

macao

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Quarterly

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President Hu Jintao

Macao stronger after a decade of challenges



Chui Sai On

At the helm of Macao's government

Wu Zhiliang

leading a think tank to rediscover
Macao's history

Macao invests in reservoirs
in mainland to ensure future
supply of water

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Chinese New Year

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Editor's note

The visit of President Hu Jintao in December 2009, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Macao Special Administrative Region, and the swearing-in of new Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On and his government are some of the topics for the first issue of this year.

The Macao magazine also describes the investments made by the government to guarantee enough water for Macao in the future and build a light train system that will start operations in 2014.

The future development of transport in the Pearl River Delta and upcoming projects in the neighbouring city of Zhuhai are also on the agenda.

The magazine covers future relations between Macao and the European Union and a new vision of the Institute of European Studies of Macao to expand its studies to include Africa, the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), urban planning, the environment and creative industries.

There are also articles on the rise of historian Wu Zhiliang as a leading "Macaologist"; Konstantin Bessmertny a Russian artist who has adopted Macao as his home; and the vision of Lu Jia, music director and principal conductor of the Macao Orchestra who sees Macao as the future cultural centre of Asia.

The mansion of Lou Kou is one of the best-known Chinese homes in Macao; it once belonged to the city's richest man and is now a world heritage site. A story of success and failure, the article describes the history of one of the city's wealthiest men who killed himself at the age of 59 because of financial problems.

Macao presented in Beijing a major exhibition of its first 10 years as an SAR. There is also a story on Macao's pavilion at the Shanghai 2010 Expo.

The edition closes with a story on the many festivals of Macao.



Happiness [Fu]

Confucius said, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow, I am happy."

Confucius realised that happiness means different things to different people, and that for most in his day it meant an existence untroubled by the hunger that was endemic to the life of a serf.

Indeed, the Chinese character for happiness, fu, is formed around the idea of a full stomach.

It combines "to fill" - made by joining a "mouth", and a cultivated "field" and "one" or "united" - with "heaven", the source of abundance.

From the book "The Spirit of the Chinese Character - Gifts from the Heart" by Barbara Aria with Russell Eng Gon



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President Hu Jintao on his arrival in Macao

Praises, advice and gifts from Beijing

President Hu Jintao visits Macao for inauguration of Chief Executive

By Christian Ritter

On December 19-20, President Hu Jintao visited Macao to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its return to China and inaugurate its new chief executive.

Fernando Chui Sai On took over the post, after Edmund Ho Hau Wah had completed two five-year terms, the maximum allowed under the Basic Law. Hu met Chui and members of his new government,

as well as leading civil servants, the PLA garrison stationed in Macao and a family of teachers. He inaugurated a state-of-the-art Science Centre designed by world-famous Chinese American architect I.M. Pei and announced the gift of two pandas to the SAR. It was Hu's first visit to Macao, since he came in 2004 to mark the fifth anniversary of its return to China.





President Hu swears in the new Macao Chief Executive

Five “lessons”

The most important moment came in the Macao Dome on December 20, when Hu swore in the new Chief Executive and his 10 most senior officials, at a ceremony attended by local and mainland officials and local community leaders. Then he made a speech looking back on Macao’s first decade as one of the nation’s two special administrative regions. He set out five “lessons” for Macao.

“First and foremost, it is important to have a full and correct understanding and implementation of the principle of ‘one country, two systems.’ The key is to build a solid political foundation for Macao’s long-term stability and prosperity by promoting unity under the banner of loving the motherland and Macao.

“Secondly, it is important to strictly abide by the Macao Basic Law, which reigns supreme in the legal system of the Macao SAR.

“Thirdly, it is important to focus on promoting development. Through the wisdom and efforts of all Macao people, we can devote more attention to the

all-round, coordinated and sustainable development of Macao, enhancing its resilience against all kinds of financial risks.

“Fourthly, it is important to safeguard social harmony and stability by all means possible ... and fifthly, it is necessary to nurture different types of talent to raise the competitiveness of Macao.”

He expressed his confidence that, building on past achievements, Macao will be able to go from strength to strength under the leadership of its new government under Chui.



Macao stronger after challenges

He paid tribute to the nation's late leader Deng Xiaoping, who launched the concept of "One country, Two systems," as well as former president Jiang Zemin who contributed to its successful implementation in Hong Kong and Macao.

"While Macao has faced a string of challenges during the past decade, the SAR has emerged from each challenge stronger and better, thanks to the steadfast support of the central government and the concerted efforts of Macao people. The cause of the "one country, two systems" concept is an important part of the rejuvenation of the nation.

The great motherland is always a strong buttress for the prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao. All the policies adopted by the central government related to Hong Kong and Macao will always adhere to the principles of benefiting the

long-term prosperity and stability of the two special administrative regions, the improvement of the livelihood of all their residents, as well as benefiting the common development of Hong Kong, Macao and the nation as a whole," he said.

Hu said it was imperative to safeguard the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by Macao and fully protect the "master status" of the Macao people. "It is also imperative to respect the central government's legal powers and firmly oppose any external forces trying to interfere in Macau's internal affairs."

Passage of state security law lauded

He praised Macao for enacting the Basic Law Article 23 state security law earlier in 2009, a move that he said fully reflected the strong sense of responsibility of the government, legislature and people of all circles in Macao to safeguard the



country's national security and interests.

"The move also provides a strong guarantee for Macao's long-term stability," Hu said.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam Kuen attended the ceremony as a guest. Unlike Macao, Hong Kong has not enacted its Article 23 state security law.

Job well done

The day before, at a meeting at the New Bamboo Mansion on Penha Hill, the central government's official guesthouse in Macao, Hu praised the contributions made by Edmund Ho.

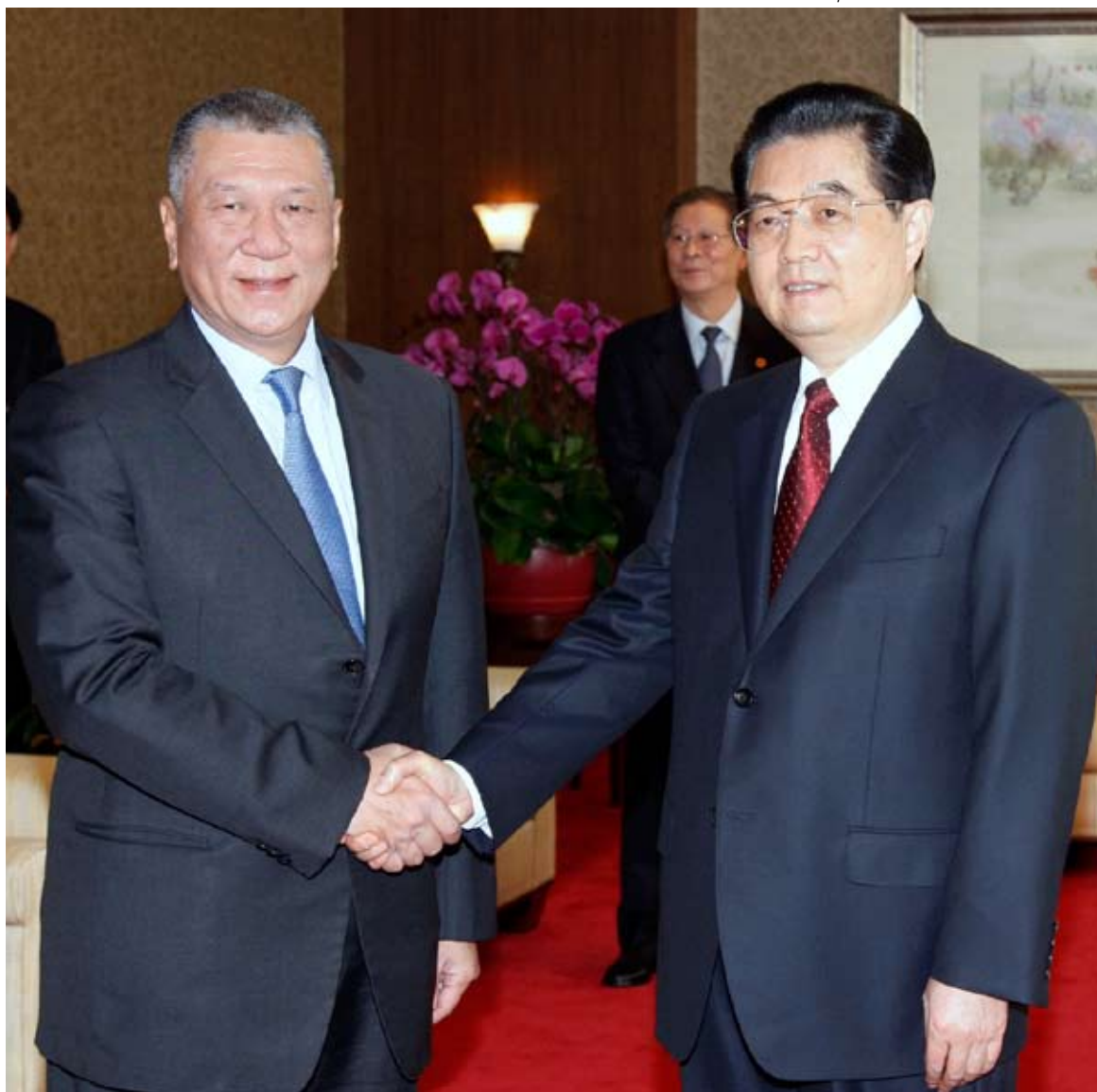
"You did much pioneering work in the successful

implementation of the 'One country, Two systems' [principle] in Macao. You have been the chief executive of Macao for 10 years. In the past decade, in your role as chief executive – you have been devoted to the post, worked diligently and in an enterprising way," the president told Ho.

He added that he hoped Ho would continue to pay attention to Macao's development and support the administration of his successor to make new contributions to the cause of 'One country, Two systems.'

Ho responded by saying that it was his honour to work for Macao and the nation. "The great motherland is the strong backup force for Macao's prosperity and stability," he said.

President Hu praises ex-Chief Executive Edmund Ho





Macao University rector Zhao Wei shows a model of the new campus on Hengqin island

In his speech at the inauguration ceremony for the Macao Science Centre, Hu said that the opening of the facility signalled a strengthening of science education in Macao. Hu went on a guided-tour of the centre, which features the model of the Shenzhou VII space craft and a model of Macao's future driverless light-rail system. He also met 47 students from six local schools.

Designed by I.M. Pei, the world-famous Chinese-American architect, the center includes exhibition space, a planetarium and convention facilities.

