

International Financial Centre Court examine how the pandemic changed the landscape of international commercial dispute resolution and paved the way for the future. The conclusion is written by Pamela Bookman from New York City's Fordham University and Alyssa King from Canada's Queen's University echoing the views of Justice Sundaresh Menon, that the "biggest disputes in transnational commerce would inevitably touch upon issues of global importance that go beyond the direct interests of the contracting parties – like working conditions, security concerns, taxation, inequality, and climate change (p. 340)".

This book, with new ideas for exigent times, is a rich contribution to the existing scholarship of international commercial dispute resolution.

**Competing interests.** None.

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## **Justice and International Law in Meiji Japan: The María Luz Incident and the Dawn of Modernity**

**by Giorgio Fabio COLOMBO. New York: Routledge Press, 2023. 134 pp. Hardcover: £125.00; VitalSource eBook: £39.99. doi: 10.4324/9781003280637**

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For historians, the Meiji reforms were an event of the utmost importance in that they embodied the moment of Japan's transformation from feudalism to modernity, enabling Japan to confront the West as a global power in the early twentieth century. The reforms brought a different interpretation to a keen observer of the development of international law in a non-European space. Giorgio Fabio Colombo's meticulous research tracing the development of international law in imperial Japan in the late nineteenth century is a fresh contribution to the literature regarding the history of international law. Inspired by the María Luz incident in 1872, which altered Japan's role in global affairs, Colombo narrates his compelling account of Japan's ascendancy as a late bloomer to the international legal system. In the Japanese academic lexicon, international law was known as "*Bankokukouhou*", an expression the Japanese borrowed from the Chinese translation of Whaeton's "History of International Law", and in their journey to modernity the Japanese perceived international law as a mandatory tool with which to be admitted into the international legal system. Thus, international law has been integral to Japan's development.

Before tracing the trajectories that led to the María Luz incident. In Chapter 1, Colombo gives an apt description of Japan's yearning to adopt international law as the Japanese elite started to appreciate the power of legal weapons to accomplish their ends. Chapter 2 presents the María Luz case, whereby a ship sailing under the Peruvian flag entered Japanese territory and created a diplomatic dispute, which eventually elevated the independence of the Japanese judiciary, as this particular episode demonstrated their mastery of legal acumen before the Western powers. The case is still mentioned

on many occasions today to show Japan's longstanding engagement with international justice.

Quoting the British jurist, Sir Edmund Hornby, Colombo states that "Japan had an opportunity of asserting herself as a new member of the Comity of the Nations due to Maria Luz incident" (p. 303).<sup>1</sup> In Chapter 3, Colombo unveils criminal procedure ambiguities confronted by Japan as Japan attempted to legitimize her position as a state with a proper legal order. Notably, Japan was the first Asian nation to adopt an international dispute resolution system, with the first matter being mutually agreed by both Japan and Peru to be arbitrated by the Czar of Russia in St Petersburg. Although María Luz remains the cardinal point of this book, it astutely signifies the admittance of Japan to the system of international law and the work deserves to be praised for its originality based on archival materials. However, it could have been a much more critical piece if the author had questioned how dubiously Japan used unequal treaties, a method they learnt from the West to oppress China on the question of Manchuria during that same period.

**Competing interests.** The author declares none.

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## Half Way Through: Feminist Approach to International Law Revisited After 20 Years

by Hilary CHARLESWORTH and Christine CHINKIN.

Melland Schill Classics in International Law Series.

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. xlix + 416 pp.

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This book by Hilary Charlesworth (who is currently a judge at the International Court of Justice) and Christine Chinkin, is a second edition published in 2022, following its first edition published in 2000. The highlight of the second edition is its new introduction. The rest of the book remains largely unchanged, with still relevant critical examinations of both theoretical and practical perspectives of international law. As the authors state in the new introduction, "Boundaries' may be showing its age, but many of its concerns remain current."

The new introduction begins with a reflection on the essence of "feminist analysis," explaining that the term feminism regards gender as a logic based on "binary oppositions and the establishment and the hierarchies between them" (p. xxiv). Feminist analysis,

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Grimani HORNBY, *Sir Edmund Hornby: An Autobiography* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1928) at 303.