

Thursday 5th July:

The Elephant and the Dragon

Joseph Cheng, Ramachandra Guha, Robin Jeffrey, Philippe Legrain,
Colleen Ryan

(Chair: Peter Mares)

India and China are major cultures, which Europeans (and particularly Australians) have had an insulting habit of 'discovering' routinely for decades, indeed centuries. What does the discovery mean this time? And on what sort of schedule does the West have to get used to the idea that it will cease to be the dominant global force in economic and cultural terms? Will we live long enough to be grateful for an Indian or Chinese 'discovery' of Australia or Europe, perhaps?

'Everyone' has been saying for years that these waking giants are the future for the world economy, but what will this mean in practice? Will it be globalization as usual with different addresses for central office? Or will there be more profound realignments of human cultures? White Australia has a 229-year history of paranoia about the threat of Asian domination. What, instead, are the regional opportunities of grasping the coming future? And what are the vectors (migration, trade, sport, education, etc) along which this transformation might best be sought?

It would also be good to have your views on how two such populous giants can move rapidly towards first-world levels of consumption without destroying the host-organism, the earth. Other panels in the Festival will address the science of global warming and other apocalyptic prospects. It's the economics and cultural politics of controlling the environmental risk in China and the Sub-Continent that you could inform us about.