The president also visited an incineration plant for solid refuse in Taipa, to show his support for Macao's efforts to implement environmentally friendly policies. ■

Photos: Eric Tam and GCS





At the helm of government

Fernando Chui Sai On heads the new SAR administration on a platform of experience and continuity

By Pedro Dá Mesquita

The third government of the Special Administrative Region of Macao which took office on 20 December 2009 has two characteristics: one is experience, with most of its members having held top positions in the SAR for nearly a decade. The other is continuity, with the policies announced by new Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On emphasising the need to follow the course set by his predecessor Edmund Ho.

The executive body which will oversee Macao's destiny for the next five years is tight-knit, formed by a core group who know each other and are well aware of the pitfalls and challenges facing Macao. They are thoroughly acquainted with the main areas of government.

The accumulated experience of the SAR's top office-holders is the biggest asset of Chui and ensures that the Government Action Plan to be presented during the first quarter of 2010 will mark a continuum.

Indeed, the last six months in office of Edmund Ho – during which three significant events occurred in Macao's political life – anticipated what will occur in the SAR in the medium term.

There was a common theme in the election of the third Chief Executive and the Legislative Assembly elections which followed, culminating in the choice of the government headed by Fernando Chui Sai On; this was the concern to ensure a consistent approach to politics and government, vital to consolidate the priorities of the previous government - to guarantee economic stability, employment and an enhanced quality of life.

Making use of capital accumulated over a decade

The third SAR government aims to make good use of the capital accumulated since 20 December 1999 and will seek to deepen and improve the main policies implemented since then. It will be the second phase of the process; the population will feel the concrete benefits of the broad policies set out by Edmund Ho during his two consecutive terms.

This is what the outgoing chief executive said a few days before stepping down from the position he held for a decade marked by dynamic economic activity thanks to the liberalisation of the gaming



industry and by the need for the Macao government to faithfully follow the Basic Law: “the future government will certainly, with more astuteness and ability, be able to apply the Basic Law in its actions in order to contribute towards ensuring even better implementation” of the SAR’s mini-constitution.

This continuum of governance is a huge advantage for Chui’s administration in setting priorities and implementing policies; it will follow the overall plan long approved and put into practice.

Staying on course

The new government will stick to the course set several years ago and continue the policy of maintaining tax and fee exemptions and reductions adopted in recent years, in order to help citizens and companies deal with pressures and hardships that result from the international financial crisis. Among these are subsidised bus fares, the subsidy

for employees and the health voucher programme launched in 2009.

Chui’s government will also be responsible to implement policies previously announced, such as the Two-Tier Social Security System. This means that, from the first quarter of 2010, the government will transfer 3.3 billion patacas (US\$412 million) under the Central Provident Fund Scheme to all residents who meet the requirements.

The third SAR government starts off with a number of advantages that the first team did not enjoy - above all a wealth of experience and knowledge about the most important tasks and challenges ahead.

The legacy of the previous government is a Special Administrative Region of Macao in excellent financial health and considerable budget flexibility.

As announced by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Francis Tam Pak Yeun, who is keeping his post in the new administration, the accumulated

One of the first speeches of Chui Sai On as Macao’s Chief Executive



financial balance and the SAR Reserve Fund now total 100 billion patacas (US\$12.5 billion). This means a very solid financial base for the region and for the executive beginning his new term.

New government members well-known in Macao

Speaking of the changes in the government, the new Chief Executive has often said that the shift of office-holders to new posts and the arrival of new faces in the region's top executive body are normal events and that this process will in no way affect the work of the administration.

"The new team shares the same spirit of governance, the same determination to serve the country and Macao. In the future, this team will scrupulously adhere to the concept of serving the citizen," Fernando Chui Sai On said.

A glance at the composition of the third SAR government shows that familiar faces outnumber debutants.

Unchanged are Francis Tam Pak Yeun, in charge of economy and finance, including the important duty of supervising the gaming industry; Florinda Chan, in charge of administration and justice, Cheong Kuoc Va, security and Lao Si lo, transport and public works.

Among those moving to new duties are the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Cheong U, who was anti-corruption commissioner in the first

and second SAR governments, Anti-Corruption Commissioner Vasco Fong, who took up the new post only days after becoming a judge on the Appeals Court, and Audit Commissioner Ho Veng On, who was for ten years Edmund Ho's chief of staff.

Better transparency, Effective governance

Transparency is a priority for the new administration; this was clear from the ideas debated during the campaign for the Chief Executive election. To ensure an inclusive society, Chui has said at that time that the incoming government would establish a transparent government and make every effort to fight corruption and strengthen education in this area.

He said that the priorities of the new government were improving governance and higher transparency.

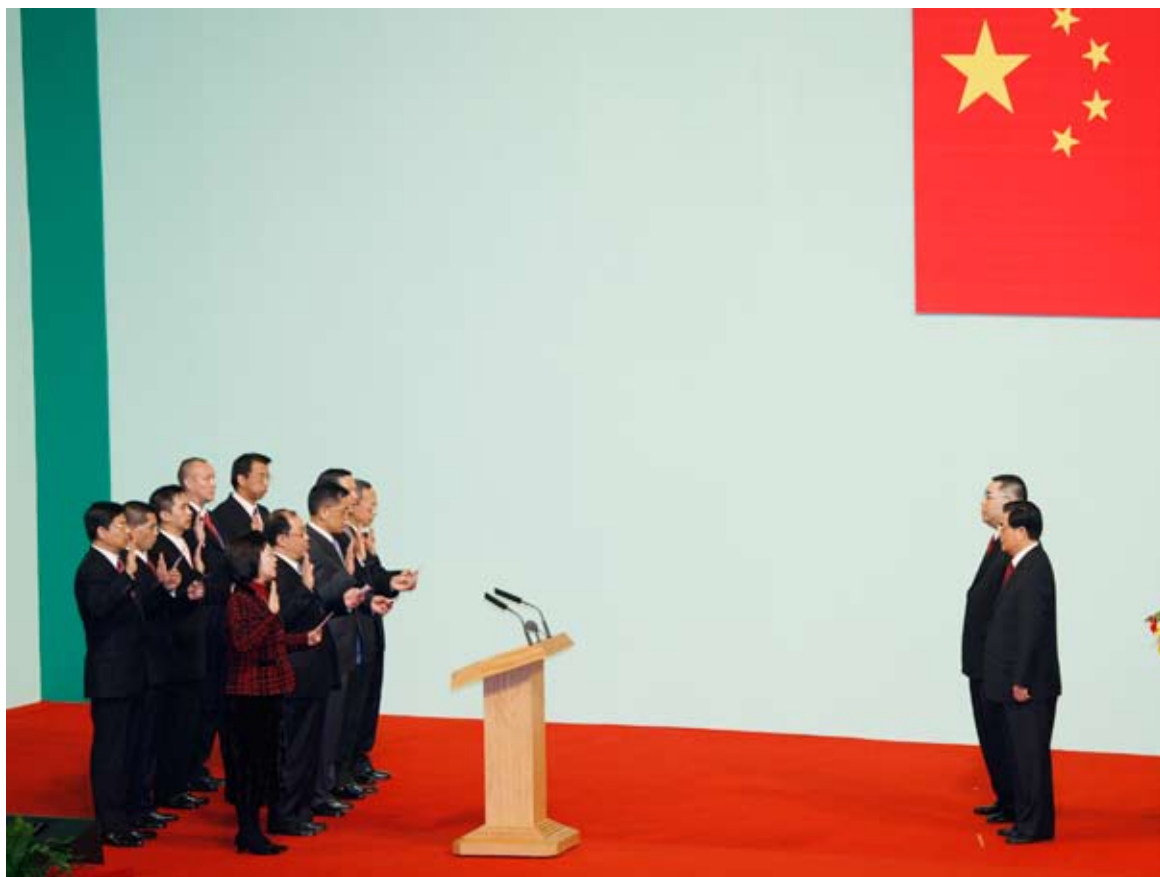
He said that, after taking office on 20 December, he and his team would begin work on a concept of social governance that emphasises the concerns of citizens, especially during preparation of the Government Action Plan it will submit to the Legislative Assembly next March.

He said that he and his government would in all circumstances follow the principle of "one country, two systems" and "Macao people governing Macao", continuing to uphold its high degree of autonomy and application of the SAR Basic Law.

He promised more cooperation with different

Chui Sai On with principal officials of his government





sectors of Macao society in working out measures to develop the economy and ensure social harmony.

"Based on the success of this ten-year course, we shall work to continue and make progress in innovation, to keep promises made during the election campaign and above all to complete the mission entrusted to us. The contributions and opinions received from civil society during the election campaign merit our attention and constitute the basis and reference for the measures the government will develop during its mandate," Chui Sai On said.

More dynamic administration

Fernando Chui Sai On is also promising a more dynamic administration. The new government has a programme of internal reforms ready for its first year, aimed at making the government process more efficient.

A consultative body will be established to study policy formulation at the highest level of government, promote follow-up of scientific decisions, study the

appropriateness of public service responsibilities and whether they should be reorganised and create a financial reserve system able to deal with future needs. The government will take measures to make the government function better and, to improve transparency, establish a system of spokespersons, to ensure a fast and efficient response from the government.

Chui has set out some of the detailed measures he wants to implement first.

The government's major priorities will be to ensure diversification of the economy, improve the health system and adjust it to meet the needs of the future, build a hospital on Taipa Island, make best use of educational resources and build public housing, road networks and infrastructure in a careful and well-planned way.

These policies aim to alleviate the impact of the world financial crisis on the SAR and to improve the quality of life of the population over the long term. ■

Photos: GCS/ The Macau Post Daily (Iong Tat Choi)

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Macao invests in reservoirs on mainland to ensure future supply of water

By Staff Reporter



Macao is investing heavily in reservoirs and other infrastructure in the mainland to ensure the future supply of clean drinking water for the city.

The Special Administrative Region (SAR) has lent 450 million yuan (US\$66 million) toward the construction of a major reservoir in the neighbouring city of Zhuhai, in exchange for a maximum of 40 per cent of its outflow. In 2006, the Macao Water Supply Company (Macao Water) spent 100 million yuan (US\$14.7 million) on a 24-km pipeline upriver

into the mainland to bring water to Macao. In November 2009, the SAR government signed an agreement with China's Ministry of Water Resources to provide 800 million yuan (US\$117 million) for the construction of a giant hydroelectric project in the southwest region of Guangxi.

Driving these investments is rising demand for water in Macao and an increase in salinity which has made its citizens more demanding of the quality of the water they drink.

