

Keynote

After Victory:

The waves of returning exiles in China, 1945-46



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5.00 pm, Thursday 7 January 2016  
room 436, Run Run Shaw Tower,  
Centennial Campus

In the last few months of 1945 and throughout 1946 most of the tens of millions of Chinese who had been displaced by the Resistance War started to move home, in a tumultuous movement even larger than the flood of civilians on the move in postwar Europe. This was one of the largest mass migrations in human history. Chinese government estimates in 1946 were that thirty million people were a long way away from home. A high proportion of them tried to get home. The displaced people included civil servants, intellectuals, business people, artists, students, peasants, workers and slave labourers, Overseas Chinese and people from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The great return migration has almost been obscured by the turmoil of the civil war getting under way at the same time, and by the mass movements of people out of China only three years later. But the earlier return migration was extraordinary, an astonishing achievement for the tens of millions who made it home. Their experiences tell us a great deal about their courage, fortitude and endurance. Their stories deserve to be told.