



Picture: James Kerr

at Hobart Airport.

and flying ure of all

where he served as Speaker for a term.

"My views are still that you have to use common sense," Mr Webb said. "In the early days of my political life, when you said anything you said it. You just used common words - but now they use words with no meaning in it.

"Politicians these days don't make decisions. They procrastinate and the reason they do it is that the salaries they get are so high now that they only go in there with one object in view and that is to remain there."

"But in the early days, politicians were dedicated people."

▶
Helene Chung recalls her time as a correspondent behind the Bamboo Curtain. One observation from her life in Beijing that has upset her is China's lack of human rights - and the great wall of silence in the outside world about them. She says that politicians are quick to raise the issue of human rights elsewhere, but not when it comes to China.



Helene finds an alien life land of her ancestors

CHIN left China in the
ed by Tasmania's tin
undred years later, his
ghter, Helene Chung,
as an ABC correspon-

was an alien in Tas-
tung felt alien in China.
she learnt Mandarin,
ed a foreign place
three years in Beijing;
ore Western.

embers the taunt "ching
an" when she started
y's in Hobart, which she
years. She retaliated

By MARGARETTA POS

different and Chinatowns attract tourists - there are shops, restaurants, dragon festivals and parades."

When Jin Gee Chin arrived at Weldborough, the State's main alluvial tin-mining area, tin accounted for a quarter of the colony's export earnings in the 1880s, and the Chinese role was significant because although there were never more than 1,000, they outnumbered Europeans in the industry.

Jin Gee Chin prospered. He went back to China to marry and then

years as a radio reporter in Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and returned to Australia to work in Sydney on ABC's programmes *AM*, *PM* and *Correspondents Report*.

In 1975 Miss Chung transferred to television, and was a reporter on *This Day Tonight* and *Nationwide* first in Hobart and then in Sydney and Melbourne, until appointed Beijing correspondent in 1983.

She is now on leave from the ABC completing a book on her Beijing experiences, *Shouting from China*, to be published later this year.

are quick to do so with regard to the Soviet Union or South Africa," she said. "They want to keep China onside with Washington against the Soviet Union and they are mesmerised by the prospect of trading with a market of one billion people."

"It is simply much easier to assume that the Chinese people are not interested in freedom."

Miss Chung was a foreigner in China and never felt more Australian in her freedom - of thought, attitudes and way of life.

She sympathised with the aspirations of the people for freedom of expression

Helene finds an alien life in land of her ancestors

JIN GEE CHIN left China in the 1880s, lured by Tasmania's tin mines. A hundred years later, his great granddaughter, Helene Chung, went to China as an ABC correspondent.

Jin Gee Chin was an alien in Tasmania — Miss Chung felt alien in China. And although she learnt Mandarin, China remained a foreign place throughout her three years in Beijing; she never felt more Western.

But she remembers the taunt "ching chong Chinaman" when she started school at St Mary's in Hobart, which she attended for 12 years. She retaliated with "white trash".

Recalling her schooldays while visiting Hobart last week, Miss Chung said that for most of the time she and her sister were the only children of Chinese descent in the school. But she was so involved in school activities it never occurred to her that she was different; she never thought of herself as Chinese.

She is proud now of the Chinese contribution to Australian history and of being a Chinese Australian.

"Seventeen years ago Australia had no multi-cultural policy," she said. "The Chinese had a low profile, and although there were Chinatowns in some cities, they were limited places. Now it's

By MARGARETTA POS

different and Chinatowns attract tourists — there are shops, restaurants, dragon festivals and parades."

When Jin Gee Chin arrived at Weldborough, the State's main alluvial tin-mining area, tin accounted for a quarter of the colony's export earnings in the 1880s, and the Chinese role was significant because although there were never more than 1,000, they outnumbered Europeans in the industry.

Jin Gee Chin prospered. He went back to China to marry and then returned to Weldborough. His son, Jin Jiang, joined him from China and later moved to Hobart, eventually establishing his own fruit and vegetable business.

As a descendant, Helene Chung grew up without any interest in China. She went to the University of Tasmania, graduating with honours in history. As a student she interviewed a Hobart butcher who claimed to have seen a Tasmanian tiger; the interview was broadcast on the ABC's current affairs programme *AM* and Helene Chung's career was launched.

She worked for Radio Australia's Overseas Service, freelanced three

years as a radio reporter in Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and returned to Australia to work in Sydney on ABC's programmes *AM*, *PM* and *Correspondents Report*.

In 1975 Miss Chung transferred to television, and was a reporter on *This Day Tonight* and *Nationwide* first in Hobart and then in Sydney and Melbourne, until appointed Beijing correspondent in 1983.

She is now on leave from the ABC completing a book on her Beijing experiences. *Shouting from China*, to be published later this year.

Why did she want to go there? A sudden interest in her Chinese heritage and because China is so important in the strategic balance of the world, yet is a country few Westerners understand.

"Tourists flock to China and 100,000 Australians clamber over the Great Wall each year, yet we know almost nothing about the country," Miss Chung said.

She "peered into a few cracks of Chinese society" and was dismayed by the lack of human rights in China and the great wall of silence in the outside world about it.

"Our politicians never take up the issue of human rights — although they

are quick to do so with regard to the Soviet Union or South Africa," she said. "They want to keep China onside with Washington against the Soviet Union and they are mesmerised by the prospect of trading with a market of one billion people."

"It is simply much easier to assume that the Chinese people are not interested in freedom."

Miss Chung was a foreigner in China and never felt more Australian in her freedom — of thought, attitudes and way of life.

She sympathised with the aspirations of the people for freedom of expression and a better standard of living and she is concerned that they will be unobtainable because of political instability in China.

But she didn't identify with the people.

She visited her mother's ancestral village, Toisan, in Guang Dong Province, near Hong Kong, and felt out of place although she was welcomed.

"Frankly, the reason was money," she said. "I was always treated according to the way I could best be parted from my foreign currency. You get used to being exploited as a foreigner. But it was sad that people were only interested in exploiting foreigners for financial gain."