With 531,000 people crowded into 29 square kilometres, Macao has few reserves; its reservoirs account for just two per cent of daily supply. The rest comes from the Modaomen river in Zhuhai [1]. With the rapid development of the economy, water consumption is going up. It reached around 68 million cubic metres in 2008, up from around 55 million in 2005 and 48 million in 2001.

"In 2009, we expect demand to remain the same as in 2008, because of the impact of the financial crisis," said Dr Fan Xiaojun, executive director of the Macao Water Supply Company, a public utility that is the sole supplier of water to the SAR. "In 2010 and 2011, we expect annual growth of consumption to be two-three per cent."

It is to meet such demand that the SAR government decided to take a stake in the Zhuyin reservoir in Zhuhai [2]; construction began in December 2008 and is due to be completed at the end of 2010, at a total cost of around one billion yuan, with a capacity of 43 million cubic metres.

The reservoir is being built in a rural area with no industry, surrounded by hills; the several hundred farmers who tilled its fields have resettled elsewhere.

Susana Wong Soi Man, director of the Macao Maritime Administration, said it was difficult for the government to invest directly. "We are providing a loan of 450 million yuan and are guaranteed 40 per cent of the water from the reservoir. The money will be used to pay for the water we buy."

It is the first such stake by the SAR government in a water facility in the mainland.

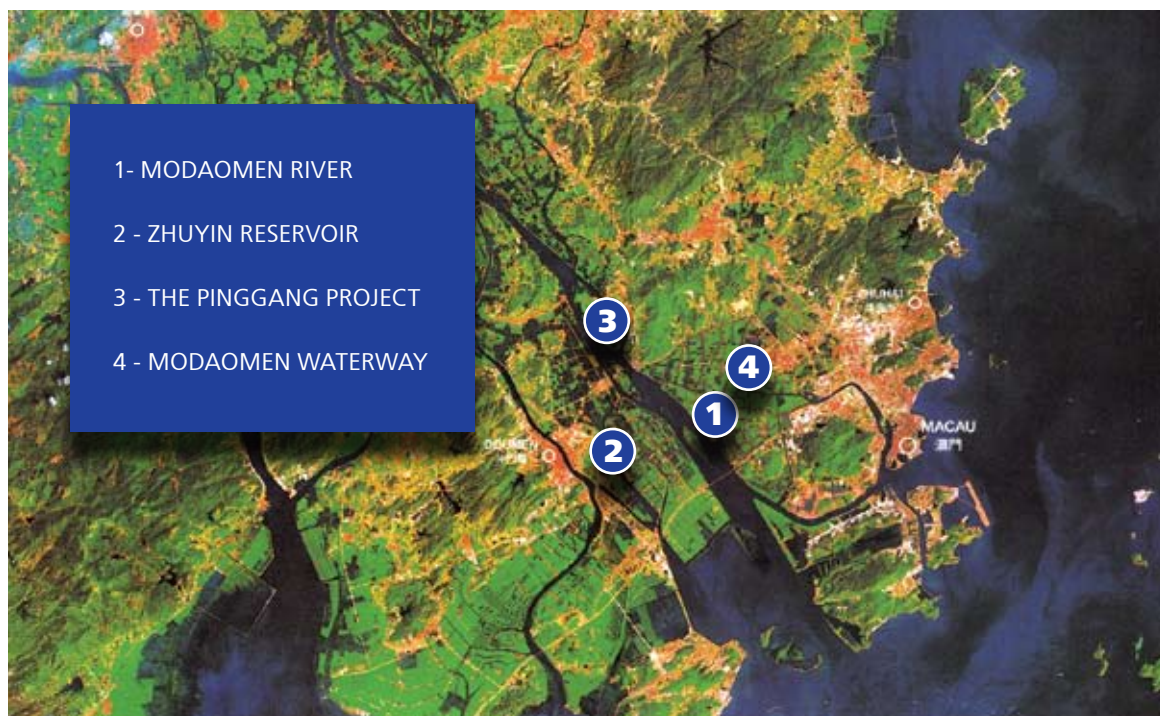
Wong's main job is to manage the port of Macao. She became involved in water after salinity became a serious issue in 2003. This was a result of several factors – including climate change, sea water washing further up the rivers and the overuse of water resources in neighbouring Guangdong province.

Water turns salty: panic buying

The public protested against the saltiness of tap water and had to add dilute it with bottled water to make it drinkable. There was panic buying of bottled water in 2005 and 2006.

The Macao Water turned for help to the government; it set up a working committee and appointed Wong the chairperson. Since the problem





originated in China, the committee looked to the mainland.

It went to Guangzhou and the headquarters of the Pearl River Water Resources Commission (PRWRC), an institution set up in 1979 by the Ministry of Water Resources in Beijing to regulate the use of water in the Pearl River which runs through Guangdong.

Over the last 30 years, Guangdong has grown faster than any other province in China, with enormous demand for water from industrial and domestic consumers and intense competition between the different cities along the river. Using its department-level authority, the PRWRC has the task of regulating the use of water and balancing the competing interests of these consumers.

In response to the request from Macao, the PRWRC instructed upstream dams and reservoirs in Guangxi Autonomous Region and Guizhou province in 2006 and 2007 to release water, to improve the quality of the supply received by Macao.

In March 2006, the SAR government and Guangdong province set up a joint water supply committee; Wong and her colleagues now deal with this committee and the PRWRC. It represents a further integration of Macao with the rest of China.

The issue of Macao's water supply even reached the desk of China's Cabinet, the State Council, which in April 2009 approved a plan called 'Ensuring the safety of the water supply of Macao and Zhuhai'.

To combat the increase in salinity caused by sea water intrusion in the Pearl River, the plan – drawn by the PRWRC – proposes short- and long-term solutions for the tens of millions of residents of the Pearl River basin.

The long-term solution, up to 2020, is construction of the Datengxia project on the upper reaches of the Pearl River in Guiping, Guangxi. This involves construction of a reservoir with capacity of three billion cubic metres; which will take nine years to build, at a cost of around 25 billion yuan (US\$3.7 billion). The project is waiting approval from the National Development & Reform Commission in Beijing.

Under the agreement with the Ministry of Water Resources signed on November 30, the SAR government will provide 800 million yuan (US\$117 million) toward relocation of residents and for soil and water conservation in the areas affected by the construction.

Lau Si lo, Secretary for Transport and Public Works of the Macao SAR Government, said at the signing ceremony that the Datengxia project was



the long-term solution for the salinity problem.

Wong said the SAR's contribution toward the project was a patriotic gesture, to express

its thanks for the help which the central and Guangdong governments have given in resolving the water issue.

Private - an advantage?

In Macao, the supply of water has always been managed by private companies. In the 1930s, clean water was only available to rich people. In the post-war period, the supply was unstable and its quality erratic.

As the economy grew, the former Portuguese administration decided that it needed a more reliable supplier. In 1985, it signed a 25-year contract with Macao Water, a joint venture of which the New World Group of Hong Kong and Suez Environment of France hold a 85 per cent stake and local investors 15 per cent. Under the contract, Macao Water proposes a rate, in line with its production costs, to the government, which has the final decision; it is obliged to make adequate investment in infrastructure and every five years present a master plan to the government. If it needs money, it borrows it at commercial rates from the banks and receives no government subsidy.

"Before 1985, people would ask if there was enough water," said Fan. "The supply of public services, including water, electricity and telephones, is a major issue for potential investors. Now, these services are taken for granted. Investors do not have to worry about them."

In 1999, the water price charged by Macao Water was 4.53 patacas per cubic metre. "To support the new government at a time of economic weakness, we cut to the price by three per cent to 4.39 patacas and have not increased it since," said Fan.

The Pinggang project: reduce salinity

Macao Water supported the Pinggang Project [3] with Zhuhai with over 100 million patacas in advance to finance the work. This was the laying of pipes along a stretch of 23.8 kilometres in 2006, to move upstream the intake of raw water and reduce salinity. It was an engineering challenge to lay the pipes at a depth of 26 metres, between the Modaomen waterway [4]; it was completed in October 2006.

Macao Water must finance its own operations. Each year it has made a profit of about 50 million patacas. "We need to make a profit but not a big one," said Fan. "We have to balance the needs of the shareholders, the public and our employees. The government has a plan for a cross-border industrial zone; we need to provide for this."

The 25-year contract expires in 2010 and the company is very optimistic about its being renewed. "There is no competitor. Water is a natural monopoly. It is not like telephones; you cannot have two sets of pipes in one building."

Macao Water was the first investment by Sino-French Holdings (Hong Kong) Limited in China. In the 1990s, its business model has been applied in the mainland. "We are a model public-private partnership which has been copied in many cities, including Pudong in Shanghai, Jiangbei in Chongqing, Sanya and Tanzhou. The aim is to combine the efficiency of a private firm with a public service," Fan said.



New 20-year Contract

On December 1, 2009, the government signed a new 20-year concession contract with Macao Water, which will take effect on July 8, 2010. The biggest difference between this one and the current contract is that the SAR government will purchase water on the mainland and then sell it to Macao Water. Currently, the company itself buys the water.

"The government will have more control," said Susana Wong. "If the cost of raw water in the mainland rises, as the government is the buyer of the raw water, the government will bear that cost and work out how much Macao Water will have to pay back to the government. This way, the cost of raw water will not be directly passed to the residents." She also said that the government was

studying new water tariffs, to be announced by the middle of 2010.

Saving Water

One aim of the government and Macao Water is to encourage consumers to save water. Domestic users are already efficient, consuming an average of around 160 litres a day, the same as Singapore, one of the most efficient users in Asia.

But the total average for Macao is around 300 litres a day, which means that industrial and commercial clients use more than individuals. The government has set up a committee that educates people on how to save water, with public campaigns and promotional material. ■

Photos: Carmo Correia, Eric Tam and GCS



Macao to build first rapid transit network

By José Miguel Encarnação

It will be the biggest construction project in Macao and will address the needs of residents and millions of tourists who annually visit its casinos and historic sites. Costing between 11 and 13.5 billion patacas (US\$1.38 and US\$1.69 billion), the project involves an overhaul of the road network, re-development of old neighbourhoods and improving the environment. It aims to relieve the worsening traffic congestion that has resulted from a rapid increase in tourists. It will bring mainland China closer.

Within four years, Macao will boast one of the world's most modern metro systems. From 2014, residents and tourists will be able to travel quickly, cheaply and comfortably from the Border Gate Checkpoint, the territory's main border crossing, to historic heritage sites and world-famous casinos where they can enjoy the unique mixture of Eastern and Western culture. The route will offer views of the river and different areas of the cities, old and new, with a wide variety of architecture. In the first phase, the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system will have 21 stations over a total length of 21 kilometres, from the Border Gate to Macao





International Airport.

