

The merit of prizes and distinctions is shared by all those who by their own merits have up until today been awarded this Beccaria Medal.

The presentation by Pedro David is illustrative of that worthiness. It is clear that professor GAO Mingxuan brings together the highest qualities of his predecessors and he has successfully dedicated all of his life to progress in Criminal Science and Legislation and to working towards a humanist criminal policy.

The life of Gao is representative of a life dedicated to teaching and to research in criminal Law. Criminal policy and reform arrived in China as from that significant time at which the new People's Republic of China was constituted in 1949 following the anti-colonial war against foreign occupation and the civil war.

Today, it is not easy to imagine what a young GAO would be like who, with a legal vocation inspired in a family setting, entered the University of Zhejiang, the province of his birth, immediately went on to the Faculty of Law at Beijing in 1949, the same first days of the life of the People's Republic. What would that young man have had in his mind at that ecstatic time of the People's Revolution in China that exerted such an attraction and so much transformation. Prof. GAO Mingxuan owes us some memories of his youth.

We know the rest. From 1953, he began as a professor at Remin University and worked intensely teaching ordinary and PhD students. He is still working, 10 years after his retirement, as a Distinguished Professor at the College of the Science of Criminal Law at Beijing Normal University and he continues to direct doctoral students.

His publications are deserving of a grand master, with a great Treatise on Chinese criminal law, in three volumes, as well as contributions to the History of Criminal Law in the People's Republic. He has concerned himself with specific topics, such as International criminal Law and economic offences. There is a matter in the work of GAO that should be highlighted at this act that follows a meeting on and against the death penalty: I think that a majority of the process to restrict the death penalty in China produced over recent years is the result of the academic work of Prof. GAO Mingxuan.

Great masters are not only so because of their work, but because of their capability to educate teams, and schools. This is the case of Prof. GAO, who has not only completed traditional schooling, but has received an education at the great Universities of Europe and America. From among them all, allow me to cite two disciples: Prof. Dr. Zhao Bingzhi, who is now the Dean of the College of criminal Sciences at the University of Beijing and Lu Jianpin, also a disciple of Mireille Delmás-Marty, and a member of the Board of Management of the International Society of Social Defence.

Through the work of Gao, Chinese penalists have joined the AIDP and other scientific societies. They have recently achieved the recognition of their Institute as an Institute of the United Nations.

This internationalization of Chinese criminal science is a guarantee of commitment towards the modernization of the Chinese penal system and its harmonization with international principles and standards, with Human Rights and with the commitment to humanity.

Finally and as a complement to the scientific qualities of professor Gao Ming Xuan, he is a good singer of Chinese opera, an extraordinarily difficult matter and for that alone he would deserve a good prize.