



Rethinking China with Stan Grant

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 fourth lecturer was journalist and author Stan Grant together in conversation with CEO of the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations Michaela Browning.

Below are some of Stan's key observations:

I too came from a hard place and a hard history. Like the Chinese I was born into a family and a people swept away on history's tide. The modern world had washed over us and we were left like survivors of a shipwreck clinging to the debris of our lives.

We are witnessing a return of great power rivalry, yet China is economically more powerful today than the Soviet Union was then and the United States is unquestionably diminished. China is again a powerful country but it is still a country grappling with its identity and its place in the world.

Mao (Zedong)... did not deliver China to global power, instead it was Chinese communism's embrace of capitalism that powered the great Chinese economic revolution. It was Deng Xiaoping who after Mao's death opened the country to the world and set China on a course to usurp the United States as the most powerful economy on the planet. Xi Jinping is where Mao and Deng meet. Xi is poised to lead the country back to its place as he sees it as the greatest power in the world.

Xi Jinping ... presides over a schizophrenic nation that is neither truly communist, and if capitalist then certainly not liberal democratic that is strong yet paranoid rich but not free sea is battling corruption and enemies within the party and navigating a world where some countries may accept accommodating china's power but most resist Chinese hegemony

Xi Jinping pledges to avenge the hundred years of humiliation. We cannot understand China or begin to negotiate the impact of its return to global power without fully appreciating the depth of that history.