

Introduction

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The 2008 issue of *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* focuses on Australia, New Zealand, and the Southwest Pacific. It features two new historical articles that examine aspects of Chinese life in later-nineteenth-century rural New South Wales and in 1890s Sydney. Connecting both is the most famous Chinese of his time, Mei Quangda (Quang Tart), who made his fortune on the Braidwood gold fields after being adopted by a local Scottish family and then, as a young man, moved with them to Sydney, where he became a highly successful merchant and leader of the new emerging bi-lingual elite of 1890s Sydney. Our third article traces the long spiritual history of a Chinese temple founded in Sydney in 1909 by examining its Quang Dong origins. Then one of Australia's foremost demographers presents a study of the changing nature of Chinese diaspora in modern Australia. The Research Notes and Data Papers section contains an insightful analysis of old and new Chinese communities in Papua–New Guinea and a study of the sense of 'Chineseness' among a group of long-established locally-born Chinese Australians. There are also two data papers that introduce several important electronic databases useful for the study of Chinese heritage in Australia and New Zealand.

This issue of *CSDS* is dedicated to the memory of Henry Chan Min-hsi (1937–2008), who died recently in Sydney. Henry Chan was an exemplary product of the Chinese southern diaspora, and an indefatigable champion of its people's heritage and histories as both Australians or New Zealanders *and* overseas Chinese. This issue of *CSDS* is deeply indebted to Henry's kind interest and helpful advice. As a mark of our respect, we dedicate it to his memory and begin with an appreciation of his life and work.

In Memoriam: Henry Chan Min-hsi (1937–2008)

John Fitzgerald and Harriet Veitch

The most striking thing about Henry Chan was his drive. He was a scholar of international renown in the history and philosophy of science, a community historian, a tireless partisan in the culture wars, a gifted networker and organiser, an energetic institution builder and a generous teacher. Running through it all was an iron will to secure recognition for Chinese–Australians as Australians, and likewise of Chinese–New Zealanders as New Zealanders.

Henry Min-hsi Chan, who died this year aged 70, was born in Sunghai, southern China, shortly before the outbreak of war with Japan, the only son of Chan Runling and his wife, Huang Lixia. Henry's great-grandfather had migrated to Australia in the nineteenth century and his son, who took the surname Hunt, started an import-export business in Wellington, New South Wales, where Henry's father grew up. Commerce between Canton (now Guangzhou) and Australia was strong in the 1930s. The business took his father between the two, in the course of which he married in China. In 1933 he was sent to Auckland to set up a branch of the family green grocery. In 1940, Henry and his mother joined him there, leaving his two sisters with their grandparents. There was now a large family spread across the Tasman engaged in business and community activities, exposing Henry to Chinese networking from an early age.

Henry's father wanted him in the family business but Henry wanted to go to university. He left home and was fostered by the Reverend Robert McDowall and his wife until he finished high school at Auckland Grammar. While at school, Henry

took New Zealand citizenship. He went on to Canterbury University in Christchurch and later taught at Napier. In 1968, he was a junior lecturer in history at Massey University, Palmerston North, where he met Mary Joiner, a lecturer in English literature. They were married in 1970 and Chan earned his MA in New Zealand. In 1974, when the junior lectureship came to an end and Mary had study leave, they went to London where Chan studied for another MA, in Chinese and Japanese history, at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. They returned to New Zealand in 1975 and the following year Mary took up a lectureship at the University of NSW, where she stayed until her retirement in 2000, Henry worked for a time in the Rare Book Library at Sydney University and in 1986 took up a lectureship in Chinese history at Newcastle University. He stayed there, commuting to Sydney each week, until he retired in 1998 and the couple moved to Katoomba, in the Blue Mountains.

Henry Chan knew and loved both Australia and New Zealand, and was passionate about his Chinese ancestry. It bothered him that someone might imagine there was something inconsistent about the mixture, and he spent much of his life showing there was not. He could be impatient with growing signs of a self-righteous 'victimisation' mentality among young Chinese in China and Australia, which he felt did credit to no one and fuelled intolerance.

His convictions drove Chan at a breakneck speed through the years of the Howard government. He organised conferences and workshops, brought together community and academic networks, set up heritage coalitions, developed digital resources, email lists and websites, won funding for heritage projects, and alerted local community historians to wider developments in the country and Australian scholars to international developments in the field. He had a hand in virtually every important event and institutional initiative in Chinese–Australian studies over the past two decades. Through these activities, he helped to remake the field and, in his own way, to refashion Australia into the land he always imagined it to be: one in which the values he cherished as an Australian were seen as part of a common human heritage rather than the sole legacy of an Anglo–Saxon elite.

In 2004, he was awarded a fellowship at the National Library in New Zealand (Wellington), where he studied Chinese immigration to New Zealand. A book on immigration from Zengcheng (in Guangdong province), *Zengcheng New Zealanders*, was published in 2006 for the 80th anniversary of the Zengcheng Association in Wellington. He edited the book and wrote a long historical introduction. He was also instrumental in organising "Tracking the Dragon", a cultural heritage project in Sydney that grew from the Australian Heritage Council's guide to Chinese–Australian heritage places.

Henry Chan is survived by Mary, their son Sebastian, daughter-in-law Kerri Cavanagh and grandchildren Grace and Rupert.

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