

Beijing Forum 2019 Governance and Civilization: The Origins of the State across Civilizations (II)

On the afternoon of November 2nd, the panel session “Governance and Civilization: The Origins of the State across Civilizations” held its second session at the 8th conference room, Yingjie Exchange Center, Peking University. The topic of the session was “Contemporary Chinese Governance” and was chaired by Professor Yu Keping from Peking University.

Professor Chuang Jae-Ho, from Seoul National University, delivered a lecture on topic of “China and International Governance: On Five Hurdles”. He pointed out that in order to make China’s rise more sustainable, China needs to overcome five hurdles. In the economic dimension, China should pay attention to avoid the middle-income trap, so that it can maintain economic growth to ensure military strength; in the strategy dimension, China's rise may cause conflicts and changes in the global order or society, so it is necessary to handle bilateral relations with the United States; in the dimension of public goods, the strength of the United States is declining, while China needs to make more contributions to the supply of public goods in the international community; in the dimension of alliances, China emphasizes “partnership”, but it is unknown whether that partnership can compete with the US., which has much more overseas military bases; in the dimension of soft power, China needs to balance the cultivation of soft power and the restriction of “sharp power”.

Professor Cai Yongshun, from Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, launched a discussion on the issue of mass protests in China. He expressed his view that the compensation for urban residents is unsustainable. The Chinese government’s decentralization has achieved objective results, dispersing discontent with the government. Protests in local cities would not have an impact on the stability of the central government. According to the data, the number of mass protest incidents peaked in 2014 and has declined in recent years. National policies and measures have affected the occurrence of mass protests.

Professor Laura Langbein from American University put forward a question whether state-owned enterprises are good citizens. She provided evidence from the control of air pollution in China. From the perspective of pollution control, she used panel data of sulfur dioxide emissions in

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30 provinces of China from 2005 to 2010 to conduct empirical research. Research showed an overall drop of sulfur dioxide emissions, and the drop was even more conspicuous by reported data than official data; SOE dominance within the average province was relative to the previous year. Two policies—anticorruption measures and reward and punishment mechanisms, designed to amplify the role of the state authority in controlling market—slightly detracted from emission reduction or had no effect.