



HISTORIES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN CHINA ALL UNDER HEAVEN? (10 & 11 November 2023)

3 March 2024

Ding Yuan

In the wake of a global surge in interest in historical studies of international law, an expansive body of literature has emerged, chronicling the intricate history of international legal systems. Works such as the "Series in the Theory and History of International Law" by Oxford University Press (OUP) and "Studies in the History of International Law" by Brill stand as formidable examples of this literary renaissance. Yet, amidst this flourishing narrative, a prevailing concern looms – much of the scholarly work continues to harbor Eurocentric perspectives, limiting the comprehensive understanding of the historical forces at play.

This backdrop of historical exploration underscores the imperative to transcend the Eurocentric lens and delve into diverse global narratives, particularly those emanating from the rich tapestry of China's historical, political, and cultural experiences. Responding to this critical need, the Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL), situated within the School of Law at the City University of Hong Kong (CityU), has forged a collaboration with Wuhan University Law School and Fudan University Law School. Together, they have orchestrated a symphony of international legal minds, assembling a group of distinguished scholars specializing in both Chinese and international legal history.

Professor Ignacio de la Rasilla unravel the intricacies of his speech with a focus on the evolving dynamics between China and the international legal sphere, he delves into the pivotal shifts in historical perspectives, exploring how China navigates its position as a significant player in national and semi-peripheral contexts within the global framework of international law.

Professor Rossi is set to introduce the intricate tapestry of historical dynamics between the United States and China within the realm of international law. His discourse aims to shed light on pivotal shifts in perspectives, navigating the nuanced historical interactions that have defined China's role on the global stage of international law.

Professor Huang delved into the evolving dynamics between China and the international legal sphere. His insights promised to reveal the pivotal shifts in historical perspectives, offering a profound understanding of how China strategically positions itself as a significant player, both nationally and in semi-peripheral contexts, within the intricate tapestry of global international law.

Professor Ryan Martinez Mitchell focuses on historical intricacies, who peels back the layers, delving into the evolving dynamics between the Republic of China and the league of nations. His speech promises to unveil the pivotal shifts in historical perspectives, shedding light on how China navigates its role as a significant player within the global framework of international law.

Professor Qu Wensheng and Professor Wan Li explore the interplay between historicism and the translation of international law. Unraveling the intricate threads of historical context, their speech promises to offer profound insights into how Chinese scholars of that era grappled with the complex interweaving of traditional Chinese thought and the burgeoning field of international law.

Professor Cai Congyan and Professor Liu Jie delve into the foundational years of the Chinese communist party, unraveling the intriguing intersection between political ideology and international law during the interwar period. Specifically, they shed light on the profound impact of the introduction of Marxist theory of International Law to China, offering a unique perspective on how ideological currents shaped the nation's legal landscape during this transformative era.

Professor Li Mingqian illustrate the intriguing historical intersections among China, the western standard of civilization, and the pivotal hague peace conferences of 1899 and 1907. Exploring how China navigated within the framework of Western standards during this transformative period, and illuminated the profound impact of the Hague Conferences on the country's diplomatic landscape, offering a nuanced perspective on China's engagement with international norms.

Professor Jacques deLisle takes the stage, offering profound insights into the transformative era of China's opening up and reform policy. His speech delves into China's re-engagement with the international legal order during this pivotal period, unraveling the intricacies of how policy shifts have shaped the nation's stance within the global legal landscape.

In a compelling discourse, Professor Pasha L. Hsieh unravels the historical intricacies surrounding the professionalization of the discipline of international law in the republican period. Exploring the transformative era, his speech delves into the evolution of international law as a discipline within the context of the Republic, shedding light on key developments, challenges, and the emergence of professionalism in the field.

Professor Wang Jiangyu takes the podium to unravel the intricate nexus between China, the Cold War, and the realm of international law. In his compelling speech, he navigates the historical waters, shedding light on how China's legal landscape was shaped amid the tumultuous backdrop of the Cold War era. From geopolitical shifts to legal frameworks, Professor Wang delves into the nuanced interplay between China's evolving position and the international legal order during this pivotal period.

Professor Luigi Nuzzo delves into the intricate relationship between lease agreements and international law, specifically examining their impact during the critical transition of the 20th century. Profoundly exploring the history of Western colonialism in China, Nuzzo sheds light on the legal dimensions that shaped the landscape of this pivotal era, offering a nuanced understanding of the intersection between legal frameworks and geopolitical shifts.

From the nation's foundational moments to the exclusion of the People's Republic of China, Professor Su Jinyuan's insights are set to provide a nuanced understanding of China's evolving role on the global diplomatic stage. Get ready for a riveting exploration of historical dynamics, geopolitical shifts, and the impact on China's international relations.

Professor Straton Papagiannenas delved into the intriguing era of the cultural revolution and its aftermath, exploring the intricate relationship between China and international law during this transformative period. His speech shed light on the legal landscape, offering insights into the challenges and shifts in China's approach to international law amidst the socio-political upheavals of the Cultural Revolution and its enduring repercussions.

