



Lecture Series: Early Efforts by the Qing's Dynasty to use International Law for the Protection of the Chinese Diaspora (30 Mar 2023)

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In light of a forthcoming book on Histories of International Law in China: All Under Heaven? (edited by Ignacio de la Rasilla, Jiangyu Wang, and Congyan Cai, Oxford University Press 2025), the Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL), in partnership with Wuhan University Law School and Fudan University Law School, is organizing a massive series of public lectures on the histories of international law from both Chinese and global perspectives. On 30 March 2023, the Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL) of the City University of Hong Kong's School of Law hosted the fourth lecture to assist students and lawyers in discovering early efforts by the Qing Dynasty to use international law for the protection of the Chinese diaspora. **Prof. Frédéric Mégret, McGill University, and Dr. Wanshu Cong, Hong Kong University** were invited as our speakers.

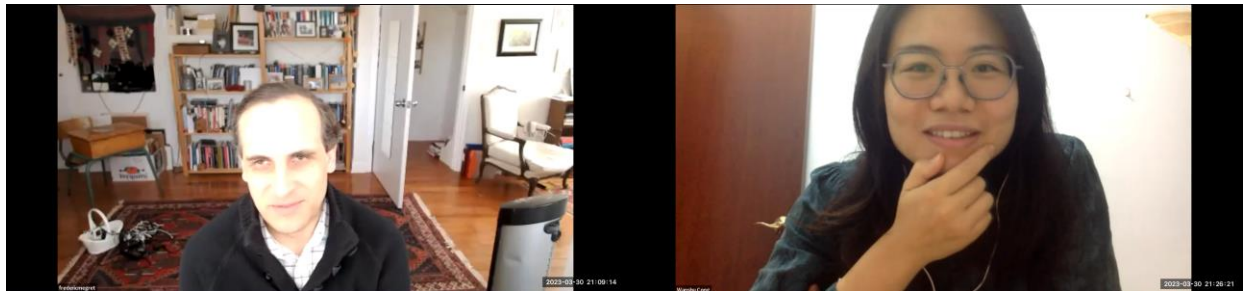
Prof. Ignacio de la Rasilla, Wuhan University delivered a welcome speech to start the public lecture and **Prof Qu Wensheng, East China University of Political Science and Law** gave a brief introduction of the speakers.

Prof. Frédéric Mégret is a Professor of Law and a William Dawson Scholar at McGill University. He held the Canada Research Chair on the Law of Human Rights and Legal Pluralism from 2006 to 2015. He was promoted to full professor in 2019. He was named co-director of the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism in 2021. In November 2022, Professor Mégret received an honorary doctorate from the University of Copenhagen. **Dr. Wanshu Cong** is a Global Academic Fellow at the Department of Law, HKU. Her research interests include the theory and history of international law, critical legal studies, and the intersection of law and technology. More recently, her work has been looking at transnational data governance by drawing from Marxist and Third World Approaches to International Law. During the Global Academic Fellowship, she will compare claims and practices of digital sovereignty by state and non-state actors around the world and analyze them from a historical perspective.

They began the lecture by introducing the main reasons for their research, including a minor contribution to our understanding, particularly as it relates to its diaspora, the present relevance

to these questions which has not escaped us, and a better understanding of international law itself. As most people are very sensitive to the fact that the history of international law has been written from the West, at least the most influential paper works, it is urgent to decentralize and deprovincialize these histories. He stated that it could be the paradox for paradoxes in the late Qing Dynasty for China, which asked to develop a policy to protect its nationals abroad for the very first time. However, as known that China is extremely weak at the time, and could hardly guarantee security on its territory. Therefore, in the mid-19th century, it is clear to see a major shift in Chinese attitude and policy regarding Chinese immigrants. It is also a period when the Qing underwent all sorts of fundamental, political, and ideological changes. Before the mid-19th century, China was almost not at all interested in protecting its immigrants. We see that sentiment is expressed in several literary works like poems, describing the sufferings of Chinese workers. They quoted Zhu Ke Pian (Expulsion of the Guests), written by Huang Zunxian, a general council who experienced all sorts of anti-changes as an example, that we could get a sense of very kind of humanist descent in his sympathy wordings, and the sufferings of Chinese workers in the United States, and also the misfortune of Qing Dynasty. In conclusion, they hinted at a story involving the rise of China and also human rights, a class of international law, capitalism, and exploitation. They don't have a final word on this, but they would just say that it is an incident, but basically, an encapsulates all of you, different dimensions at once.

Prof. Matthias Vanhullebusch, Shanghai Jiao Tong University led a discussion session following **Prof. Frederic Megret and Dr. Wanshu Cong's** thought-provoking speech, in which they shared their insights. The majority of all those attending took the opportunity to express themselves, and many of them were insightful and imaginative. **Prof. Qu Wensheng** gave a closing remark in which he thanked all of the attendants for their contributions to the lecture's success.



Prof. Frederic Megret and Dr. Wanshu Cong.



Prof. Ignacio de la Rasilla, Prof. Qu Wensheng and Prof. Matthias Vanhullebusch.