Neither “the periphery as the core” nor “the core as the periphery”: The Changing Role of Hong Kong in Modern Chinese History

Presented by Professor Man-Kong Wong, Director of China Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University

Time: Wednesday 22 August, 11-1pm
Venue: Molecular Biosciences Bldg Room 228

Co-Chair: Dr. Chi-kong Lai, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, UQ.
Dr. Hui Feng, Griffith Asia Institute
Welcome: Professor Megan Cassidy-Welch, Professor of History, Head of SHPI, The University of Queensland.

This lecture offers an overview of the changing role of Hong Kong in modern Chinese history. As the British colonial historians insisted that Britain brought history to Hong Kong after the Opium War, the history of Hong Kong has become closely interwoven with that of modern China, from the Taiping Rebellion to the 1911 Revolution; from the Pacific War to the Cold War; and from the sovereign transfer to China to more recent developments in Hong Kong and mainland China.

The lecture will take a detour to avoid the historiographical biases that the British created as well as those by the Chinese. It gives a clear vision of the changing role of colonial Hong Kong in modern Chinese history. By doing so, it sheds light on the present state of affairs in Hong Kong and how they reveal the unique position of Hong Kong as a special administrative region of China since 1997.

About Hugh Dunn

A diplomat by vocation and a sinologist by training, Hugh A. Dunn (1923-2005) had an outstanding career in the diplomatic service in general and fostering the Sino-Australian relationship in particular. For over 30 years, Dunn had been the Australian lead diplomat in a wide range of countries, particularly Ambassador to Taiwan (1969-1972) and the People’s Republic of China (1980-1984). Upon his retirement, Dunn kept his ongoing passion in furthering Sino-Australian relations on such wide range of frontiers as trade, business, culture, and education. In 1985 he was made an officer of the Order of Australia for public service. He was a member of the Australia-China Council from 1985-88, a member of the Queensland China Council for 18 years and chairman of the Brisbane China Council. He was also an Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Queensland, Chair of the Advisory Committee of Asian Business History Centre, UQ and a Visiting Professor of Modern Asian Studies at Griffith University.

The Hugh Dunn Lecture Series celebrates Dunn’s contributions and legacy in this area by engaging the academia and the public in thoughtful deliberation on a wide range of issues in contemporary China.