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Ryan Martínez Mitchell is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Law of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He holds a JD from Harvard Law School and a PhD in Law from Yale University. His scholarship on China and international law has appeared in a number of leading scholarly journals.
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Recentering the World

China and the Transformation of International Law

RYAN MARTÍNEZ MITCHELL
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
人君中天下而立，则正身以为四方之标准。... 若就君德论，则德到这处，极至而无以加。

The lord of men centers the world around him and rectifies himself to provide a standard for all four directions. As for the ruler’s virtue, this signifies that when virtue has reached this stage it is at its utmost, and nothing can be added.

Chen Chun 陈淳, *North Stream’s Glossary of Scholarly Terms* 北溪字義, c. 1217

巴西议员在会曾有言曰: 今知天下果无公理...请俟第三次会诸君再视巴西是否强国、弱国、大国、小国。臣闻其说, 心窃壮之。

The Brazilian delegate said at one point: "Now I realize that there is after all no just principle under Heaven... Please wait until the Third Hague Conference, gentlemen, and see whether Brazil is a strong country or a weak one, a large country or a small one." As I listened to his comments, I privately felt a sense of grand resolve.

Lu Zhengxiang 陸徵祥, Memorial to the Qing Court regarding the Second Hague Conference of 1907, January 16, 1908

依国际组织以求世界永久和平，可说是中国民国国民一致的外交原则。

The pursuit of perpetual peace in the world by means of an international organization can be considered the foreign policy that is the consensus of the whole Chinese citizenry.

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