Chinese Immigrant Workers in Australia: From Segregation to Integration

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The historical record of Chinese immigration to Australia began with the Daoyi Zhilüe (A Brief Record of Exotic Isles) by Wang Dayuan, a famous Chinese navigator in the Yuan Dynasty. Archaeological artifacts such as the Jade Shouxing Statue prove that there is a close connection between the culture of Yi ethnic group in southeastern China and the ancient cultures in Oceania. Under the influence of Australia's various immigration policies, the population and communities of Chinese society have undergone many complex changes, with key characteristics in the Chinese community through the various stages of changes. A large-scale immigration of Chinese into Australia began with the Chinese laborers in the mid-19th century. The Australian gold rush in the 1850s brought a large number of Chinese to Australia, and they integrated well with the white immigrants. The "White Australia Policy" from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century led to a significant decline in the population of Chinese immigrants to Australia. After the abolition of the "White Australia Policy" and changes in Australia's immigration policy, combined with China's reform and opening up, Chinese immigration to Australia has set off a new upsurge, and the Chinese have integrated into Australia to become the third largest ethnic group.

Keywords: history, Chinese immigrant workers, Australia, segregation, integration

EARLY RECORDS OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

To understand the entry of Chinese into Australia, we first need to know how the Chinese discovered Australia. Archaeological findings tell us that, 6,000 years ago, the Yi and Yue people, whose culture type belong to the Qingliangang culture, were distributed along the lower Huang-Huai areas and eastern coasts of China. Archaeologists have found, in the Philippines, North Kalimantan, Sulawesi and on the island of Timor which is not far from the northern part of Australia, archaeological types close to the Chinese Qingliangang culture, and also found ground stone axes that are completely different from the native stone tools unearthed in those places. Western archaeologists, therefore, believe that the Qingliangang culture might be a primitive form of culture of the Austronesian family. In 1879 Richard Strawbridge, an official of the Municipal Works Department of the Australian Colony, while directing a group of government-employed Chinese workers in the construction of a road in the harbor of Darwin, found a jade statue of the God of Longevity at a depth of four feet under a large 70-foot banyan tree. On March 8, 1928, the historian N. B. Tyndall, in his paper, first suggested that it was a Chinese Taoist longevity image in the Tang Dynasty, and that it might have been brought to Australia at that time. Some scholars have also suggested that the

longevity statue was probably left behind by Chinese laborers or obtained by Australian natives from Chinese sailors (Zhang 1998:12).

According to research, the earliest record of Chinese expedition to Australia is the *Daoyi Zhilüe* (A Brief Record of Exotic Isles), written by the famous navigator Wang Dayuan in the Yuan Dynasty. Wang, a native of Nanchang, was born in 1311, his courtesy name being Huanzhang (Sheng 1983). In the first year of Zhishun reign (1330A.D.), at the age of 20, he set sail from Quanzhou (Zayton or Zaitun in older times) for the first time and visited the Hainan Island, Malacca, India, Persia, Arabia and other places by merchant ships, and successfully crossed the Mediterranean and arrived in Morocco. In addition, he made a preliminary investigation into a number of countries and peoples in Africa. After completing his African exploration, he crossed the Indian Ocean and visited Sri Lanka, Sumatra, Java and other places before arriving in Australia and finally returning to Quanzhou. The whole journey lasted five years (Wu 2018). In the third year of the reign of Zhiyuan (1337 A.D.), he once again set sail from Quanzhou. This time he sailed through the South Sea Islands, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Mozambique Channel between the African continent and the island of Madagascar, while also reaching various parts of Australia. Two years later, he finally came back to Quanzhou. Upon completion of his two voyages, Wang Dayuan began compiling the *Daoyi Zhi*, later renamed the *Daoyi Zhilüe*, a detailed record of the socio-economic conditions and peculiar customs of the various countries he had observed on his voyages. Because of his important contribution to world history and geography, Wang has been called by Western scholars the "Marco Polo of the East". And because of Wang's great pioneering work on Chinese overseas immigration, he can also be called the pioneer of Chinese entry into Australia. In 1867, Alexander Wylie, a British sinologist, made the first mention of the *Daoyi Zhi* in *Notes on Chinese Literature*. In 1871, the Russian sinologist Emil Bretschneider also introduced the *Daoyi Zhi* in his *On Knowledge Possessed by the Ancient Chinese of the Arabs and Arabian Colonies and Other Western Countries Mentioned in Chinese Books.* William Rockhill, an American sinologist, translated much of the *Daoyi Zhi* in his *Report* of 1913. In 1914 and 1922, French sinologists Eluzu and Ferrand translated and published parts of *Daoyi Zhi* into French, and in 1915 Toyohachi Fujita translated it into Japanese (Ishida 2019).