Early estimates indicate about 8,000 riders in each direction during rush hour between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.; they will be transported on remote-controlled trains operated from a base in Taipa Island. The price tag for the first phase is estimated at 7.5 billion patacas.

The second phase will enable users to travel from Barra, near the Inner Harbour to the Border Gate stations over a 4.7-kilometre line served by seven stations. This phase will cost between 3.5 and 6 billion patacas, with the final amount depending on the choice of the route -- underground, elevated or both -- and the cost of the Inner Harbour urban renewal scheme.

Peter Lei, director of the Transportation Infrastructure Office



Rubber wheels and no driver

When the first line of the LRT begins operating, visitors will be able to travel quickly between points on the Macao Peninsula and Taipa Island. The first line will begin at Border Gate. The system will have two distinct features – trains will be driver-less and will move on rubber wheels – a technology successfully developed in other cities.

The ticket will cost four patacas for trips within Macao and Taipa and six patacas for trips between the peninsula and the island. Another option will be the purchase of a combination pass for rapid transit and bus services.

“The price of LRT tickets will be affordable for people, compared to the price of bus tickets. This is also because most metro systems are not for profit. The government’s intention is not to earn money, but to help people get around,” explains Peter Lei, director of the Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT).

After leaving Portas do Cerco station, trains on the first line will head for the Iao Hon and Areia Preta districts – the world’s most densely populated



residential area. The next stop will be between the Macao Reservoir and the ferry terminal, close by the Macao Grand Prix stands.

The fifth station will be located between Golden Lotus Square and the Fisherman's Wharf, at the beginning of the casino zone. The line then passes through the NAPE district and the end of Friendship Avenue, a large area marked by residential buildings, offices, hotels, casinos, gardens and other open-air leisure and cultural facilities.

Farther ahead is Nam Van Lakes station, where a 2.6-kilometre underground tunnel will cross the lakes to reach Sai Van Lake station before continuing on to Barra, the only underground station on the entire line.

The trip will continue on the lower deck of the Sai Van bridge to Taipa, with stops at the end of the bridge and the Macao Jockey Club, Macao Stadium, Our Lady of Hope Bay, COTAI Strip, COTAI Border, Macao Dome, the back of the City of Dreams complex, the sports complex of Macao University of Science and Technology, Macao International Airport and, finally, the Taipa Ferry Terminal.

When the LRT second phase is completed, travellers will also be able to savour the atmosphere of the Macao Peninsula's Inner Harbour district, the city's former commercial centre.

Trains leaving Barra station on this line will travel to Border Gate with stops at Manduco Beach, Ponte e Horta, Ponte 16, Patane Market, Red Market, Fai Chi Kei and Ilha Verde, before reaching the terminal.

"The LRT's second phase has two goals: to complete the loop around the Macao Peninsula and to facilitate transportation of people coming from mainland China and of residents of Fai Chi Kei and the Inner Harbour. In 2020, the metro should transport around 14,200 people during rush hour in each direction," says GIT consultant Michael Lam. The GIT is analysing studies and opinions on the route for the project's second phase. Their final choice is likely to be a mixture of underground and above-ground sections.

"This stage involves additional work such as flood prevention and renewal of old neighbourhoods. That's why we're working with other government departments to find solutions," Michael Lam explains.



First phase

21 stations (10 in Macao peninsula, 11 in Taipa)
21 kilometres
Start of construction – second half of 2010
Construction completed – 2014
Rush hour in 2014 – 8,000 users in each direction (estimated)
Total cost of project – 7.5 billion patacas (estimated)

Second phase

7 stations (all in Macao peninsula)
4.7 kilometres (estimated)
Start of construction – After 2014
Construction completed – To be determined
Rush hour – 6,200 users in each direction (estimated)
Total cost of project – Between 3.5 and 6 billion patacas (estimated)

The government of the People's Republic of China drew up the Pearl River Delta regional plan with the aim of linking the cities of Macao, Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Shenzhen and bringing them into closer contact with the rest of Guangdong province.

Construction of the Light Rapid Transit will help to link the transport networks of Macao and Guangdong. A number of connection points are planned between the LRT network and mainland China.

The Border Gate and COTAI Border stations will be the stations where LRT passengers will be able, in future, to connect to train services for the cities of Zhuhai and Guangzhou and from there to Beijing and the rest of China.

The station between the Macao Reservoir and the ferry terminal will likewise connect to the Hong Kong – Zhuhai - Macao bridge, whose construction officially began on 15 December 2009. There is also a plan for a pedestrian tunnel at Barra station leading to Zhuhai's Wanzai district.

Bus terminals will be located near the Border Gate, Barra, Jockey Club and COTAI Border stations so that travellers can easily access areas within the Macao Peninsula and Taipa Island. Close to the station there will also be taxi stands and parking areas for private vehicles.

Supporters argue that the LRT will help resolve many urban





and environmental problems; the improved public transport system and road network will help the circulation of people and make city planning easier.

Project born in 2002

The idea of the Light Rapid Transit project began to take shape in 2002, nearly three years after the Special Administrative Region was established, and coinciding with the liberalisation of the gaming industry. Casinos had previously been run as a monopoly of STDM (Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau), belonging to the magnate Stanley Ho.

Since then, the number of tourists has risen sharply, placing a heavy burden on the public transport system and increasing the number of private vehicles.

"Our statistical data indicate that traffic jams in Macao rose sharply after 2002, along with the number of citizen complaints," GIT director Peter Lei recalls.

The situation led the local government to study different solutions in order to improve traffic conditions. It finally opted for the LRT, a low-energy environment-friendly train system.

"Only taxis and buses currently provide public transport service. Hence the need for a third option to facilitate the access for residents and tourists to all sites in the MSAR," Peter Lei explains.

In 2002 the chief executive commissioned studies from Hong Kong's Mass Transit Railway (MTR) and Consulgal of Portugal, which later that year sent reports to Macao.

Due to the number of projects then under construction and uncertainties about the eventual road network on the Macao Peninsula and Taipa and Coloane islands, the LRT remained on the back burner until 2005, when planning work resumed.

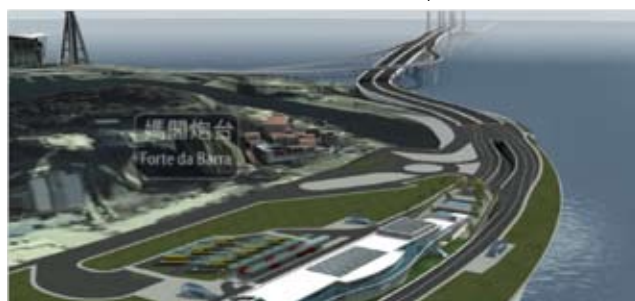
In 2006, after examining different proposals, the government decided to split the LRT project into two phases, considering factors such as urban density and vehicle and pedestrian flows in different parts of the city. It then consulted the general public and gathered hundreds of opinions.

The Secretariat for Transport and Public Works chose the final route in 2007 and the Transportation Infrastructure Office was established to oversee and co-ordinate construction.

The government commissioned more studies in 2008, including one on the environmental impact; in 2009, the planners settled on the choice of rolling stock.

The project's support offices are being built in COTAI. Work on the phase one line and stations should begin in the second half of 2010, following the choice of the manufacturer of the coaches and of the remote control system. ■

Photos : Carmo Correia, Eric Tam and GCS





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Europe expands business in Macao

By Staff Reporter

European business is expanding in Macao, with the establishment of the British and French chambers of commerce and a rapid increase in exports, to take advantage of the booming economy.

Ten years after Macao's return to China, the European presence there is stronger than ever and Macao's universities maintain a strong link with Europe.

"Macao has an important European legacy," said Maria Castillo Fernandez, the head of the office of the European Commission in Hong Kong and Macao. "You see this in its buildings and its atmosphere in a way you do not in Hong Kong.

"The University of Macao is a pillar of European studies, with students from EU countries and Portuguese-speaking countries and Chinese students who know about Europe. Europe has a meaning," she said.

While Hong Kong counts a larger number of European residents and businesses, Macao is a more powerful reminder of the centuries of European presence in China.

Castillo Fernandez, a Spaniard and career EU official who previously served in Seoul and as desk

officer for relations with Russia, has been head of the EC office for Hong Kong and Macao since September 2008.

Her job takes her to Macao three to four times a month, to meet business and government representatives as well as academics. She also goes to Macao to show her support for cultural activities, such as the Spanish National Ballet's performance in November.

Castillo Fernandez, head of the office of the European Commission in Hong Kong and Macao





Macao

Strong Ties

Ties between the Union and Macao remain strong. "The EU is Macao's third largest trading partner," reads a report of the European Commission that sets out policy with Macao from 2007-2013. "Macao retains close links with Portuguese culture and Portuguese remains one of the official languages of Macao. This contributes to the strength of the EU's relations with Macao and its attractiveness as a tourism, education and conference destination. China uses Macao to connect with the Portuguese-speaking countries."

The two sides have established a EU- Macao Joint Committee which has met once a year since 1993, in Brussels and Macao alternately. The 14th session was in Macao in February 2009.

The EU has funded co-operation projects with Macao worth around one million euros a year, including regulatory training, European studies, ways to improve Macao's service sector and legal co-operation.

Castillo Fernandez said that this year three students from Macao were taking part in the EU's Erasmus Mundus programme, which promotes exchanges between students of the EU and the Third World, against none from Hong Kong. HK students

prefer the U.S., Britain and other English-speaking countries.

In December 2008 the European Commission announced the start of a 36-month project entitled the European Union Business Information Programme, to provide up-to-date information on EU policies, regulations and institutions to a wide range of audiences, through seminars, conferences and other activities.

It awarded the contract for the programme to a consortium formed by the European Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute and the Institute of European Studies of Macau. The commission agreed to provide a grant of 750,000 euros for the programme.

Growth of European Business

The move of European businesses to Macao is a result of the booming economy of the last eight years. They are especially strong in luxury goods, food and restaurants, hotel management, transport equipment and construction. The Lisboa Hotel boasts a Michelin-star French restaurant, the Robuchon a Galera.

There are 400 British residents in Macao, enough

to establish a British Chamber of Commerce. French companies are strong in electricity, water, waste management, outdoor advertising and luxury goods and have also set up a Chamber of Commerce. There is a German-Macao Business Association, founded in 2004.

All this translates into good news for EU exports, which rose to 220 million euros in 2008 from 209 million and 164 million in 2007 and 2006 respectively. But Macao's exports have fallen, from 541 million euros in 2006 to 502 million and 231 million in the next two years. In the first nine months of 2009, its exports to the EU fell by 59.6 per cent and its imports rose by 5.4 per cent.

