

Presentation

Academic exchange between China and Mexico began with trust and friendship

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The academic exchange between the Law Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and Institute for Legal Research National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México or UNAM) began with a “chance encounter” in 2008, when I received a letter from Dr. Arturo Oropeza García, a professor at UNAM Institute for Legal Research, inviting me to send a delegation to his Institute in Mexico to introduce the research on legal theories, construction of the rule of law and judicial reform in China, so as to help the Mexican people better understand the true situation of economic reform and development of law in China, strengthen the long standing friendship between the people of the two countries, and establish exchange and cooperation between the two institutes. This was a happy surprise for me because there was no academic relation between the two institutes, nor did I know Dr. Oropeza at that time. Thanks to the unremitting efforts and careful arrangements by Dr. Oropeza, a seven-member delegation from CASS Law Institute, consisting of Professors Chen Su, Mo Jihong, Xu Hui, Liu Huawen, Liu Jingdong and Han Han and myself, finally arrived in Mexico in October 2008.

During several days in Mexico, the delegation visited many organizations in Mexico City and Mérida, the capital city of Yucatan, and met with many people, including Dr. Héctor Fix-Fierro, Director of UNAM Institute for Legal Research, the Governor of Yucatan and the President of the High Court of Yucatan. The visit was very fruitful. It not only increased the trust and understanding between the Chinese and Mexican academic circles, but also enabled the members of the delegation to fully appreciate the beauties of the sites of mysterious ancient Maya civilization and Aztec pyramids. Through this visit, all members of the delegation, as well as the CASS Law Institute represented by the delegation, had formed an indissoluble bound with UNAM Institute for Legal Research. Interestingly, both Professor Mo Jihong, a member of the CASS delegation, and Professor Héctor Fix-Fierro, the director of UNAM Institute of Legal Research, were members of the Executive Council of International Association of Constitutional Law. The reunion of the two

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old friends brought the two institutes closer to each other and increased the understanding between them. Thanks to the support by UNAM Institute for Legal Research and the hard work of Professor Oropeza, the result of this visit, a compilation of articles written by members of the CASS delegation, Professor Oropeza and other Mexican professors—Mexico and China: A Comparison of Cultural and Legal Systems—was published in Spanish language. As far as I know, this is the first Spanish language academic book that introduces the construction of the rule of law in China and compares it with that in Mexico. In 2009, the launching of the book was held in the Mexican Embassy in China, which further strengthened the relationship between the two institutes.

On May 2010, Professor Fix-Fierro and Professor Oropeza visited CASS Law Institute and CASS Institute of International Law and met with Professors Chen Su, Chen Zexian, and Feng Jun to discuss the cooperation between the two institutes in different fields of legal research. During the visit, Professor Fix-Fierro and I signed a formal cooperation framework agreement on behalf of our respective institutes. After the signing of the agreement, Professor Fix-Fierro, and Professor Oropeza visited Xi'an and Shanghai, accompanied by Professor Mo Jihong, who was a member of the CASS Delegation to Mexico in 2008 and then already an assistant director of CASS Law Institute, and Professor Liu Huawen, head of the Foreign Affairs Department of CASS Law Institute at that time, and then already an assistant director of CASS International Law Institute. The unforgettable travel to China had left our Mexican friends with deep impression and further strengthened the trust and cooperation between the two institutes. As national legal research institutes in our respective countries, what we need to do next in our cooperation should be something more influential, something with greater social impact and historical significance.

In November 2010, according to a cooperation and exchange agreement between CASS and UNAM, Professor Chen Zexian, Director of CASS Institute of International Law, went to Mexico for a academic visit, during which period he gave two lectures at the Law Faculty and the Institute for Legal Research of UNAM, visited many organizations, including the Supreme Court of Mexico, the Human Rights Commission of Mexico, the Judicial Research Institute of the Federal High Court of Mexico City, and the Attorney General's Office of Mexico City, and held discussion with Professor Fix-Fierro on the future cooperation and exchange between the two institutes. In December 2010, a delegation of China Law Society, led by Assistant Director Mo Jihong, participated in the Eighth World Congress of the International Association of Constitutional Law, organized by UNAM Institute for Legal Research in Mexico City. During their stay in Mexico, members of the delegation were treated kindly and generously by their Mexican friends and, in return, they took every opportunity to display the academic style of Chinese constitutional law scholars.

In 2011, the relationship between the two institutes continued to “heat up”. In August 2011, Mr. Liao Fang, an associate professor at the CASS Institute of International Law, attended an international seminar organized by UNAM Institute for Legal Research in Mexico. Professor Mo Jihong received a special invitation from Professor Oropeza to give a lecture on the development of the rule of law in China and to attend an international seminar on the development of legislation in BRIC at the Law Faculty of UNAM. Although, for various reasons, Professor Mo failed to make the trip to Mexico, he was deeply moved by the “special treatment” given to him by his Mexican friend: Professor Oropeza told us that, at the international seminar, Professor Fix-Fierro personally presented Professor Mo’s academic paper on his behalf. Such an act of kindness showed that a deep friendship had formed between the two institutes. And when Professor Oropeza, together with Professor Fix-Fierro, came to China for the Roundtable of International Association of Constitutional Law held in Xi’an in October 2011, he made a special arrangement to visit the CASS Law Institute in Beijing. My colleagues and I were very happy to snatch a little leisure from our busy work to meet and have a cozy chat with our old friend from Mexico.

While attending the Roundtable of International Association of Constitutional Law in Xi’an and later during a conference in Macao, Professor Mo discussed in detail with Professor Oropeza and Professor Fix-Fierro the cooperation between the two institutes in the year 2012. They finally decided to jointly publish a book entitled “A glance to mexican positive law”, to be presented to Chinese readers in 2012, on the occasion of the 40th years anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relation between China and Mexico. This will be another important result of the cooperation between the two institutes.

The book, compiled by a group of Mexican legal experts, gives a detailed and skillful introduction, from many different perspectives, to the system of positive law of contemporary Mexico. It is an informative and practical academic work mainly targeted at readers in China. I believe that the publication of this book will further promote the legal exchange between China and Mexico, deepen the friendship between the law circles of the two countries, and enable various government departments, the judicial circle, the business circle, the civil society, as well as individual citizens in China to have a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the continuously developing legal system in Mexico and the legal culture behind it.

It is without any doubt that, in the past cooperation, the trust and friendship between the two institutes and the legal exchange between the two countries have been steadily increasing and deepening. I believe that, through our joint efforts, the CASS Law Institute and UNAM Institute of Legal Research, as national-level legal research institutes in their respective countries, will make even greater contribution to the cultural exchange and legal development in China and Mexico in the future.