

The University of Hong Kong

香 港 大 學



Department of Politics and Public Administration

Presents

# Three Hypotheses about the Chinese State

The new Chinese leadership is highly ambitious, but just what is it ambitious for? Is it for the regime itself, for the good of the Chinese people, or for the glory of the nation? The regime is obviously determined to preserve itself and to protect the country's territorial integrity, but what more is there to it. A first hypothesis, the triviality hypothesis, is that there is nothing more. Self-preservation is all. A second hypothesis, the welfare hypothesis, is that the regime is pragmatically dedicated to improving the conditions of the common people. A final hypothesis, the power hypothesis, is that the regime is re-constituting itself as an ideologically committed regime on nationalistic terms. The lecture will explain these hypotheses, lay out how they can be tested up against each other, and suggest a tentative conclusion.

## Stein Ringen

*Professor of Sociology and Social Policy  
Green Templeton College, University of Oxford*

**Stein Ringen** is emeritus Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at Green Templeton College, University of Oxford. He was Professor of Welfare Studies at the University of Stockholm and has held visiting professorships and fellowships in Paris, Berlin, Prague, Brno, Barbados, Jerusalem, Sydney and at Harvard University. He has been Assistant Director General in the Norwegian Ministry of Justice, a consultant to the United Nations, and a news and feature reporter with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. His books include *What Democracy Is For* (Princeton 2007, Chinese version published by Xinhua in 2012), *The Korean State and Social Policy* (co-authored, Oxford 2011) and *The Possibility of Politics* (Oxford 1987 and Transaction 2006). A new book, *Nation of Devils: Democracy and the Problem of Obedience*, is published by Yale University Press in 2013. He is a visiting professor at Richmond, the American International University in London and Adjunct Professor at Lillehammer University College in Norway. He is currently undertaking a study of the Chinese state.

**Date: 30 October 2014 (Thur)**

**Time: 4:30pm**

**Venue: Room 966 The Jockey Club Tower  
Centennial Campus**

**Registration: <http://ppa.hku.hk/registration/33246>**

**Enquiry: 3917-2393**

**email: [psdhku@hku.hk](mailto:psdhku@hku.hk)**

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