of voyages sailed to Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and the east coast of Africa. The imperial fleet was under the command of Muslim admiral Zheng He. Numbers of historical materials i.e. *the Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, and scholarship, such as Tan Ta Sen's *Cheng Ho and Islam in Southeast Asia*, have demonstrated that the voyages had promoted the spread of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. Based on this context, this paper argues Zheng He's voyages were involved in the formation of an inclusive nature of Chinese-Indonesian Muslims, that is, a singular identity that tends to blend Chinese identity, Muslim identity, and *pribumi* (indigenes) identity. With the end of the voyages, this identity, rather than disappearing as time went on, has been inherited.

After 1998, it has contributed significantly towards Chinese-Indonesian Muslims seeking greater social acceptance and recognition in both ethnic Chinese society and *pribumi* society where they have been long excluded. In ethnic Chinese society, conversion to Islam is considered as a betrayal of traditional Chinese family values and loyalties. In the *pribumi* society, Chinese ethnicity has not been fully accepted as part of the Indonesian nation and the historical prejudice against ethnic Chinese is still firmly entrenched. Many *pribumi* Muslims consider Chinese-Indonesians' faith of Islam is insincere and driven by pragmatic reasons, such as wanting to become more similar to the local society in order to secure their life. To substantiate my argument, this paper will investigate Chinese-style mosques in Indonesia, particularly the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque which was opened by the Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia (*Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia* or PITI) in Surabaya in 2003, with emphasis on the architectural style of those mosques and the social activities those mosques have been involved in.

**Yuhao Wen** is a postgraduate student in Asia-Pacific studies at the Australian National University, currently researching Indonesia's Chinese-language newspapers in the post-New Order era. This research looks at how those newspapers present the self-identification of Chinese-Indonesians. His research interest is in the history and politics of Indonesia, and the overseas Chinese in Indonesia and elsewhere. His recent publications include a journal article published by the University of Tennessee, US, and several conference papers in Indonesia. He also writes for several Southeast Asian Chinese-language newspapers, such as *Harian Indonesia (Sin Chew)* and *Harian Nusantara*.

Michael Williams

**Chinese Australian Historical Society, Sydney**

*Heads-I-win-tails-you-lose: The test it was a criminal offense to fail*

The Dictation Test lay at the heart of the White Australia Policy for much of its existence. Despite this long history and its largely being directed at Chinese people, confusion about just exactly what the dictation test was and how it was implemented also existed throughout this time and much remains even today. This confusion and ignorance is no coincidence for the original administrators of the test and the *Immigration Restriction Act* of which it was a major instrument began by attempting to keep aspects of its operation a secret. In fact, throughout its more than 50 year history – beginning with its first administrators – police, magistrates, lawmakers, and journalists, as well as potential immigrants and even museum curators and historians have continued to mistake the nature of this “test”. This paper will explore the history of the dictation test in an attempt to tease out some of the various issues and contradictions this “test” generated.

**Dr Michael Williams** has researched the Chinese diaspora of the Pacific in terms the *qiaoxiang* (home villages), extending this to Chinese movement at the end of the twentieth century and beyond. Michael is currently historian of the Chinese Australian Historical Society and is a member of the Professional Historians Association (NSW).

Wing-Fai Wong

**University of Queensland**

*The significance of Lu Ban Jing, the carpenter's and builder's geomancy manual in Chinese Australian heritage conservation*

When gold rush period was over in Australia, many Chinese goldminers returned to their former timber-related carpentry and building occupations. They respected *Lu Ban* (魯班) as the patron saint of carpenters and builders. The timber merchants in Melbourne had formed an association (美利濱木行工商會) and the largest ceremony of the association (木行大慶會) was to memorise *Lu Ban* and to celebrate *Lu Ban's* birthday. The association regulated the ceremony day as a holiday for all carpenters and builders in Melbourne from 1910 onwards. *Lu Ban Jing* (魯班經), the occupation manual of Chinese carpenters and builders, contains much information on *Feng Shui* (風水), *Ze Ri* (擇日) and magical concealed objects in construction of a building. There is no doubt that *Lu Ban Jing* was put into practice in Australia by early Chinese Australians. *Lu Ban Jing* is still reprinted in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan without a single word of change for the past five hundred years (except typos and missing diagrams made by certain careless publishers). It is one of the major reference sources of feng shui aspects with respect to auspicious scales, ratios and dimensions of a building.

