

Event Recap: Book Talk by Professor He Xin: *The Judicial System of China*

On 30 October 2025, the School of Law Research Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL) hosted a closed-door academic salon featuring Professor He Xin, Chair Professor of Law and Society and Mo Shiu Keung Foundation Professor of Law at the University of Hong Kong. The event was chaired by Professor Wang Jiangyu, with Professor Guan Wenwei serving as the discussant. Attendance was by invitation only, limited to members of the JSDCJ 2025 cohort and JSDCJ candidates currently visiting Hong Kong.

Professor He, who taught at CityUHK School of Law for fifteen years before joining HKU, is a leading scholar in Chinese judicial studies and socio-legal research. His major Chinese-language works include *The Researcher on the Street* and the forthcoming *Chinese-Style Divorce* (2026).

In his presentation, Professor He introduced his latest English-language monograph, *The Judicial System of China* (2025), which provides a systematic examination of China's judiciary in the new era. The book synthesizes bilingual scholarship and extensive fieldwork to trace how the Chinese courts have evolved both institutionally and functionally over the past decade.

Departing from the conventional frameworks of judicial independence or rights protection, Professor He proposes a governance-oriented model for understanding Chinese courts, characterizing them by dual functions of policy implementation and legitimacy enhancement. Under this approach, courts not only serve as instruments for carrying out state policies but also as key institutions for strengthening the legitimacy of governance through professionalism, procedural transparency, and socially responsive adjudication.

Drawing on empirical studies of civil, criminal, and administrative cases, Professor He illustrated how judicial decision-making operates within the constraints of hierarchical administration and political coordination, while judges continue to negotiate professional autonomy and institutional credibility.

During the discussion, Professor Guan Wenwei commented on the tension between institutional autonomy and integration within China's judicial governance, while Professor Wang Jiangyu guided an engaging exchange with participants on the courts' evolving role in China's modern governance framework. JSDCJ students actively participated, raising thoughtful questions and reflections.

The CCCL expressed sincere appreciation to Professor He Xin, Professor Wang Jiangyu, and Professor Guan Wenwei for their stimulating and insightful contributions. The salon deepened understanding of the judicial reform process and demonstrated the intellectual vitality of the JSDCJ community. It also reaffirmed CCCL's commitment to fostering dialogue on law, society, and governance in contemporary China.



Professor Wang Jiangyu



Professor He Xin



Professor Guan Wenwei

