

Editors' Introduction

編者的話

The 2013 volume of *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* focuses on sources, language and approaches in the study of the history and heritage of the Chinese in Australia. Most of the articles are revised versions of papers presented at Dragon Tails 2011, the second in a series of Australasian conferences on overseas Chinese history and heritage, held at the Museum of Chinese Australian History in Melbourne in November 2011.

The articles in this volume reflect our aims as convenors of the Dragon Tails 2011 conference – to provide an opportunity to hear new and emerging scholarship on Australia's Chinese history and heritage, to encourage researchers to discuss the methods and sources they use and the challenges these present, and to continue to build a diverse and multidisciplinary community of scholars that includes historians, heritage professionals, archaeologists, curators, archivists, librarians, genealogists, educators, postgraduates, amateurs and professionals. We are pleased that the contributors to this volume represent a number of these different groups.

The research articles begin with an illustrated essay by Kate Bagnall that uses the intertwined histories of two rural settlements, Indigo in Victoria and Shek Quey Lee in Guangdong, to consider how the story of Chinese migration and settlement in Australia has been remembered and forgotten, both in China and Australia. Themes that emerge in Bagnall's essay – of diverse and complex networks of family and community – continue in Kevin Rain's article on the overseas Chinese social landscape of early Cooktown in far north Queensland. Rains' work, based in historical archaeology, considers the webs of association through which Chinese people obtained their material needs, accrued and exerted social power and continually defined their social identity. Barry McGowan's article also considers the social dynamics of life for Chinese in rural Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but through the lens of colonial and federal immigration restriction. McGowan argues that the responses of white residents of the Riverina to the impositions placed on local Chinese challenge popular impressions of Chinese-European relations.

The final three articles focus more explicitly on the process of researching and writing Chinese Australian history; two are by current postgraduate students. Gary Osmond's article explores what emerged when he self-consciously chose to only use online source material, primarily newspapers, to research the unknown visit of a Chinese swimmer, Kwok Chun Hang, to Australia in 1935. Alanna Kamp then challenges the absence of Chinese women from much of the historiography of the Chinese in Australia, arguing that Chinese Australian women were present in the Australian nation throughout the White Australia Policy period and that their lives, experiences and contributions are worthy of investigation. Among the sources Kamp has used to uncover women's experiences is oral history, something Grace Edwards has also turned to in her work on cultural history. Edward's article provides a sensitive discussion of her approach to researching the history of Chinese involvement in dance-related activities in Australia, including Cantonese opera, dragon dances and community-run balls and social dances.

The research notes and materials sections highlight the diversity of source material available and suggest how researchers can broaden their approaches to create more nuanced understandings of overseas Chinese history. From rare gold rush documents of the 1860s – a parchment certificate, a petition and a phrasebook – to the material culture of Chinese market gardening, to the holdings of the New Zealand government archives, we hope these short articles will inspire further exploration of Australia and New Zealand's rich Chinese pasts.

Kate Bagnall and Sophie Couchman
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