This is a result of the phasing out of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, which gave a quota to Macao's clothing exports to EU. The agreement expired on January 1, 2005 after a 10-year transition period. Since then, trade in textile and clothing products is no longer subject to quotas but has been governed by the general rules of the World Trade Organization. Macao's manufacturers have lost their market share to cheaper producers in mainland China and other countries.

Safer Toys

One recent area of concern is toys. In the autumn of 2009, the European Commission introduced a new Toys Safety Directive, which calls for tougher

standards for the toys used by the 80 million children under 14 in the EU. Annual sales of toys are around 14 billion euros, of which 80 per cent are imported, - over 97 per cent from Asia. China is by far the largest manufacturer. "Industry is eager to know more (about the rules)," she said.

The EU office in Hong Kong and Macao invited experts from Brussels to explain to toy manufacturers in Hong Kong and Macao new rules for the safety of their products.

Despite this boom in business, the number of EU residents in Macao remains small, except for Portuguese who number more than 150,000, most of them ethnic Chinese. Portugal issued only one kind of passport to its citizens in Macao, unlike Britain, which issued passports to citizens in Hong Kong that did not confer the right of residence in the U.K.

In the field of gambling, EU citizens are not big players. Castillo Fernandez said that EU visitors had not been a major factor in the boom in gambling in Macao over the last eight years. "The number of EU tourists has remained steady. The growth has been driven by Asians, especially Chinese." She said that one way for Macao to attract more EU visitors would be to restore its beautiful buildings and cultural heritage and provide more artistic events.

She said that it was easy for EU citizens to open businesses, shops and restaurants in Macao.

EU headquarters in Brussels



Improved Co-operation

In its policy document for 2007-2013, the European Commission sets out several areas for improved co-operation – trade and customs, finance, people-to-people links, including academia, transport, environment and health safety.

“We push Macao to be more open in taxation issues and exchange of information,” said Castillo Fernandez. “Macao has decided to adopt the OECD standard on taxation and drafted a law on this.” The government announced earlier this year that it would improve existing legislation related to money-laundering, in line with what has happened since 2005, when it adopted procedures established by the OECD. “Macao can develop agreements with EU states to avoid double taxation,” she said.

Protection of intellectual property rights is another important issue for the EU. China is the world’s leading source of counterfeit products, including footwear, textiles and cultural products. The EU arranges two seminars a year, one in Macao and one in Hong Kong, on the issue. “We like to have Chinese participation and make them more aware,” she said.

“We want to build on the framework of the Customs Co-operation Agreement to strengthen

action against copyright infringement,” says the 2007-2013 policy document. “We want to combat transnational smuggling of counterfeit cigarettes by sharing information and intelligence and working toward a more secure global shipping system by electronically scrutinising containers, without slowing the flow of international commerce.

“The current legal co-operation and training project in Macao is a good example and should be built upon: international cross-border legal issues could form an interesting area for co-operation on the rule of law, good governance, human rights issues, civil law and commercial law,” it says.

The EU-Macao Legal Co-operation Programme began in 2001 and has provided training, workshops and seminars to develop the SAR’s legal system and to promote its rule of law.

“EU visibility should be enhanced in Hong Kong and Macao,” the policy paper says. “This should be done mainly through practical actions, including the possibility of setting up a ‘Europe Centre’ or ‘Europe House’.” But Castillo Fernandez said there was currently no plan to build such a house in Macao.

The paper also calls for better co-operation with Macao on the environment, including air and water pollution and industrial emissions. ■

Photos: Carmo Correia



Studying Europe, understand the world

By José Miguel Encarnação



The Institute of European Studies of Macao was founded in 1995 with the aim of studying the construction of the European Union and relations between Europe and Asia, with China as a

constant theme. More recently, it has expanded its scope of study to include Africa, the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), urban planning, the environment and creative industries.



The Institute of European Studies of Macao (IEEM) was founded on 23 October 1995, three years after Macao and the European Union (EU) signed an economic co-operation agreement.

"The last Portuguese government of Macao decided to forge a close relationship with the European Union, with a view to strengthening historic ties between Macao and Portugal and also to mark the difference with respect to Hong Kong, which always enjoyed special relations with the United States," says IEEM President José Luís Sales Marques.

The IEEM has the status of a private entity devoted to the public interest. Its partners are the government of the Special Administrative Region of Macao, the University of Macau, the Macao Polytechnic Institute, the Macao Foundation, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute and the Macao Monetary Authority.

As a vehicle for academic and cultural relations between Macao and the EU, the IEEM introduced in 1997 a Masters in European Studies that focuses on relations between the European Union, Asia and the People's Republic of China.

According to Sales Marques, "what makes our

Masters in European Studies different to others taught in Asia – in Hong Kong, for example – is that it centres more on issues of European integration and institutional development than culture. We examine treaties and the role of European institutions from the legal, economic and social standpoint, without ignoring the Union's external policy".

Besides the Masters in European Studies, the IEEM has organised summer courses on international trade, with participation by teachers of the International Law Academy of the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. These are individual training courses that cover issues linked to international trade and the functioning of the World Trade Organization.

In recent years, the Institute has also held seminars on intellectual property issues attended by various experts; this subject has been on the political agenda of meetings between the European Union, China and the United States.

The IEEM, together with the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute and the European Chamber of Commerce of Hong Kong, is an active player in the European Union Business Information Programme (EUBIP).

"The main goal of this programme is to attract

more companies from the European Union to Macao and Hong Kong, to help them contact local companies and to provide information about business opportunities in the European market. Our Institute is also a bridge between Macao and Europe,” Sales Marques explains.

At the last Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (MIF), the EUBIP gathered European companies on the same stand; it was also present at the 2009 Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum & Exhibition.

Five years ago, the IEEM and the Milan Polytechnic began a co-operation project called Architecture, Culture and Environment (ACE), which seeks solutions for the sustainable development of cities.

To that end, three conferences have been held – two in Macao and one in Varenna, Italy. A fourth conference is scheduled for this year in Shanghai, together with Tongji University.

For Macao, a conference is planned on urn renewal, with the participation of departments of the SAR government.

“The ACE project counts the involvement of academics, engineers and architects. It mainly focuses on urban planning and energy management, two key areas in the development of cities,” Sales Marques notes.

Also, under the IEEM aegis, a conference on dialogue between Asia and Europe is scheduled for the end of this year; it aims to gather young academics in Macao.



In the last three years, the Institute joined the Network of European Studies Centres in Asia (NESCA), a project involving nine academic institutions in Asia and Europe which seeks to encourage the interest of young academics in relations between the European Union and Asia. With this year's conference, the IEEM aims to ensure continuation of the work previously developed under the NESCA project.

Regional integration in the study centre

The successful creation of the European Union serves as a model for regional integration and inter-governmental co-operation for other parts of the world.

The Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese speaking Countries (China-PLP Forum) is based in Macao. The government of the People's Republic of China

is committed to strengthening regional cooperation between Macao, Hong Kong, Zhuhai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou. And the BRIC countries have recorded economic growth rates far above the global average.

"As regional integration is the focal point of our studies and research, the China-PLP Forum, the Pearl River region plan, BRIC and other political and economic blocs now being formed are examples that must be studied from the academic standpoint," Sales Marques says.

To debate the concept of regional integration, the Institute of European Studies of Macau intends to hold a number of conferences to encourage discussion of ideas on the subject.

For Sales Marques, "European companies nowadays consider Macao, Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Shenzhen from a regional perspective. Measures such as the CEPA (Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement) dictate entrepreneurs' decisions



Creative Macao co-ordinator Lucia Lemos

when the time comes to locate their companies.

Only the free movement of goods, merchandise, people and capital, along with the building of road infrastructure, enables full regional integration of markets."

Room for Culture

In the late 1990s, the Institute of European Studies of Macao taught a course on Arts Management and trained a number of professionals currently active in cultural institutions in Portugal.

The IEEM subsequently organised a course on Cultural Tourism, which drew many students from mainland China, including Jinjiang and Xian.

"Macao is also growing in the cultural area. There was a need to train people who can manage cultural spaces and promote cultural tourism. As Macao is on the UNESCO heritage list and is a destination increasingly in demand, it is important to know how to balance tourism with heritage preservation. Our courses were inspired by the European experience, with a strong Macanese and Chinese influence," Sales Marques says.

The IEEM has a full-time staff of 19. The teaching staff consists entirely of guest professors.

Creative Macau Centre for Creative Industries

Talent hub

It was 2003 and liberalisation of the gaming sector opened new prospects for engineers, architects and designers. Realising that local talent existed, the Institute of European Studies of Macao founded the Creative Macau– Centre for Creative Industries.

The Creative Macao coordinator, Lúcia Lemos, recalls the early period: "The creative industry practically stagnated with the handover. As the Institute of European Studies of Macao had already trained cultural managers, the directors decided to open Creative Macao in August 2003. We were the pioneers in this area."

The first year saw the statutes drafted and contacts made with associations and local creators.

The logo was also designed and the website creativemacau.org.mo set up.

"The Centre now counts more than 500 participants, all residing in Macao, from Chinese, Portuguese, Filipino and Russian ethnic backgrounds, among others. Anyone can join, so long as they are "creative and dynamic – there's neither sign up fee, nor any dues," Lúcia Lemos explains.

The goals of this project include publicising the image of Macao creators abroad, especially in sector-related fairs. According to the coordinator, "many people are surprised by the product our creators present – there have been a number of success stories."

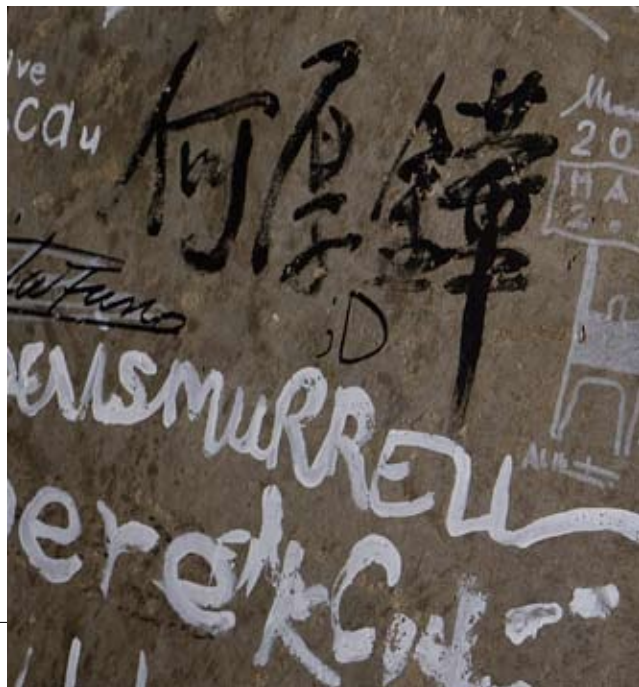
The 2010 agenda of Creative Macao includes holding workshops and exhibitions, attending fairs locally and abroad, organising special projects and attracting new companies and members of the public.