There have been a number of interesting and even reliable accounts of the early arrival of Chinese in Australia. Many Western scholars believe that the earliest arrivals on the west coast of Australia were Chinese crews. In 1942, an Australian wrote an article in *Walkabout*, a Sydney magazine, about the discovery of Qing Dynasty Chinese writing about a small island in northern Australia. Called the Sweets Islands, it is actually "a small, narrow island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, but has a history that began long before the white man colonized Australia. ... Captain Matthew Flinders landed on it during his circumnavigation of Australia in 1802 and, therefore, was the first Englishman to reach the island. The Investigator, the ship of which he was in charge, was greatly damaged on the voyage from Sydney. When it was moored on the island for repairs, the crew dug a well there to obtain water, and found many Chinese characters carved on a large tree nearby, marked with the year '1748 A.D.' on it, serving as evidence that Asian fishermen had been to the island." (Liu 1989:20) 1798 A.D. was the third year of the Jiaqing reign of the Qing Dynasty, nearly fifty years earlier than the gold discovery in Australia in 1851, though later than the landing of the British Captain Cook in a bay of Sydney. If this is true, it proves that the Chinese had reached Australia by the end of the 18th century**.** Even more compelling evidence comes from *The Peking Magazine* (《中西闻见录》), edited by American missionary W.A.P. Martin. In Issue No. 23 (1873) under the column "News from the Southern Seas" discussing Australia, it contains the first documented account of Chinese gold miners in Australia. The report mentions: *"*In Melbourne (rendered phonetically as "Mei-la-bu-na"), by the 11th Year of Tongzhi Reign (1872), the city's population had grown to 193,698 inhabitants, including 18,000 Chinese. Significant Chinese communities also existed elsewhere." (Chen 1981:499) Liu Xihong, an official who accompanied Guo Songtao on his mission to Britain, also mentioned Chinese laborers there in his diary and called Australia "Xinjinshan" (New Gold Mountain), in contrast to "Jiujinshan", literally "Old Gold Mountain", the name used by Chinese for San Francisco (Zhang 1998:64).

ENTRY OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT WORKERS INTO AUSTRALIA: EARLY CHANNELS

The mass migration of Chinese into Australia started with Chinese laborers. In the era of the great voyages, Chinese people already living in Southeast Asian countries and those from the southeast coastal regions of China, mainly Guangdong and Fujian, were mostly farmers, and they were, in a compulsive manner or spontaneously, caught up in the global migration tide. So when did Chinese workers first arrive in Australia? According to *The Colonization of Asia*, an English source, Chinese began to travel to Australia between 1823 to 1825. C. P. F. Scott Fitzgerald in his *The Third China: the Chinese Communities in Southeast Asia* (1965) mentioned that "the first Chinese arrived in Australia in 1827" (Liu 2013). In 1829 E. G. Wakefield, an Australian colonial geographer, suggested to the government in *Sydney Newsletter* to "employ poor Chinese in the development of Australia" in New South Wales (Zhang 2015). On April 19, 1834, a proposal was made to the government in *The Sydney Morning Herald* for an organized effort to transport the inhabitants of South China to New South Wales, and Chinese could be employed as agricultural laborers, machinists, builders and other occupation fillers. But the whole method of recruiting Chinese laborers was rather like the slave trade: the employer had to pay the company for conveying the coolies at £5 per person, and the coolies were paid for their labor, except for food and lodging, by a mere £1 per month. Against this background, in the 1840s and 1850s there was a wave of Chinese labor importation into Australia (Wang 2018).

