



## Rethinking China with Linda Jaivin

In China Matters' monthly lecture series: 'Rethinking China', speakers with diverse expertise and background are asked to describe how they see the People's Republic of China, why they see it that way, and on that basis share their thoughts on what kind of China strategy Australia should pursue in the medium to long term. Our second lecturer was author, essayist, cultural commentator, and literary translator Linda Jaivin together with moderator Joyce Nip, Associate Professor of Media and Communications and Chinese Studies at the University of Sydney.

Below are some of Linda's key observations.

"In China you'll find, like anywhere else in the world, people who live for money, you find people who live for love, for their children, their pets, their faith, their music, their art, for travel, or the fight for democracy and human rights, and people who, whether because of poverty, horrific labor conditions and expensive health care, official corruption, callus policing, struggle to live full stop."

"Chinese communism is today not what it was in Mao's time, and it's not what it was in the late 1970s or the early 1980s when Deng was launching his reforms, so perhaps it's not so surprising that even the most presumably ideologically cohesive demographic in the People's Republic, the more than 91 million members of the Chinese Communist Party, do not, despite the best efforts of the Party's disciplinarians, think or act as one."

"Given the extensive control that the party exercises over media culture and education, the pervasiveness of its propaganda machinery ... the party can at least appear to speak for all Chinese. But I think it's always been really important for me to understand that no-one can speak for all Chinese."

"I see the PRC as a rising power that wants what it considers long overdue respect and rightful recognition. Aware of just how much the current rules-based order was designed to benefit the US, rather the US and global capitalism, Beijing not unreasonably from its perspective, believes it's now its turn to write the rules."

"Whatever tensions and problems exist between our two countries, Australia and Australians must also continue to engage on a number of levels, obviously diplomatically, economically as much as we can, culturally and across the many channels both public and private and semi-private that have been established or have arisen organically over the near half a century since the normalization of relations under Gough Whitlam. "