In 2009 the Creative Centre was represented at the Oporto International Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Fair, the Macao International Trade & Investment Fair, Hong Kong Business of Design Week and Lisbon's ExperimentaDesign.

This year trips are planned to the 10th London Asia Expo and to the Amsterdam ExperimentaDesign.

The creative industries cover 12 major areas, including visual arts, design, architecture, cinema, fashion and production of video games. ■

Photos: Carmo Correia





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macauhub is a free Macau-based news service in Chinese, Portuguese and English providing economic, trade and investment information about southern China's Pearl River delta and the world's eight Portuguese-speaking nations to help governments, private entities, businesspeople, researchers and others better understand the development and business potential in the respective countries and regions.

macauhub comprises a team of professionals in Asia, South America, Europe and Africa who produce information in the three languages about southern China, including the nation's economic powerhouse of Guangdong, the special administrative regions of Macau and Hong Kong, as well as the Portuguese-speaking countries of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, and East Timor.

macauhub is the Macau Special Administrative Region Government's dedicated Internet site to promote Macau's role as a platform for the development of ever closer economic and trade ties between the People's Republic of China (PRC) – comprising mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan – and the Portuguese-speaking world.

macauhub is part of the **macaulink** media group that also produces the English-language Macao magazine and English and Chinese-language MacauNews website.

macauhub logged some one million website visitors in 2008.

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The western Pearl River Delta: better access for Macao and challenges

By Thomas Chan (*)



Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong

The western part of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) has long lagged behind the eastern part, led by Shenzhen and Dongguan, despite the special economic zone of Zhuhai and its proximity to Macao, the second Special Administrative Region of China. This is in part because Macao has been no match for Hong Kong, first as an industrial economy and then a service economy, and has been unable to play the same role as a growth engine for the

development of the mainland cities bordering it. It is also because Zhuhai has not grown at the same pace or to the same scale as the special economic zone of Shenzhen, although both have shared the same special policies given by the central government. But the primary factor that facilitated the relocation of industries from Hong Kong to Shenzhen and beyond in the PRD has been the presence of the advanced transport and logistics systems of Hong Kong and the

easy access to services in Hong Kong. Accessibility to Hong Kong, the transport and logistics services of Hong Kong and industrial relocation to the eastern part of the PRD are three interlocking and mutually reinforcing factors that explain the fast development of Shenzhen and Dongguan. On the other hand, the under-development of transport and logistics services in Macao and inadequate accessibility to Macao may explain the poor economic integration of the western part of the PRD and Macao, resulting in the lack of such mutually reinforcing factors and the lack of economic impact of the international connections of Macao on the area.

Over the past 30 years, besides the Guangzhou-Kowloon Railway in operation since the early 20th century, highways have been built across the boundary between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, extending to Dongguan and beyond. The highway network has added hinterland for the transport and logistics industries in Hong Kong, which has in turn created one of the largest and most modern container terminals in the world, based on the ever-rising demand from this expanding hinterland.

Guangzhou as new leader

But, in the new century, Guangzhou has taken over the leadership of the PRD and changed the geography of the region. It has expanded its boundaries and recently incorporated Foshan, a city which has also been growing rapidly. Together, they form a large metropolis that matches the economic size of Hong Kong; they have a greater dynamism for growth that could easily enable the combined city to surpass Hong Kong in the near future. The Guangdong provincial government and Guangzhou city government have embarked on ambitious investments in high-speed railways for the city and the PRD. Although there is no direct conflict between highways and railways, with the PRD having built an extensive network of highways over the past three decades, the impact on economic, social and cultural factors and, in particular, on a more integrated and equitable regional and local development is very different. Railways are high-speed and can carry large numbers of people and goods at lower prices than highways: they are also more carbon-





Diversifying away from exports

For the Guangzhou city government and Guangdong provincial government, the balanced development of the PRD will enhance the central metropolitan role and functions of Guangzhou and eliminate inter-locality disparities in development. This will mean strengthening transport linkages not just between the more developed cities, towns and areas of the eastern part of the PRD. In addition, the coverage and intensity of the network will include less developed areas, including the western part of the province, such as Zhuhai, Zhongshan and Jiangmen, and extending to areas outside the PRD.

The global financial crisis has shown that excess reliance on export-oriented and foreign investment-dominated economies of the eastern part of the PRD exposes the regional economy too much to the vicissitudes of the world market. To sustain growth and diversify risk, the region needs to balance the importance of the domestic and external markets in its development. In addition, to meet the challenges of increasing competition in the two markets, the region must enhance further the advantages of economies of agglomeration, scale and scope and the capacity for local innovation that can only come from improving social, cultural and human resources. This can only be achieved by integrating economies and communities of the entire PRD into an unbeatable network in terms of scale and diversity. A dense regional network of high-speed railways is the economic and social foundation for such a strategy.

efficient. As a result, they will serve as the best and most effective mode of transport to integrate the PRD. They will be able to transform the cluster of cities and towns of different sizes in the region into a larger functional urban region bound together by a dense network of mass transit railways. The Tokyo metropolitan region and Greater Paris are good examples of the role of high-speed railways in creating an effective and fast-moving metropolis. The same may happen in the PRD region. The inter-city railway plan of the Guangdong provincial government for the PRD explicitly cited the example of Greater Paris as a target for investments up to 2030 in the region.





Dense high-speed rail network

In late 2009, the central government approved the inter-city railway plan of the PRD. Of the 23 lines, seven will be in the western part of the region,

totaling 711 km by 2030, or 37.6% of the total mileage under construction and planning.

Table 1 is the list of intercity express railways approved; some are already under construction.

Table 1

Seven intercity express railway lines in the western part of the PRD region (2010-2030)

| <i>Intercity express lines (completion date)</i> | <i>Length in km.</i> |
|--|----------------------|
| Guangzhou – Zhuhai Intercity (2010) | 142 |
| Zhongshan – Nansha – Humen Intercity (before 2020) | 54 |
| Guangzhou – Foshan – Jiangmen – Zhuhai Intercity (before 2020) | 172 |
| Zhuhai-Doushan Intercity | 116 |
| Jiangmen – Kaiping – Enping (Taishan) Intercity (before 2020) | 152 |
| Shenzhen – Zhuhai Intercity | 40 |
| Zhuhai City-centre – Zhuhai Airport (before 2020) | 35 |
| Tanzhou of the Guangzhou – Foshan – Zhuhai Intercity Extension – – Wanzai of the Guangzhou – Zhuhai Intercity Extension | 11 |
| Meihuayuan of Guangzhou – Foshan – Zhuhai Intercity – – Jianshan of the Nanwan Link | 5 |
| Jiangli Road of the Jiangmen – Enping Intercity – Lidong of the Guangzhou – Foshan Intercity | 6 |

According to the current plan, the first intercity express railway in the western PRD will be the Guangzhou-Zhuhai line; four more will be completed before 2020, two of them starting in Zhuhai. The focus on Zhuhai confirms the spatial development strategy of the railway network plan, which takes Zhuhai as the main city in the western part of the PRD, on the same level as Shenzhen for the eastern part. Given the progress of construction and planning, it is likely that the four lines will be put into operation around 2015. By that time, Zhuhai and Zhongshan will be fully integrated with the greater metropolitan region of Guangzhou/Foshan, and through Jiangmen, the two cities will extend their hinterland westward along the coast.



High-speed trains like a metro

At the same time, Macao is building a light rail, which it is expected to be completed by 2014. By 2010, when the Guangzhou – Zhuhai Intercity express will be in operation, Macao will be linked to the Guangzhou/Foshan metropolis through the terminal at its northern border with Zhuhai and travelers will be able to reach Guangzhou within one hour. The intercity railway will run like a metro with great frequency. Macao and Zhuhai will then come within the orbit of Guangzhou/Foshan, sharing its services and public facilities and taking part in the rapid growth of business and consumption of the joint metropolis. Macao will thus end its centuries-old marginalisation from the central urban area of the PRD. As the Zhuhai terminal of the inter-city express railway will be at the border of Macao and Macao is not big, it will be very convenient for people to travel to Guangzhou/Foshan and back via the terminal. The route will start in 2010, just several months from now.

The Guangzhou – Zhuhai Intercity express train will run at a lower speed (below 200 km/hr) than the Guangzhou – Shenzhen – Hong Kong high-speed train (350 km/hr in the mainland section



and 200 km/hr in the Hong Kong section). For the latter, however, the Guangzhou – Shenzhen section is expected to come into operation in 2012, while the Hong Kong section will come even later in 2016. The distance from the Hong Kong border to the Futian station in Shenzhen is considerable and not convenient, linked only by metro. It will take more than 15 minutes from either Lowu or Lok Ma Chau to Futian, and even longer from within Hong Kong; from Central or southern Kowloon, it will take one hour. In other words, in 2010, Macao and Zhuhai will have a better access to Guangzhou/Foshan than Hong Kong. Even in 2012, the advantage in access over Hong Kong will still be maintained by Macao.

Macao gets closer to Guangzhou

This advantage of accessibility, to and from Guangzhou/Foshan, should give Macao a better chance to pursue its programme of industrial diversification, which is in fact the upgrading of its service industries, in cooperation with the larger and more dynamic economy of the metropolis. It will be able to attract both demand for its consumption - probably for services other than gambling - and

talent to improve its retail trade and business services. However, the increased accessibility will also mean more intensive competition for the city's services because of the ease in travelling. The Macao government and industries will be under pressure to upgrade and improve the competitiveness of local services to attract demand and talents. Given the strong fiscal position of the government and its traditional advantage of internationalism, in particular connections with Europe and the Portuguese-speaking world, it should be able to develop its niche in services – in European dining and wines, fashionable goods from Europe and as a gateway for mainland Chinese businesses to approach European and Portuguese-speaking countries. There is no direct competition between Macao and Zhuhai; the latter is committed to aero industry and resort-style tourism and holiday housing, unlike Shenzhen, which is competing with Hong Kong in a full range of production and consumer services. As Macao is small and the success of its gaming industry has generated too much wealth and incoming tourists, it will be difficult to control costs. It may continue to use Zhuhai as its suburb, probably as Monaco uses the land and



labour of neighbouring areas in Italy and France. It needs to steadily move to higher value-added services to maintain its external competitiveness vis-à-vis Guangzhou/Foshan, even in niche areas of services.