It was more than 160 years ago, and there were two channels through which Chinese laborers moved into Australia. One channel was the indirect importation from the British Channel Colony of Singapore. Before the Opium War, as the Chinese ports of entry were not opened, Chinese workers needed by Australia could only be recruited indirectly from the British Channel Colony. In 1937, advertisements appeared in Sydney newspapers that Australian businessmen were recruiting Chinese laborers in Singapore, and laborers from China to Australia and New Zealand were also transferred from Singapore by foreign ships (Zheng 1981:243). No detailed records exist as to how many Chinese workers were recruited at that time in this manner. However, some statistics say that 60,000 Chinese workers went to Australia and New Zealand between 1851 and 1875. According to Sydney's *The People's Advocate*, "As early as 1838, a person named Ma Kai accepted a commission from some landlords to bring in hundreds of Chinese laborers at his own expense." (Zhang 1998:50) In fact, though not authorized by the government, private trade in hard labor between Singapore and Australia had already begun. Citing Western sources, Lim Kim Chee, a Chinese born overseas and came back to China in the 1930's, said that "in 1839 and 1840, hundreds of Chinese were intermittently shipped out from Singapore and Xiamen (Amoy), via Chinese agents, into Sydney and were auctioned there, the strong ones being sold for up to 11 pounds, and the weak ones for 2 to 5 pounds, and they then worked as "cargo handlers" for the British or the Irish with contracts ranging from three or five years." (Lin 1986) Obviously these Chinese laborers came from the British Channel Colonies. Another source, i.e. the Ethnic Affairs Committee survey of SACA in South Australia, indicates that "the first Chinese to come and settle in South Australia was Tim Sang, a furniture dealer who had tendered to a government department in 1840". Also according the South Australian Census figures, "from 1836-1860 there were 60 permanent residents of Chinese origin in the state", who would be a group of Chinese immigrants settling down in Australia in the mid of 1800s (Lin 1986).

Another route was direct importation from the southeast coasts of China. After the Opium War, foreign merchants used Xiamen (Amoy) as a center for illegal coolie trade and established, one after another, six foreign coolie agencies in Xiamen, i.e., the Hyde, Hodge & Co., Jacksen, Robert & Co., Syme, Muir & Co., Dulle Turner & Co., Smeired & Co. and Tait & Co. Among them, the British businessman James Tait opened the most powerful one, i.e. Tait & Co., and he went so far as to detain those Chinese waiting to be loaded in the so-called "pigsties" set up next to the Qing government offices, and he himself served as the British consul there. Acknowledged by the British government, Tait also became the consul of Spain, Holland and Portugal in Xiamen from 1846 onwards. The British dominated the Xiamen coolie trade during this period. Of the six coolie agencies, five were British, with the exception of the Smeired & Co., which was Dutch. As a result, a considerable number of Chinese laborers plundered and sold from Xiamen during

this period were sent to the British colony of Australia, where they were in dire need, and where began the mass importation of Chinese laborers to Australia (Zhang 1998).

From 1848 to 1853, hundreds of Chinese laborers were trafficked from Xiamen to Australia every year, constituting a peak period of the Western colonizers' selling of Chinese workers (Yang 2013). According to the statistics of *International Migration*, "from 1845 to 1852, a total of 2,666 Chinese laborers were exported from Xiamen to Australia"(Chen 1981b). According to the statistics of *Foreign Relations of the United States*, "a total of 8,281 Chinese laborers were exported from Xiamen from 1847 to 1953, of which 3,425 were to Sydney, New South Wales, alone, from 1848 to March 1853" (Ding 2019). It is difficult to come up with an accurate count of how many Chinese laborers were transported from Xiamen to Australia by foreign coolie traders. The *Compilation of Historical Materials on Chinese Workers' Going Abroad* and the *History of the White Australia Policy up to 1920* (cf. Table 1 and 2) show similar statistics on the number of Chinese workers. However, it is estimated that during the six years or so when the labor trade was at its height, more than 3,000 Chinese workers were shipped to Australia from Xiamen alone, and this is yet a rather low estimation. According to Mr. Chen Ze-Xian's "Estimates of Chinese Workers Indentured Abroad from 1800 to 1900" (Table 3), the number of Chinese who went to Australia and New Zealand in the 100 years of the 19th century could reach as many as 78,000.