Professor Eva Pils unraveled the historical threads that connect China to the concepts of democracy and human rights, shedding light on the nation's evolving relationship with these fundamental principles. The speech served as a compelling exploration of China's journey through the annals of time, providing a nuanced understanding of the historical context shaping its stance on democracy and human rights.

In the illuminating discourse led by Professor Lauri Mälksoo, the spotlight turns to the intricate web of Soviet-Sino relations within the historical backdrop of Cold War

international law. Delving into the annals of diplomatic intricacies and legal entanglements, Professor Mälksoo's speech unravels the nuances that defined the complex relationship between the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War era. This exploration sheds light on the often-overlooked legal dimensions of geopolitical dynamics, offering a fresh perspective on the intersection of history, politics, and international law during this pivotal period.

Professor George R.B. Galindo and Professor Louis Felipe Yonezawa delve into the fascinating realm of British historiography of international law on China. Unraveling the layers of historical narratives, their speech provides a nuanced exploration of how British perspectives have shaped the understanding of China's interactions with international law over time. From colonial influences to diplomatic intricacies, they navigate the intricate tapestry of historical accounts, shedding light on the evolving dynamics between British interpretations and China's role in the global legal landscape.

Professor Frederic Megret and Cong Wanshu unravel the historical threads of the Qing Dynasty, they explore the nuanced landscape of Chinese emigration and the early stages of transnational protection. Through meticulous examination, they shed light on the roots of China's policies towards its diaspora, offering invaluable insights into the complex interplay between historical circumstances and the evolving dynamics of international relations during the Qing era.

Professor Chen Yifeng introduces a fascinating exploration of China's diplomatic landscape during the tumultuous 1950s-1960s. The speech unveils the intricate journey of China as it navigated global affairs. Professor Chen sheds light on how China, in the midst of shifting international dynamics, grappled with formulating a foreign policy vocabulary that went beyond conventional international law, marking a crucial period in the nation's diplomatic evolution.

Professor Luo Guoqiang and Professor Wang Chao take the stage to introduce the profound contributions of Professor Zhou Gengshen. A luminary in Chinese legal history, Zhou Gengshen's contributions to international law during the transformative period from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China era were unveiled.

Professor Zhuo Zenghua illuminates the audience on the life and contributions of Professor Xiang Zhejun, who became an instrumental figure in legal education, imparting his knowledge at esteemed institutions such as Peking University and Beijing Jiaotong University. Witnessing the dynamic political landscape of his time, he took on pivotal roles in various government bureaus, including the ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, after the establishment of the Nationalist Government in 1927.

Professor Zou Guoyong and Professor Li JueIn delve into the life of Professor Li Haopei, a luminary in the realm of international law. From serving as a professor and department head at National Wuhan University (1939-1945) to later becoming the professor and dean at National Zhejiang University (1945-1949), Li Haopei's journey through academia is a tapestry of dedication.

Professor Hao Yayezi and Professor Yu Hong introduce a renowned diplomat and international law scholar, Professor Ni Zhengyu earned high praise from the influential jurist Li Shengjiao. Driven by an unwavering commitment to justice, Ni Zhengyu played a pivotal role in the Tokyo Trials, leveraging his profound knowledge and exceptional debating skills to present compelling accusations against the key perpetrators of Japanese aggression in China.

Professor Xiao Yongping and Professor Zhu Lei illustrate Han Depei as a visionary trailblazer who pioneered a distinctive modern theory of international private law in China. Acknowledged as a founding figure in the realm of international private law in the People's Republic of China, Professor Han Depei's lifetime achievements become a narrative tapestry, weaving together the complexities of conflict law, unified substantive law, and the direct application of national laws in foreign civil and commercial relations.

Professor He Chi delve into the lifetime of a distinguished legal scholar Wang Tieya, born in 1913, emerges as a towering figure in the realm of international law. Against the backdrop of China's Open Door Policy, Wang's influence extended far beyond national borders. His remarkable journey led him to become a visiting scholar at Columbia Law School from 1980 to 1989, a visiting professor at The Hague Academy of International Law in 1984, and a dedicated educator at the University of British Columbia in 1988, followed by the University of California in 1989.

Professor Wang Chao introduce the Professor Qiu Shaoheng's journey, which unfolds as he served as the Secretary of the Chinese Delegation and Assistant Inspector at the Tokyo Far East International Military Tribunal from February to December 1946. Noteworthy is his role as an advisor to the Special Court of the Supreme People's Court in the trial of the "Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Counter-Revolutionary Clique" from November 1980 to January 1981.

As the symposium's vibrant discussions reached their zenith, Professor Wang Jiangyu, Professor Ignacio de la Rasilla, and Professor Cai Congyan took center stage for the grand finale. In a moment of collective gratitude, the symposium concluded with heartfelt expressions from the trio of hosts. They sincerely thanked all the speakers for their valuable insights, making the symposium fruitful and providing beneficial insights for divers global narratives, particularly those emanating from the rich tapestry of China's historical, political, and cultural experiences.