

### THE VOICE FROM CHINA: AN CHEN ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW

By An Chen  
Springer 2013  
ISBN: 978-3-642-40816-8

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## Introduction

It is an incredible honor for me to have this opportunity to review the product of a long and painstaking research conducted by an honorable scholar like Professor An Chen. My first encounter with Professor Chen traces back to 2011 when I visited Xiamen in order to interview him for the Journal of East Asia and International Law. The interview was held in the law school building of Xiamen University which is close to the coast of the beautiful ocean. The atmosphere of Xiamen law school was very professional, gentle and cooperative. I was fully impressed by the warmhearted hospitality of Professor Chen and other staff members of Xiamen including Professor Congyan Cai, Professor Huiping Chen and Professor Chen's lovely daughter Carol. It made me feel at home. When I entered the wide room for the interview, Professor Chen was waiting with his gentle smile. I could instantly recognize he is a true scholar and a man of immense virtue (士) with the invincible power against anything suppressing 'veritas' (真理). After my deeply felt greetings, he modestly and friendly said: "Dr. Lee! We are sharing two common things. First, both of us (China and Korea) have suffered severely from Japanese militarism. Second, we (Professor Chen and Lee) in common re-

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spect Confucius, considering that your name Yong Joong (庸中) is related to one of the holy books of Confucius. The relating specific holy book is named with ‘中庸’ (Chinese pronounced as Zhong Yong).” Indeed, our interview started on a positive note based on these commonalities. Professor Chen spoke about many interesting stories during the interview sufficient to enthrall me. (The transcript of the whole interview has been published in volume 4, number 2 of the *Journal of East Asia and International Law* as well as in the introduction section of *The Voice from China*). As a flag-holder Chinese scholar of international economic law, he is a man of exceptional brilliance and principles with clear, broad, rigorous thinking and wisdom. He has a profound understanding of the importance of international law.

Since my return home, we have maintained frequent contact with each other. In 2014, Professor Chen requested me to review *The Voice from China*. I was hesitant at first because I thought I was *not* entitled to comment on something by an outstanding scholar whom I respect from the bottom of my heart. It would thus be one of the most difficult tasks I have endured. However, I finally decided to accept his proposal because it would be my duty to celebrate his voice toward the global community. My review may not contain an evaluation *per se*, but humble comments as a young foreign scholar admiring the author.

## The Author

Professor Chen was born in May, 1929 in a small mountainous town in north-east Fujian Province, China and grew up there profoundly influenced and educated by his father who was a Confucian scholar and poet. He began studying law at Xiamen University in 1946 when he was 17 years old. Due to historical reasons, his legal studies were unfortunately interrupted for 27 years until 1980 when the Law School of Xiamen University was reestablished. By that time, he was already in his fifties. He had the keen insight to recognize that China would need to establish not only its domestic legal regime, but also international (economic) law, especially when China opened up to the world. Professor Chen decided to focus on international economic law (“IEL”). At that time, however, there were few modern legal reference texts in China, not to mention IEL lit-