TABLE 1
NUMBERS OF CHINESE WORKERS TRANSPORTED FROM XIAMEN TO AUSTRALIA BY FOREIGN COOLIE AGENTS AS REVEALED IN THE *HISTORICAL MATERIALS ON CHINESE WORKERS GOING ABROAD*

Year	Place of arrival	No. of Chinese laborers
1848	Sydney	120
1849	Sydney	150
1850	Sydney	406
1851	Sydney	1,478
1852	Sydney	1,077
1853	Sydney	254
Total		3,485

Source: Chen (1981:96)

TABLE 2
NUMBERS OF CHINESE WORKERS TRANSPORTED FROM XIAMEN TO AUSTRALIA BY FOREIGN COOLIE TRADERS AS REVEALED IN THE *HISTORY OF THE WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY TO 1920*

Year	Place of arrival	No. of Chinese laborers
1848	Sydney	120
1849	Sydney	270
1850		
1851	Sydney	1,438
1852	Sydney	1,228
1853		
Total		3,056

Source: Willard (1974:9-10)

TABLE 3
ESTIMATES OF CHINESE WORKERS TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND FROM 1800 TO 1900

1801-1850		1851-1875		1876-1900	
Total No.	Average per year	Total No.	Average per year	Total No.	Average per year
10,000	200	60,000	2,400	8,000	320

Source: Zheng Youkui (1981:240-241)

Zhang Qiusheng, specializing in the history of the Chinese in Australia, has analyzed the dynamics of the early migration of Chinese into Australia. According him, early Chinese workers to Oceania were mainly concentrated in Australia, accounting for at least 90% of the total, especially in the early and middle periods. New Zealand was developed later, and after the discovery of gold in the South Islands in 1860, and due to the fact that gold mining in Europe was depleted, a wave of Chinese exclusion arose, and Chinese workers in Australia turned to New Zealand. The number of Chinese workers going there in 1866 was 1,219, which increased to 2,641 in 1871, and reached a peak of 4,816 in l874 (Yuan 2014). Later, due to the pass of the Immigration Restriction Act, Chinese gradually left New Zealand, and by 1896, there were about 3,700 Chinese there, and in 1906, only 2,500 left (Liu 1989:221). Thus we can say that the mass importation of Chinese laborers to Australia took place in the mid-19th century gold rush period, i.e. after 1845-1850 (Yu 2020:88-90). Before that, Chinese workers to Australia were mostly sporadic and decentralized, mainly engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, and their number was extremely limited, and most of them had been recruited indirectly from the British Straits Colony of Singapore (Zhang 1998:58). The name "New Gold Mountain" emerged, just due to the wave of gold rush in Australia, and it was the name used by Chinese gold miners to refer to Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city and capital of Victoria, and its surrounding areas (Lei 1991:12). The discovery of gold was an epoch-making event in Australia's history, and the mass migration of Chinese workers to Australia was closely linked to the discovery and exploitation of gold (Zhang 1998:64).

DIGGING GOLD MOUNTAINS: GOLD MINERS FROM THE SOUTHEAST COASTS OF CHINA

Since 1851, numerous Chinese laborers had been coming by ship from Xiamen, Hong Kong and Singapore to the gold-rich Australian colonies of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Each group of them, usually numbering 600-700, would first dock at the ports of Sydney and Melbourne before heading to goldfields. And, at the time, Ballarat had the highest Chinese concentration. In 1853, there were 2,000 Chinese workers there. By 1856, the number increased to 25,000, accounting for a quarter of the city's total population. Meanwhile, the Sovereign Hill also attracted a large number of Chinese laborers due to its rich gold mines. In addition, places such as Ararat and Avoca to the north of Ballarat also attracted many Chinese workers to the gold mines there. Due to the abundant gold resources in Victoria, the number of Chinese workers digging for gold there was also the largest and, Melbourne, as capital of Victoria, was thus called the "New Gold Mountain" by Chinese workers (Zhang 1985:94-95).

