

30 Chinese Senior Judges successfully complete intensive Law Programme at CityU

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-Agnes Kwok

The Programme

The 7th Advanced Programme for Chinese Senior Judges (“the Programme” hereunder) offered by the School of Law at City University of Hong Kong was successfully held from 5 May to 18 May 2013. This year, 30 senior judges from 23 provinces in the mainland were recommended by the Supreme People’s Court of the People’s Republic of China and participated in the Programme.

The two-week Programme is the joint effort of CityU Law School, the Supreme People’s Court of the People’s Republic of China, and the National Judges College. It comprises intensive courses delivered by scholars at the CityU Law School and practicing legal experts, covering topics on international arbitration, case law, Hong Kong law reform and judicial system. Another important component of the Programme is the organization of visits to various institutions in Hong Kong, including the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Correctional Services Department, the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC in HKSAR, the Hong Kong Legislative Council, the Customs Department, the Ombudsman, the Department of Justice, the Auditing Commission, the Law Society of Hong Kong, the Legal Aid Department, the Hong Kong Bar Association, and different levels of the Hong Kong courts. It aims at giving an opportunity for Chinese senior judges to acquire, via inspiring dialogues with Hong Kong legal professionals, a comprehensive understanding of common law jurisdiction, the essence of the Hong Kong legal system, and also legal issues in relation to finance, commerce and intellectual property.

The Opening: Meet the New Faces



Group photo of the officiating guests and the Chinese senior judges at the Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony on 6 May 2013 welcomed this batch of Chinese judges and was attended by **Mr. Herman HU Shao-ming**, Council Chairman, City University of Hong Kong; **Mr. LI Yuanming**, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR; **Professor HUANG Yongwei**, President of National Judges College, the People's Republic of China; **Mr FENG Wei**, Director-General, Department of Law, Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR; **Mr LI Lu**, Director-General of the Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological Affairs, Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR; **Professor Arthur ELLIS**, Provost, City University of Hong Kong; **Mr. GUO Qingliang**, Director of China Legal Service (H.K.) Ltd.; **Professor Gerard McCOY, SBS, QC, SC**, Member of International Advisory Board, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong; **Mr. George TAM Siu Ping**, Member of International Advisory Board, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong and Principal of Wah Yan College, Hong Kong; and **Professor WANG Guiguo**, Dean & Chair Professor of Chinese and Comparative Law, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong.

In his welcoming speech, the Provost, Professor Arthur Ellis, said that as China's commercial ties become more globalized, there is a great demand in the country for legal experts who are well versed in Chinese law and international law. CityU's faculty has such experience and looks forward to sharing their knowledge and experience with the Chinese senior judges.



The Council Chairman, Mr. Herman Hu, noted that this is already the fifth year for the CityU Law School to collaborate with the National Judges College to offer this Programme. CityU is proud of the work of the School of Law and looks forward to serving our motherland with even wider impact.



Professor Huang Yongwei pointed out that ever since the twenty-first century, the training of Chinese judges increasingly aims to instill in judges an international vision, and an awareness of global communication. The Hong Kong judiciary system belongs to the common law system and would provide a lot of insights for Chinese judges.



"It is an honour for City University of Hong Kong and the School of Law to be entrusted with the task of broadening the horizon of Chinese senior judges," said Professor Gerard McCoy. The Programme would give the judges a clear horizon, to learn from some of the best legal academics the way to understand, and be critical of other legal systems; in so doing, the judges may develop their own love and yearning of their country and its legal system.



Mr. Qiao Shengbiao, President of Intermediate People’s Court of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, spoke on behalf of the participating Chinese senior judges. “From the legal concepts, system design, to its operational rules, the Chinese legal system has made reference to foreign concepts. The massive economic development and fundamental changes in China’s economic structure have brought new challenges to the work of the Chinese judiciary.” He believed that the exchange of ideas in the forthcoming Programme would bring impact to the judges’ future work.



At the end of the ceremony, Professor Wang Guiguo reiterated that globalization is now a prevalent trend of the world’s development. The effective operation of a judiciary system and the development of a country will be closely connected to other areas of the world. Hence the purpose of the Programme is to widen the vision of the Chinese senior judges, and at the same time allow other areas of the world to have a deeper understanding of the Chinese judges. This inter-connectedness and mutual influence would be a long and inevitable process.

The Closing: Memories and Gratitude



Group photo at the Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony for the Programme was held on 15 May 2013 and officiated by **Dr. LIU Xinkui**, Deputy Director-General of the Legal Affairs Department, Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the HKSAR; **Ms. Winnie TAM, SC**, Vice Chairman of Hong Kong Bar Association; **Mr. Daniel R. FUNG, SBS, SC, QC, JP**, Member of International Advisory Board, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong; **Professor WANG Guiguo**, Dean & Chair Professor of Chinese and Comparative Law, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong; and **Professor GU Minkang**, Associate Dean & Professor, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong.



Professor Wang Guiguo began by pointing out that the Hong Kong legal system is exemplary of the common law system and enjoys international recognition. Yet each system will naturally have their own drawbacks. It is important for the Chinese senior judges to wisely discern the strengths of foreign legal systems, and by such experience improve and strengthen their own system and country.



Ms. Winnie Tam said that she felt the keen curiosity of the Chinese judges towards the common law system, as well as the relationship between barristers and judges. “The rule of law is much valued in the Hong Kong judiciary system and its various units are vouchsafed with clear accountabilities. In this way bias and conflicts of interest are minimized in the trials of cases.”



Mr. Daniel Fung trusted that through the Programme, the participating Chinese judges had already gained a good understanding of the common law system and the multi-cultural aspects of the Hong Kong judiciary system, and also came in contact with judges that can accommodate different opinions. It was his hope that they could make further contributions to the advancement of the country’s judiciary system.



In the address by Mr. Du Yixing, Vice-president of Higher People's Court of Guangdong Province and representative of the Chinese Senior Judges, he expressed heartfelt gratitude to the CityU Law School for offering the judges this wonderful opportunity, and also to the teaching staff and various organizations for their warm reception. During the course of the Programme, the Chinese judges have glimpsed the fruits of Hong Kong law reform, and also introduced the work of law courts in the mainland to their Hong Kong counterparts. It has been a very rewarding experience for all of them.



Professor Gu Minkang remarked that the success of organizing the Programme hinged upon the support and attention from various sectors of the society, including government bodies, law-related institutions, and the University. In particular, he would like to thank the Supreme People’s Court of the People’s Republic of China for their trust in CityU Law School in this meaningful endeavour.