

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, distinguished guests, dear professor Gao,

it is my privilege to address myself to such a distinguished public on behalf of ISPAC and SIDS, being at the same time the vice-president of both associations.

Today we all have the great opportunity to celebrate one of the most prominent members of the Chinese criminal law academia. Personally speaking, there are several reasons why I really wanted to be here today and take part in this ceremony.

First, professor Gao has always showed a great interest in comparative and international criminal law and for this reason he has been the reference for a great number of criminal lawyers all over the world, introducing them to such a complex and fascinating legal order. I want to mention here one of the most impressive experiences I had the chance to live in my early career. At the beginning of the nineties a research program was carried out between Europe and China under the title “Towards the international guiding principles of criminal law”, with the joint co-ordination of prof. Gao and professor Delmas-Marty, and I had the honour to be associated to it. In this framework, not less than seven books have been published in both languages French and Chinese, focusing particularly on human rights, at a time when these were not very popular in the Popular Republic of China, and I am sure that these publications strongly contributed to the debate in this country leading to the present situation.

Second, I want to stress the great impact professor Gao had on the European criminal law doctrine. Many scholars arising from his ‘school’ contributed to increase the knowledge of Chinese law and to improve the awareness of western scholars. This was a an impressive tool for making our mutual understanding easier. Let me mention here my close friend Lu Janping, one of the most brilliant witnesses of the chinese legal culture, that he widely contributed to diffuse in France.

Third, with this celebration, a new link is established between China and Europe, and particularly with the Italian tradition of the Enlightenment. The medal which prof. Gao is offered today bears – as everybody knows here – the name of the Marquis Cesare Beccaria, the champion of the humanistic criminal policy. Promoting and defending all over the world such a criminal policy is the main task of the SIDS and this ambitious aim is surely achieved today.

I wish to congratulate you, dear prof. Gao, for this new success in your long and rich career, and I wish to congratulate the SIDS and his president, Luis Arroyo Zapatero, for having chosen such a distinguished scholar, at the same time a representative of the classical approach to criminal law and –since many decades – one of the pioneers in our field.

Thanks !

Stefano Manacorda