Prior to 1855, in the five years after the Australian Gold Rush had just begun, the gold mining industry had risen very rapidly, and Chinese workers were widely welcomed. They got along well with the white settlers, and were free to move in and out of the Australian colonies (Yang 2015). As a result, the Chinese population there grew rapidly too. As is evidenced by the Chinese records on the Victorian goldfields, the number of Chinese in 1854 was 2,341, while by the end of 1857 it had soared to more than 30,000, and from l858 to 1859 it reached 42,000. And the number of Chinese in other colonies showed a similar growth. In New South Wales, in 1856 it was only 896, but, in 1858, it grew rapidly to 12,000. In 1861, the number of Chinese in the whole state even reached 21,000, accounting for one-sixth of the total population of the state. Since the discovery of gold in Queensland in 1869, there had been an influx of Chinese. Especially

in early 1876, a large number of gold seekers from Guangdong gathered in the Kalman mining area in north Queensland, 80% of which were concentrated in the two mines of Cook and Palm. From 1835 to 1877, the total number of Chinese in Queensland reached 25,000, meaning that on average, one in seven residents was Chinese. These gold-seeking Chinese even braved the hardships and extended their footprints into the inhospitable Northern Territory. Thousands of Chinese were attracted by gold to the Northern Territory. They made up about half of the local non-Aboriginal population. Around 1877, the number of Chinese in the Territory was as high as 7,000. Between 1882 and 1900, gold was discovered in Western Australia. Even in this remote region, Chinese workers who were panning for gold could be seen. According to statistics, the number of Chinese in WA grew from 145 to 1,521 during this period (Zhang 1998:74).

Since the middle of the 19th century, most of the Chinese who went to Australia to look for gold and work as hard laborers were poor peasants from coastal provinces such as Fujian and Guangdong, and a few were unemployed intellectuals. According to the *Report of the Special Committee on Chinese Immigration* of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in 1856-1857 and related information, 2/3 of the Chinese migrating to Victoria at that time were peasants, and the other 1/3 artisans, shopkeepers and merchants (Zhang 2008). In terms of the distribution of the sources of Chinese workers, most were firstly Minnan people from Xiamen, while later on, they mainly came from Hong Kong and Guangdong. The exact number of early Chinese to Australia from each county is not known, but based on the available information, it can be determined that immigrants from Taishan and Xinhui predominated.

TABLE 4
ORIGINS AND NUMBER OF CHINESE REGISTERED AT THE SOUTH MELBOURNE CHINESE TEMPLE, 1893-L913

Surname	Taishan	Kaiping	Xinhui	Enping	Elsewhere	Total
Wang	455	26	396	4	5	886
Lei	777					777
Liu	529	4	19	1		553
Ning	178	16	285		34	513
Wu	461	5	36		2	504
Chen	196	3	154		2	356
Liang	69	43	228	1		341
Zhang	21	60	219	1		291
Zhong	13		175			188
Others	2 754	770	1,579	39	16	5,158
Total	5 452	927	3,081	47	59	9,567

Source: Zhang (1998:66)

Table 4 lists the numbers of Chinese from Taishan, Kaiping, Xinhui, Enping and other places living in Melbourne from 1893 to 1913, as registered at the South Melbourne Chinese Temple. The table tells that Taishan immigrants accounted for 56% of the total, while those from Xinhui came second, accounting for 32.2%. Together they amounted to 87%, constituting the vast majority of immigrants. In addition, all of those with surname Lei and most of those surnamed Liu and Wu were from Taishan, while those whose surnames were Ning, Liang, Zhang and Zhong were mainly from Xinhui.

The influx of Chinese laborers went rapidly, reaching 40,000 in 1857, when one out of six foreign gold seekers was Chinese, and they were from the southeast coasts of China. Huang Kunzhang (1992), having made an analysis of the ancestry of the Chinese in Australia, said:

> The earliest ancestors of the Chinese in Australia were mainly the southern Fujianese from the Xiamen area (including Zhangzhou, Xiamen, Tongan, Haicheng, Zhangpu, etc.) and the people from Fuzhou too. Later, with the opening of Shantou, Guangzhou and other

ports of entry, Chinese immigrants from Guangdong arrived and became the most important source of Chinese immigrants in Australia. They mainly came from the counties near Guangzhou such as Taishan, Kaiping, Xinhui and Enping, Nanhai, Panyu, Shunde, Zhongshan, Sanshui, Zhaoqing and Gaoyao, as well as Chaoyang, Jieyang and Puning in Shantou. There were also some Guangdong Hakka people and Hainan Islanders. After World War II, Chinese immigrants came from all over China as well as from Hong Kong and Macau. Their ancestry homes expanded to include Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong and Xinjiang. However, the Cantonese were still the most numerous, accounting for 80%. As a result, Cantonese became a popular language in the Chinese community.

