



# Research Directions

## Office of Research Services

### ***Investigating China's Assimilation to Modernity***

Professor Edmund Fung, School of Humanities, is examining Chinese liberalism, socialism and conservatism during the period 1921-1949. This Australian Research Council Discovery Grant seeks to offer an alternative view on what underpinned the transformation of China into a modern state.



*Hu Shi*

'It is important that Australian policy-makers understand the way in which Chinese intellectuals grappled with the issue of modernity and problems about liberalism and socialism in the recent past' explained Professor Fung. 'The Chinese elite are tackling similar problems today as they face the challenges of globalisation'.

The focus of the project is largely on the cultural, political and philosophical thoughts of five twentieth century intellectuals, namely Hu Shi, Liang Shuming, Luo Longji, Zhang Dongsun and Zhang Junmai. These five were an interesting mix of philosophers and scholars of politics, constitutionalism and public administration. All were important high profile intellectuals concerned with China's future. From a range of perspectives, these scholars grappled with the cultural, intellectual and political issues of their time in search of modernity.

The ideas of these five philosophers and scholars will be analysed in order to bring out the diversity and complexity of their thinking on a range of issues that affected China's assimilation of modernity. Common to all of them was a conviction that China must embrace the Western scientific-industrial world culture and the spiritual civilisation that underlined it but not uncritically.

The outcome of this study will be an appreciation of Chinese political and philosophical thought, both past and present, which will help to advance the understanding of Chinese studies in Australia and strengthen Sino-Australian relations, producing both economic and social benefits to Australia.

Funding has been set at \$110,389

Project Title: *Assimilating Modernity: The Harmonisation of Liberal, Socialist and Conservative Thought in Modern China, 1921-1949*

#### Contact Details

[e.fung@uws.edu.au](mailto:e.fung@uws.edu.au)

#### Web Site

<http://www.uws.edu.au/about/acadorg/caess/sh>

November 2005.