

**An evening of conversation with Professor
Michael Sandel: How money and markets are
shaping contemporary society**

Should everything in the world have a price? If not, then what role should money and markets play in society? On July 13, in the newly-built atrium at Genesis Beijing, over 200 guests joined celebrated Harvard professor and philosopher Michael Sandel in a dialogue on the topic of “morals and markets.” The thought-provoking conversation delved into the question of how money and markets shape contemporary society, and the meaning of “the good life.”

Sandel pointed out that the reach of markets and market-oriented thinking has penetrated areas of life not traditionally governed by market values. We live in a world of congestion charges and where the buildings around us are knocked down to improve traffic congestion; where Uber and Didi raise prices during storms, and scalpers resell tickets at extortionate prices... When nearly everything in the world can be bought and sold, where do the moral limits of markets lie? How can we prevent market values from reaching into spheres of life they don't belong? These questions have significance for all of us and are forcing public debate about how much of a role markets should play in society.

Sandel spoke with the audience in his signature style of conversation, and made a compelling case for his own thoughts on these questions: in a well-run society, markets are indeed an effective tool for achieving economic development, but in reality there will always be issues for which the market cannot offer a solution. We may take it for granted but that value system poses profound ethical dilemmas for all our lives.

Lecturer of Harvard's first open-access course, Sandel has gained popularity around the world for his use of the Socratic method as a means of inquiry. Over ten million people around the globe have watched the “Justice” lecture series since it became freely available online and on television, making it Harvard's most watched public lecture series to date. In the U.S., *Newsweek* described Sandel as “the most relevant living philosopher,” while in China he has become renowned following publication of his two key works, *Justice: What's the right thing to do?* And *What Money Can't Buy: The*

Moral Limits of Markets.

The event was the first to be held in the *Genesis Conversations* series of talks, which are open to all and explore contemporary thinking in philosophy, society and culture. A forum for debate, they bring together some of the most interesting thinkers, writers, and artists of our time. The series is intended to foster a more nourishing, more educated, more connected society through open conversation among people from all walks of life.

About Genesis Beijing

Genesis Conversations is hosted by Genesis Beijing. Genesis Beijing is a new kind of urban development devoted to community, culture and mental wellbeing.