TABLE 5
ORIGINS AND SIZES OF THE CHINESE POPULATION IN AUSTRALIA (1881-1986)
BY PLACE OF BIRTH (PERSON)

Year	China	Hong Kong	Taiwan	Malaysia	Singapore	Vietnam
1861	38,258					
1871	28,351					
1881	38,533					
1891	36,032					
1901	29,907	167				
1911	20,775	413	782			
1921	15,224	337	630			
1933	8,579	236	866			
1947	6,404	762	1,768			
1954	10,277	1,554	2,279	1,127		
1961	14,488	3,544	5,793	2,759		
1966	17,390	4,206	9,179	3,641		
1971	17,601	5,583	14,945	5,532		
1976	19,542	8,818	431	19,880	8,989	2,427
1981	25,883	15,717	877	31,598	11,990	41,097
1986	37,469	28,293	2,056	47,802	16,434	83,044

Source: He and Chen (1991)

Huang Kunzhang mentioned Chinese from Xinjiang, and according to the author's study and visits in Sydney in 2008 and 2015, there were truly Chinese from Xinjiang. It can be seen that the main sources of Chinese in Australia were from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. Table 5 shows the places of origin of Chinese from 1861 to 1986. Early Chinese mainly came from mainland China, mostly laborers from Guangdong and Fujian, who were mainly scattered in the gold mining areas of Australia. Starting with the twentieth century, there began to be Chinese from Hong Kong and Malaya; after the Second World War, there were Chinese from Singapore; since the 1970s onwards there has been a significant increase of people from Taiwan, and especially Vietnamese Chinese, who arrived in Australia either as investment immigrants or as refugees. This also indicates that the Chinese to Australia have come from two sources: the southeast coasts of China and Southeast Asia.

ABOLITION OF THE WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY: CHINESE ENTRY INTO AUSTRALIA REACHED A HIGH LEVEL

In the history of Australian immigration, there had been a White Australia Policy which was implemented for more than one hundred years from the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th He & Chen 1991). Since the middle of the 19th century, due to a variety of factors and reasons, the exclusion

of Chinese in Australia had been escalating, and the Legislative Assembly of Victoria passed the Victoria Act of 1855, an anti-Chinese act, in June of this year, proposed by the then governor of the state himself. This started the exclusion of Chinese into Australia. In June 1888, the Second Intercolonial Conference of the Australian Colonies was held on the immigration policy on China, and passed a resolution to restrict even more severely the entry of Chinese, thus shutting the doors of Australia to Chinese (Du 2010). From 1893 onwards, the prohibition of the entry of Chinese and Asians into Australia became a topic of constant discussion in the parliament. In 1901 when the Commonwealth of Australia was established, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, also known as the White Australia policy, was passed. Thereafter the White Australia Policy was fully implemented. The Australian federal government regarded it as a basic national policy, which to a certain extent caused the decline of the Chinese population in Australia (Liu 2018). In less than 50 years, the number of Chinese in Australia declined drastically, from 29,627 in 1901 to 9,144 in 1947, a sharp decrease of about 70% (Zhang 2017).

However, the tide of history always moves forward. Australia is a vast and sparsely populated country, with much of its central and western regions still undeveloped. There is an urgent need for a large labor force to drive growth. Only by actively attracting foreign immigrants can the nation rapidly boost its economic development. According to the Australian Information Minister at the time, "Manpower must be increased or we may face grave consequences!"(Zhang 1998:140) In the mid-1960s, the White Australia Policy was gradually reformed and eventually abolished (Liao 2023). All political parties changed their racist internal and external policies, and in 1965, the Labor Party removed the White Australia Policy content from its programme. On March 9, 1966, the Australian government finally announced a new immigration policy, abandoning altogether the White Australia Policy (Yan and Zhang 2014). In June 1971, the Labor Party formally adopted a new immigration policy and solemnly promised that there would not be any form of racist doings in the future (Wood 1978:400). In 1972, Labor Party leader Gough Whitlam made major adjustments to the Chinese immigration policy and formally abolished the White Australia Policy, ushering in a new wave of Chinese immigrants to Australia and, meanwhile, improving Sino-Australian relations.