The auspicious dimensions disclosed in *Lu Ban Jing* have been taken into account in heritage conservation in China. Recently in China the magical concealed objects have also begun to be considered as part of the historical relics of a building for heritage conservation and are being restored according to tradition ritual. *Ze ri*, as the construction management process of a building, is still a common practice in Hong Kong and Taiwan. It is often taken care of by traditional craftsmen and builders as their trade practice, hence acknowledging *ze ri* is not a concern in heritage conservation at Hong Kong and Taiwan. However *ze ri* has not been considered in overseas Chinese heritage contexts, and my research is trying to raise awareness of the practice of feng shui, *ze ri* and magical concealed objects as disclosed in *Lu Ban Jing* for overseas Chinese heritage conservation.

**Wing-Fai Wong** is an information technology professional and has a strong interest in feng shui. While working in IT for a living, he continues to study and research built environment and feng shui. His earliest research work was on the Holy Triad Temple in Brisbane, and some of the drawings and sketches of the research were published in *The History of the Breakfast Creek Temple: Its Relationship to the People in Brisbane*. He currently is the IT coordinator of the Asian-Pacific Centre for Chinese Entrepreneurial Studies (APCCES) and undertaking postgraduate research at the University of Queensland on how the early Chinese settlers in Australia practiced feng shui and *ze ri*. His two latest

conferences presentations were: "The guidebook and daily life of the early Chinese immigrants in Australia", at the Third International Symposium on International Migration and Qiaoxiang Studies, Wuyi University, China; and "*Feng Shui and Ze Ri: The Chinese way of project management and decision making in everyday life*", at the Second Young Scholars' Conference on China Studies, Baptist University, Hong Kong.

*John Young*

**Artist, Melbourne**

*Imagining Worlds: Some considerations concerning the visual articulation of the history of the Chinese diaspora in Australia*

Visual cultural production relating to the history of the Chinese diaspora in Australia is in its nascent days. The historic English-Irish conflicts embedded within the Kelly myth have had more than a sixty year history in painting (Nolan 1946) and film (Tait 1906) – yet the interlocking relationships between the Chinese, Anglo and Indigenous cultures have barely been touched upon in the context of visual culture. Through the wonderful historic archiving of text and images documenting this history, such as Chinese Historical Images of Australia (CHIA) and Trove (National Library of Australia on-line database), a possibility is present of re-imagining historical narratives within the context of contemporary art and filmmaking.

This presentation examines a journey of the reviving of historical narration for the visual arts in several of my art projects – *Bonhoeffer in Harlem* (Berlin and Bamberg 2009–2013), *Safety Zone* (Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra and Ballarat 2010–2014), *The Macau Days* (Hong Kong 2012) and recently *1866: The Worlds of Lowe Kong Meng and Jong Ah Siug*, and *Open Monument: for the Contribution of the Chinese in Ballarat since 1840* (Melbourne 2015). These projects, and others, have focused on the context of first-person imaginary narrations, trauma, multi-lingual and situational ethical negotiations – aspects that may open a deeper comprehension of historic time in the present, within the avant-garde art world and its institutions.

**John Young Zerunge** attended the University of Sydney, graduating with First Class Honours in Philosophy. He then studied Painting and Sculpture and later lectured for 12 years at Sydney College of the Arts. Young has represented Australia in many international exhibitions, including at the Guggenheim Museum, New York (1995). Regular exhibitions are held nationally as well as in Berlin and Hong Kong. In 2005, a survey exhibition covering 27 years of works was held (*John Young: Orient+Occident*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2005); a monograph by Dr. Carolyn Barnes and William Wright AM (2005, Craftsman House, Thames & Hudson) was published to coincide with this show. A second survey was exhibited in Canberra (*The Bridge and the Fruit Tree*, ANU, 2013). As a recipient of the prestigious Australia Council Fellowship for established artists, a two-year research fellowship concentrating on the history of the Chinese Diaspora in Australia has recently concluded. Young's latest exhibition, *1866: The Worlds of Lowe Kong Meng and Jong Ah Siug* is the first in a series that draws on the content of this research. He is on the Board and the Founding President of the Asian Australian Artists' Association, now the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, a national body that encourages patronage towards the promotion of Asian-Australian and regional contemporary artistic practice.