

## Guest Lecture

# "On the Selection of Good Leaders in a Political Meritocracy"

Daniel A. Bell

Date: October 7, 2014  
Venue: SG Building, Room 183, Geibelstr. 41  
Time: 18-20 h

The debate about political meritocracy – the idea that a political system should aim to select leaders with superior ability and virtue – was revived by Singapore, but it has a long history, both in the West (from Plato onwards) and in China (from Confucius onwards).

In his talk, Professor Bell will make the following assumptions: (1) it is good for a political community to be governed by high-quality leaders; (2) China's one-party political system is not about to collapse; (3) the meritocratic aspect of the system is partly good; and (4) it can be improved. But how to judge whether China has improved its meritocratic system? Government officials should be selected and promoted on the basis of ability and morality, rather than political loyalty, wealth, or family background. But which qualities – abilities, skills, and virtues – matter for political leaders in a Chinese context? And what sorts of mechanisms and institutions can increase the likelihood that officials are selected and promoted on the basis of those qualities? This talk will attempt to answer these questions.

Daniel A. Bell (贝淡宁) was born in Montreal and educated at McGill and Oxford. He is professor of ethics and political theory and director of the Center for International and Comparative Political Philosophy at Tsinghua University (Beijing). He is also director of the Berggruen Institute of Philosophy and Culture. He has taught in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, and he has held research fellowships at Princeton, Stanford, and Hebrew University. His books include *East Meets West*, *Beyond Liberal Democracy*, *China's New Confucianism*, and *The Spirit of Cities* (all Princeton University Press), and his latest book -- *The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy* -- will be published by Princeton in Spring 2015. He is the editor of the Princeton-China Series and he has also co-edited four books with Cambridge University Press. He writes frequently for leading media outlets in China and the West and his works have been translated in 23 languages.