According to the Australian census data, in 1986, there were a total of 172,300 immigrants from China living in Australia, accounting for 1.2% of the country's total population. At that time, 130,800 people reported speaking Chinese, representing 6.5% of Australia's population, and by 1991, the number of Chinese or Cantonese speakers had doubled to about 251,000 people. In October 1987, the Australian Hawke government introduced a new Business Migration Program, stipulating that from June 1, 1988, Australia would admit 12,000 business immigrants annually from around the world, with particular encouragement for Hong Kong entrepreneurs. Under this program, Chinese immigrants came not only from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian regions but also increasingly from mainland China, which became a significant source—reaching 700 individuals in the 1990 and 1991 fiscal years (Hua & Yan 2020).

In the 40 years after World War II, Australia received about 3.5 million migrants. In the mid-1960s, with the relaxation of entry restrictions for non-Europeans, the proportion of migrants from Asian countries rose to 6%. In 1966, the number of Chinese ancestry reached 35,000. In the 1970s, Asians made up half of the total number of migrants in Australia. In the mid-1980s, there was a large influx of Chinese students, numbering as many as 60,000, into Australia. In 1987 alone, the number of Chinese students entering the country had reached 7,000. In the financial year 1990-1991, 45,555 immigrants came from countries and regions such as mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, accounting for 33% of all immigrants to Australia. It is estimated that there were over 30,000 immigrants from mainland China in that year. Of more significance to Chinese immigrants, in 1994, the Keating government announced that 19,000 Chinese students and their families, a total of 28,000 who had arrived in Australia before June 20, 1989, would be granted permanent residency, as would 8,000 others who met the PR conditions. According to statistics, there were only 23,000 Chinese in Australia in 1966, 38,000 in 1975, but 172,000 in 1986, 280,000 in 1991, and about 400,000 by the end of the 20th century (Zhang 2014).

A NEW ERA: NEW WAVES OF CHINESE ENTRY INTO AUSTRALIA

Since the start of the 21st century, Chinese immigration to Australia has witnessed a new wave. China's reform and opening up and new orientations in Australia's immigration policy have led to a large number of new immigrants coming to Australia, resulting in remarkable changes in the Chinese communities in Australia in terms of population size, education, occupation, economic status and social status, and has contributed to the development of Sino-Australian relations. In 2001, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) announced that the Chinese made up 3.7% of Australia's population, with 556,554 people altogether, approximately 550,000 from mainland China and 4,400 from Taiwan. According to the 2006 Australian Census, the total number of Chinese nationals in Australia was about 670,000, which was 3.41% of the local settled population. Compared to 2001, the annual growth rate of the ethnic Chinese population in Australia was approximately 4.07%—3.52 times higher than Australia's overall annual population growth rate during the same period. About 73.2% of mainland Chinese born in Australia have become Australian citizens. At this time there were 379,897 people who spoke good Chinese, including 225,307 who spoke Cantonese and 139,286 who spoke Mandarin Chinese. These people made up 2% of the Australian population at that time. In 2006, there were 669,901 people of Chinese background in Australia (ABS 2022).

In 2006, migrants from mainland Chinese surpassed other regions, becoming the largest group of Chinese in Australia. And among Chinese Australians, 75.38% speak Chinese well or very well. Apparently, Chinese has become the second most spoken language after English. The number of mainland Chinese to Australia ranked third among migrants in the 2012-2013 financial year. In 2014, the Chinese population in Australia reached one million, marking a climax of Chinese moving to Australia (Qiu 2011; Wang 2011).

Census data released by ABS in 2016 showed that almost half a million people in Australia were born in China, with about 1.21 million having Chinese background. And of the latter, 75% spoke Chinese: 386,475 speaking Mandarin Chinese, 82,064 Cantonese and 16,752 other Chinese languages or dialects. Data from ABS in 2022 revealed that the Chinese population had surpassed a total of 1.4 million across Australia, a rise of at least 170,000 compared to five years before. The Chinese population accounted for 5.5% of the total Australian population, making it the fifth largest ethnic group in the country (ABS 2022). In terms of absolute numbers, the main places of birth for Chinese were Mainland China, Australia, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Taiwan. Among them, about 50 percent mainly came from Guangdong, Fujian and the surrounding coastal areas. For more than 20 years, waves of immigration from mainland China had been the result of the interaction between Australia's immigration policy and China's exit policy.