This increased accessibility over the next few years will both help it to upgrade and also put pressure on it. But, while Hong Kong will achieve better accessibility through the Guangzhou – Shenzhen – Hong Kong high-speed railway in 2016 that will link it to the high-speed rail network of China, the cooperation/competition between Hong Kong and Guangzhou/Foshan will have a detrimental impact on Macao, if it is only partially successful in upgrading its services. ■

Photos: Eric Tam

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The changing face of Zhuhai

New bridge and railways are going to transform Zhuhai

By Staff Reporter

Visitors to this seaside resort find one of the most pleasant cities in China – spacious and well-kept parks, tree-lined avenues, no traffic jams and an air quality that is the envy of other cities in the Pearl River Delta.

When they return in seven years' time, they will find a city transformed. An intercity expressway to Guangzhou will be completed in 2010, a conventional line to Guangzhou for freight and passengers in 2011 and a bridge to Hong Kong in 2016.

The city, whose current population is 1.4 million, will become accessible within an hour to a

population of over 25 million people.

Another transformation is the introduction of heavy industry for the first time – shipbuilding, petrochemicals, aircraft assembly and ocean equipment manufacture – and the building of a central business district at a cost of 30 billion yuan. The city government wants to widen its economic and revenue base from tourism, education, consumer appliances and high-technology products; it was embarrassed by the lowest GDP growth of any major city in the Pearl River Delta during the last 12 months, because of the global financial crisis and

Work in Zhuhai on the intercity expressway to Guangzhou



its impact on the city's exports.

In the first half of 2009, the city's GDP grew by 7.1 per cent, less than half the 16.8 per cent of that of Foshan, the fastest-growing city in Guangdong. In the 2004-2007 period, the city's GDP grew by 14.2 per cent, 13.4 per cent, 16.4 per cent and 16.7 per cent respectively. Currently, its main industries are electronics and information, domestic electrical appliances, petrochemicals, electric power, biotechnology and precision machinery.

In March, the city announced plans for spending of an astonishing 317 billion yuan on these ambitious projects.

Think Big

The industrial projects are contained in a document published by the city government in

March 2009, which outlines spending for 2009 and 2010. It lists 67 projects, with a total investment of 316.9 billion yuan.

The largest item is 99 billion on seven projects to upgrade the border post with Macao: next is 56.7 billion on seven projects in petrochemicals, shipbuilding and ocean equipment manufacturing: 50.5 billion on six projects in commerce, leisure and tourism: 40.6 billion on 13 projects in the city's Gaolan port, 12 billion on five projects in aviation and high technology and 11 billion on seven urban infrastructure projects.

Another big-ticket item is an investment of 36 billion yuan in a Central Business District (CBD) on 5.77 square kilometres in the Wanzai district facing the northern shore of Hengqin island. It will include an international exhibition centre, two five-star hotels, the headquarters of a Chinese aviation firm





and Grade A office space.

The big transport items, which are not being funded by the city government, are a 144-km light rail from Guangzhou, due for completion in 2010 at a cost of 18.2 billion yuan. It will be extended a further 35 km via Hengqin island to Zhuhai airport and is due for completion in 2015.

The 187-km conventional railway will run from Guangzhou to Gaolan port and is due for completion in 2011. Its main purpose is to carry freight to and

from the port, which is building two new 50,000-tonne container piers.

Work on the bridge, from Hong Kong to Macao and Zhuhai, started in 2009 and be completed in 2016, at an estimated cost of 72.7 billion yuan.

These transport links will transform Zhuhai, which had a GDP in 2008 of 99.2 billion yuan, ranking eighth among the nine cities of the Pearl River delta.

Work on the bridge linking Hong Kong, Macao and Zhuhai





The greatest beneficiary of this flood of people will be the property sector. Zhuhai is heavily overbuilt, with hundreds of high-rise apartments and villas empty or half-empty. They are aimed at the high end of the market, out of reach of the vast majority of Zhuhai residents.

This improved access to Zhuhai will make it possible for people to live in the city and commute to Macao, cities on the southern side of the Pearl River delta and even Hong Kong.

Many Macao people have bought properties in Zhuhai for a fraction of the price at home: most use them for leisure rather than their principal residence. The border post between the two is closed between 2400 and 0730 and immigration checks take time.

The rail links will make it possible for people to live in Zhuhai and work in Zhongshan, Jiangmen and other cities on the railway line. The journey to Hong Kong, of about 30

minutes, is probably too long, since the bridge arrives close to the city's airport; that means a further 25 minutes to the Central business district and even more to Kowloon and the New Territories.

But it would be possible for those who work part-time in Hong Kong and retired people who want a larger, more spacious home and easy access to their friends and family in Hong Kong.



Education hub

One key sector of the Zhuhai economy is education. Since 1999, it has attracted a dozen universities and technical schools to open campuses in the city. It has a total student population of 100,000, second only in Guangdong to the provincial capital, Guangzhou.

One of the campuses, the Sun Yat-sen University, hosts a global training centre for the Shangri-La Hotel chain, with certificate and training programmes for its staff at all levels. Zhuhai has achieved this by offering the universities cheap or free land and tax benefits.

It has attracted some of the best-known universities in China, including Beijing Normal University, Beijing Institute of Technology, Jilin University and Jinan University. Beijing Normal has a joint venture in Zhuhai called United International College with Baptist University of Hong Kong, which offers four-year courses all in English.

Students from Sun Yat-sen University, which is based in Guangzhou, do their first two years in Zhuhai and the final two years in Guangzhou.

In September last year, the city last year attracted its first non-mainland university. The Macao government is to spend 1.2 billion patacas to lease 1.1 square kilometres of land on Hengqin island, to build a new and larger campus on a greenfield site for the University of Macao. It has a lease for 40 years until 2049, the 50th anniversary of its return to China. The city would like to attract other non-mainland universities.

"The future of Zhuhai is education," said Gao Zhidong, chairman of the Dantin Group, one of China's biggest property management companies. "It has ideal conditions for this." In partnership with the Higher Education Press, China's biggest publisher of education books, Gao wants to turn a site of 134 hectares in the university district of Tangjiawan into a 'Cambridge Town'.

His vision is of 30-50 schools, with up to 1,000 students each, offering courses in English, Putonghua, A-level subjects, short-term study and technical subjects. He is especially targeting Chinese students who are preparing to go to foreign schools and universities and would complete one- to two-year courses there.





He also wants to build an 18-hole golf course, Asia-Pacific golf training school and a school teaching domestic management, to provide maids, cooks and butlers to the new class of super-rich that is expanding faster in China than anywhere else in the world. He is looking for outside investors for the project.

A “new” island

An important part of the city’s future is Hengqin island, which has just 4,000 people living on 106 square kilometres of land, of which 53 square kilometres can be developed.

In September, the city government announced plans to increase its population to 120,000 in 2015 and 280,000 in 2020, with an annual per capita GDP of 120,000 yuan and 200,000 yuan respectively. The per capita GDP of the island’s residents last year was less than US\$ 8,000. The plan includes a nature reserve of 57.9 square kilometres in which no building will be allowed.

The plan includes the new Macau University campus; an “ocean resort” with an investment of 10 billion yuan that aims to attract 10 million visitors a year; golf courses and other resort facilities; space for more schools and universities; an international exhibition area; a service area; a “cultural creativity area”; and a high-technology zone.

This follows a decision by the State Council (the Chinese cabinet) on August 14 to turn Hengqin into ‘a national level new area’, the third in China post-1978 after Pudong in Shanghai and Binhai in Tianjin.

The aim is to turn it into an environmentally friendly low-carbon area, with no more than 26.3 per cent of the area being developed. By 2020, the service sector will account for 75 per cent of the island’s economy and high-tech products at least 80 per cent of its industrial output.



The island aims to develop one of Zhuhai’s core industries, tourism. It attracts more than 7.5 million visitors a year, of whom 70 per cent are mainlanders. Many stay in the city overnight and spend the daytime gambling in Macao. Zhuhai wants them to stay longer and spend more in the city. Its most famous tourist attraction is the New Yuan Ming Yuan Palace, a park of 1.39 square kilometres, including an 80,000-square-metre lake. It includes a partial reconstruction of the Old Summer Palace in Beijing, destroyed in 1860 by French and British troops during the second Opium War, which has never been restored. ■





Wu Zhiliang

From farmer's son to leading 'Macaologist'

By Mark O'Neill

When Wu Zhiliang was growing up in a poor farming village, he never imagined that, four decades later, he would be a director of a multi-million-dollar foundation in Macao and one of its most prominent historians.

"My journey has been largely accidental," Wu said in an interview in his office at the Macao Foundation, whose funds come from a 1.6 per cent levy on the gross profit of the city's giant gaming industry. It uses the money to fund educational, cultural, philanthropic and other programmes.

He has helped to make the foundation an important part of Macao's society, with scholarships, books and magazines and other projects and the aim of promoting its rich history and culture and presenting a different face to that of the casinos.

Humble birth

Wu was born in 1964 into a poor Hakka farming family in Lianping county, Guangdong province. An outstanding student, he applied in 1981 for Beijing University, China's most famous institution of higher education. But the quota for it from Guangdong was full, so he was admitted into Beijing Foreign Language University. He was the first from his

village to go to university in the capital.

In those days, a university chose the subject for the student – not the other way round -- and Wu was assigned to a small class of 10 students learning Portuguese. "I was not so surprised. I was so happy to go to such a famous university in Beijing."

It was a new subject for the university and there were no textbooks. The students had to rely on tapes and instruction from teachers, Chinese and Portuguese.

With its pronunciation and frequent change in word endings, the language was a severe challenge for the young students. In 1984, Portugal's President Antonio Ramalho Eanes went on a state visit to Beijing. Wu, his teachers and fellow students, had breakfast with him in the Diaoyutai State Guest House. It was his first taste of life at the top.

That year, Wu met a friend from Lianping who was visiting Beijing; he invited him to work in the Macao branch of a Zhuhai firm, Zhu Kuang, which was involved in trading, engineering and construction. Missing the rice-based diet and warmer climate of the south, Wu was happy to accept.

In 1985, he graduated and moved to Macao to

take up the new post. "There I read Portuguese books and newspapers and met many Portuguese people. It was easy to make friends with them. They have their own style of living and are not so concerned with efficiency.

