



THE 76TH GEORGE E MORRISON LECTURE IN ETHNOLOGY

Fathoming the Orient: Australian Narratives

Thursday 3 September 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Speaker

Professor David Walker

BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies,
Peking University, and Alfred Deakin
Professor at Deakin University, Melbourne.

David Walker took up his current position as the inaugural BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University in February 2013. He has written extensively on Australian representations of Asia. His prize-winning book, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850 to 1939* (UQP, 1999) has been translated into Chinese and published by China Renmin University Press (2009).

Location

The Auditorium

Australian Centre on China in the World
China in the World Building #188
Fellows Lane, ANU

Registration required

W <http://bit.ly/1MeTXjs>

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This lecture is free and open to the public.
It is preceded by light refreshments at
5:30pm.



In the century from the 1880s to the 1980s there were numerous accounts of what 'the rise of Asia' would mean for Australia. While it can be reasonably argued that Australia underwent considerable change across this period there were also continuities in the way 'Asia' was represented, understood and explained. The lecture will discuss some of the repeated stories or narratives that governed the Australian discussion of Asia across this period. High on the list were the 'warning' and the 'opportunity' narratives and in each case Asia was understood to be moving towards an Asian future. There were often sharply polarised understandings of what this journey from a British/European past to an Asian future might mean, but the journey to Asia was often figured as a transformative encounter. Among those transformations was the shift from Australia as a remote outpost of the British Empire to a nation at the heart of the struggle for power between East and West. However Asia was understood, each of these competing narratives had implications for how Australians should respond to their changing circumstances, thereby turning the response to Asia into a test of nationhood. Herein lies another story about the informed/visionary few who knew Asia and the ignorant many who did not.

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