The people in Sydney and Melbourne, the two largest cities in Australia, account for half of the country's total population. Chinese migrants and international students are also concentrated in big cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide. Post-2000 migrants were more highly skilled and educated than earlier ones and were more likely to make wise investment. Since 2006, the number of Chinese immigrants to Australia has exploded. Over the past decade or so, the Chinese community's participation into and influence on the Australian society have gradually increased, and more and more Chinese become involved in its mainstream affairs. The increase in the number of Chinese in politics has enabled the Chinese community to have a louder voice, and has made the Australian society to better understand the concerns and demands of the Chinese (Li & Liao 2016).

Currently, the majority of Chinese Australians recognize that they belong to two countries and cultures and maintain their Chinese identity. The 2022 ABS data showed that most of them still identified themselves as Chinese Australians, with 97.4% of the Chinese Mainland-born population, 93.5% of the Macau-born and 90% of the Hong Kong-born people identifying themselves as Chinese. Meanwhile, Cantonese was considered the fifth most commonly spoken language in Australia. According to the latest figures released by ABS, there were more than 685,000 Chinese speaking Mandarin at home across the country, an increase of more than 80,000 compared to the 2016 figures.

CONCLUSION: CHINESE HAVING INTEGRATED INTO AUSTRALIA AS THE THIRD LARGEST ETHNIC GROUP

The emergence of the Chinese as the third largest ethnic group in Australia is both the result of a long-term immigration of the Chinese and the adjustment of the immigration policy by the Australian government. Compared with people in traditional Chinese communities, those newcomers have shown new characteristics in defending the interests of Chinese people and serving them in Australia. With a more diverse membership structure and better knowledge and professional skills, they are better and more able to represent the interests of Chinese newcomers, speak out for the Chinese and enhance the status of the Chinese community in Australia. They also can actively organize various activities to unite Chinese people in Australia and promote Chinese culture through events such as the lion and dragon dance performance in Chinatown. Therefore, as a participant of Australia's multi-culture, Chinese groups have, to a certain extent, promoted the prosperity of Australia's multiculturalism.

The emergence of the Chinese as the third largest ethnic group in Australia is a result of a long history of the Chinese getting along well with other ethnic groups in Australia. New arrivals from mainland China usually have a solid knowledge basis, and after completing their studies in Australia, they usually go on to play important roles in key areas such as engineering and technology, higher education, healthcare, and business and industry. Overall, most Chinese are still engaged in traditional professions with lower costs and quick turnover, such as Chinese restaurants and shops for daily necessities. Unlike the older generations who relied on setting up stores to make money, new immigrants are more inclined to take a completely new path, venturing into areas previously dominated by whites, such as import and export, computer industry, and automobile repair industry, or setting up factories of various types, chain stores and supermarkets. In recent years, a number of new immigrants from the mainland have made significant achievements in the industrial and commercial sectors, contributing greatly to the healthy development of China-Australia economy and trade. They have consciously promoted the spirit of national self-confidence and self-improvement, endeavoring to overcome the barriers of cultural exchanges between the East and the West, eliminating misunderstandings between China and Australia, striving for the understanding and support of the people of the two countries, and committing themselves to living in harmony with the local community.

The fact that the Chinese have become the third largest ethnic group in Australia is a concrete manifestation of a common human destiny in Australia. China has always adhered to a foreign policy for world peace and common development, and is committed to building such a human destiny. The CPC has emphasized the aim for "a community of interests, a community of destiny, and a community of responsibility" in the new era, so as to help the Chinese diaspora to better perform in the international arena and participate in the construction of a community of human destiny (Liu 2022). China has formulated a proactive policy towards the Chinese diaspora that supports and promotes their unity and development with their adopted countries and cultures, guiding and assisting in their participation and cooperation on major issues. As a result of China's foreign policy, it has won the respect of Australia and effectively protected Asian Chinese in Australia, thus contributing to the stabilization of Sino-Australian relations. In the process of building a community of human destiny, the Chinese diaspora not only possesses unique advantages, but is also a beneficiary, contributor, practitioner and narrator in the process. The social status of Chinese Australians will be enhanced in political, economic and cultural aspects, and the overall function of the Chinese community will be further strengthened. Chinese Australians will be better integrated into the mainstream society and unite their efforts, so as to promote the friendly exchanges between the two countries and realize a long-term peaceful and stable partnership between China and Australia.

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