

history of the Northern Territory is filled with Asian influence. Blood ties continue to flourish between families in the Territory and those in the Asia Pacific region. As part of the State Reference Library of the Northern Territory history lectures in 1982, Charles Tsang See-Kee presented a paper entitled *Chinese Contribution to Early Darwin*. He noted that Chinese people went back and forth to Australia for centuries. Port Darwin was re-established for the fifth time in 1869, and hundreds of Chinese were brought in to help to develop the settlement. The Minister for Ethnic Affairs quoted figures of 4108 Chinese compared with 600 Europeans living in Darwin in 1881. That number grew to 6122 by 1888. The Caucasian population was then around 1144. One year earlier, in 1887, the first Chinese went to central Australia. He went because he had heard that gold was to be found there. I have learnt that he was the famous Ah Hong. A street in Alice Springs is named after him. Let me say a few words about him.

Ah Hong went to Alice Springs and started a market garden. He did not find gold. His wife was Ranjika, a western Arrernte woman. They had 3 children - a son, whom they named Dempsey, and 2 daughters, Ada and Gloria. When the children were little, Ah Hong took them with him to China where, after a year, he left them with relatives so that they might receive a Chinese education. Ah Hong then returned on his own to rejoin his wife in Alice Springs. His market garden was located on the block that is now occupied by the Memorial Club on Gap Road. He grew everything he could, including tomatoes, carrots and white turnips, and he supplied the Arltunga goldminers with his vegetables. Dempsey came back to Alice Springs after a few years, but the 2 girls stayed in China for some 10 years, after which time they returned to Alice Springs. The children were fluent in Cantonese when they returned. Gloria had 4 daughters, all now married: Valencia Pratt, Olive Veverbrants, Peg Havenen and Sarah Huppatz. I draw the attention of honourable members to the October 1995 issue of the *Alice Springs News* which includes a feature article by Kieran Finnane about Ah Hong and his family. Honourable members who want to read more about Ah Hong's family should note the title of the article - *Before Multiculturalism Was Invented*. I think it aptly says it all.

It was not until 1911 that the numbers of Chinese in Darwin dwindled to below the number of Caucasians, the decrease being due to deportation and a minor degree of migration to Queensland. Those who remained contributed, and have continued to contribute, to Northern Territory business and political development. 1911 was also the year when the Territory was surrendered by South Australia to the federal government and, since that time, all Territorians have become second-class citizens.

The Minister for Ethnic Affairs spoke also of Harry Chan, the first Chinese Mayor of Darwin who, in 1965, became the first elected president of the Northern Territory Legislative Council. He was born in Darwin of Chinese immigrants from Kwantung Province. Many buildings and streets are named after him in recognition of the contribution he made to the Territory. The late Alec Fong Lim, a recent Lord Mayor of Darwin, was another very prominent Chinese among the many who have contributed to the good life and good government of the Territory. Some honourable members may be aware of the story he shared with a former Administrator of the Northern Territory, Eric Johnston. While Alec was the Lord Mayor, Eric was the Administrator. The former was, I think, a fifth-generation Territory-born Chinese, while the latter was born in Shanghai. How multicultural can you get? I feel privileged to join them in the increasing ranks of the many established ethnic groups who