"Government officials were here for a short time and relied on Chinese translators to understand the Chinese world. They lived here quietly. It was a place on the margin, with no great prospects for development."

Translating Genesis

Wu translated a small book, *Genesis*, by a famous Portuguese writer Jorge de Sena, for the Macao Cultural Institute; it was very happy with it and offered him a one-year scholarship to study in Portugal. He accepted the offer and in 1986 went to the literature department of Lisbon University, where he studied Portuguese for 12 months. Then he moved to the Catholic University, to study law. "I knew that, in Macao, few Chinese were qualified in the law. If you did, you would have a very good future."

But, after six months, he ran out of money and had to return to Macao, where he worked as a reporter at the Macao Daily News. Then he met the Chairman of the Macao Foundation (MF), who invited him to work there. It was the autumn of 1988 and the foundation had just taken over management of the University of East Asia: it needed more people to run and restructure the university.

In October that year he moved to the MF and has remained there ever since. In 1992, he became a member of the five-man administrative council which runs the foundation, a position he has held since.

The foundation turned the university from a private institution into a public one, the University of Macau, a transformation completed at the end of 1991.

That year, Wu was involved in enrolling students for the public administration faculty at the university; he decided to enrol himself, completing a two-year course. It meant studying each evening of the week from six to ten, after a full day's work at the foundation.



Promoting Macao

Since 1992, he has concentrated on the work of MF. According to its charter, it 'aims to promote, develop and research cultural, social, economic, educational, scientific, academic and philanthropic activities, as well as activities that promote Macao.'

According to its 2008 annual report, it received 761 applications for grants not exceeding MPO 500,000, of which it approved 573 and rejected 188. It disbursed a total of MOP 1.068 billion during the year.

These include grants to mainland and foreign students, especially from Portuguese-speaking African countries, to study in Macao and for Macao students to study in the mainland and abroad. It funds scholarship and research on Macao history and culture, leading to the publication of archives, articles, magazines and books.

Wu himself continued his studies, obtaining a Ph.D in history from Nanjing University in 1997. He continued his work at the MF, visiting Nanjing five to six times a year during his student years. His 250,000-word thesis was entitled the 'History of Macao's Political Development', published in 1998; a Portuguese version came out in 1999.

Developing 'Macaology'

It was the start of what has been a prolific writing career. "I found two versions of Macao history, one from the Chinese and one from the Portuguese point of view. Both were nationalist and usually were written to confirm an opinion. The focus was on Sino-Portuguese relations and conflicts.

"I found that not much work had been done from the Macao point of view, looking at Macao society. If there was so much conflict, why has it been peaceful here for several hundred years? The Portuguese used violence against Chinese very rarely, and vice versa. It has been a story of mutual tolerance and concession. Conflicts were few."

The history of Macao is different to that of Hong Kong, which the British took by force from China in 1841 after the Opium War and managed as a full-blown colony.

The Portuguese arrived in Macao in 1553 and were allowed to remain for the purposes of trading. The Portuguese governed their own affairs, while the Chinese residents managed theirs, with their

own schools, hospitals, charities and civic societies.

It was only in 1887 that Beijing and Lisbon signed a formal treaty, under which the Qing emperor ceded the administration of the territory in perpetuity.

Since 1992, the MF has made a great contribution in developing 'Macaology', the study of Macao, by funding research by scholars, Chinese and foreign, into its rich history and culture and organising seminars and conferences.

"You cannot call me the inventor of 'Macaology'," said Wu. "Many scholars and friends have contributed towards it since the 1980s."

Indeed, according to records, veteran local academics, such as Chan Shu Weng and the late Wong Hon Keong proposed "Macaology", following the rapid development of studies in social science and humanities in Macao and the negotiations between China and Portugal on the future of Macao; both emerged in the 1980s.

"Many people at that time said that Macao was a 'cultural desert'. Despite many years of effort, Macao's academic and cultural development did not



correspond to its economic development and that is still the case," Wu admitted. "I think that the key for 'Macaology' to be able to establish itself is to link a number of isolated oasis in such a 'desert' together, so that other aspects of Macao, rather than just the gaming sector, can be seen more clearly by the outside world."

Writing History

With this objective, the MF began publishing huge quantities of materials about Macao from 1994. By the end of 2008, the MF had published a total of 494 volumes of books and journals.

And since 2001, the new Macao Foundation has sponsored publication of 288 books and works, covering philosophy, politics, law, economics, society, culture, religion, arts, folklore, medical care, external relations, languages and photography.

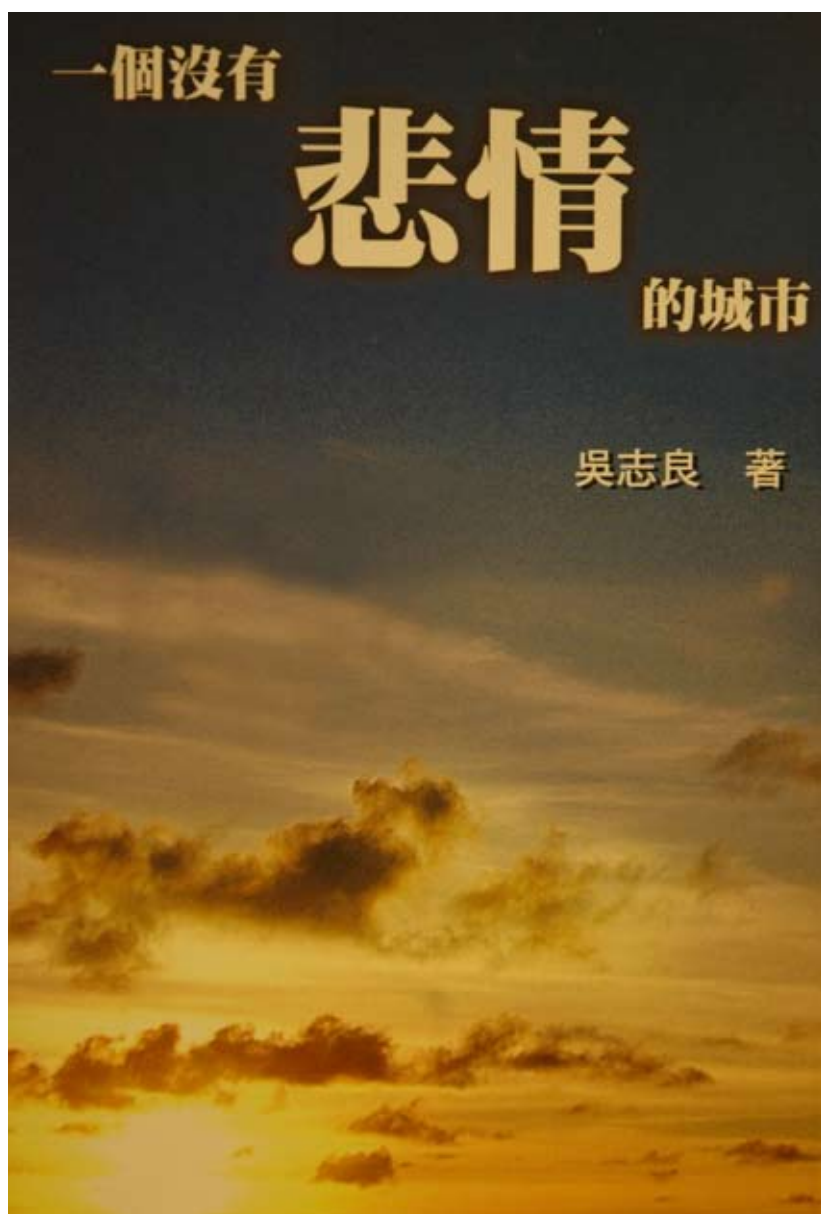
In addition, the MF published Macau Panorama in 1994 and 1996 and Macau Encyclopedia in 1999 and 2005. "Both publications serve as essential references for Macao studies and so will lay the foundation for improving the quality of research about Macao," said Wu.

In December 2009, the MF published a collection of Selected Works of Macao Humanities and Social Sciences, covering history, politics, administration,

legal studies, the Basic Law, economics, culture, education, society, language and translation, and many other topics.

"The academic circle of Macao has such a good tradition in seeing its responsibility to serve the community," Wu said. "In the face of the rapid transformation of the community and the emergence of new and old problems, academics in Macao are being more positive in taking part in public affairs, so that their research findings and solutions can provide a reliable foundation of intelligence for the overall progress of the city."

"By reviewing the path that we have followed over the past 20 years through publishing the collection of Selected Works, in addition to this tradition of local academics, I can say that we should be confident about the prospects of Macaology," he added.





Books on different aspects of Macao history: publication began in 2009

In 2005, the foundation began to write a new history of Macao, with three editors, of whom Wu was one. It has published four volumes, with 51 scholars from Macao, Hong Kong, China, Portugal, Germany, USA and Singapore contributing 56 articles.

In April 2009, in co-operation with the Joint Publishing Group of Hong Kong, it began the publication of 50 books, with text and many photographs, of different aspects of Macao history. The first five included 'the Macanese', 'the Geography of Macao' and 'A Walking Tour of Macao'.

Building a civil society

This study has an important role to play in the building of a civil society. Of Macao's population of nearly 600,000, half arrived within the past 25 years. How do you make them feel part of the history and society of the SAR?

"Our people are gradually accepting the local culture, especially the second generation who were born here. We do a lot of work in the schools and

with the textbooks. We are spreading the ideas of history and that Macao has much to offer in addition to gambling and the economy," Wu said.

This effort received a great boost in 2005, when UNESCO designated the Historic Centre of Macao as a World Heritage Site. "In our future, history and culture are very important drivers, not only for Macao but also for China, to project a new cultural image in the world," he said.

It is harder work to present this to visitors from outside and develop history and culture as an alternative form of tourism. The vast majority come to gamble, eat, drink and make merry and are unaware of the five centuries of history around them.

"There is an increasing number of people, especially from Hong Kong and Taiwan, who come here for walking tours, to see our churches and museums and attend our cultural festivals," said Wu. "Of course, the proportion of total visitors is still low. We must work harder." ■

Photos: Carmo Correia



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Strikingly serious

Russian artist laughs and paints the world in adopted hometown

By Louise Do Rosário





In December 1992, a young Russian artist came to Macao to exhibit his paintings, thinking that he would leave this quiet town for greener pastures after a few days.

But, like George Chinnery and other well-known European artists centuries ago, Konstantin Bessmertny found himself settling in Macao and blossoming into an internationally acclaimed painter. Working from his studio in the tranquility of Coloane, Bessmertny, 45, has held many exhibitions worldwide from Asia to Europe. His works are admired and loved for their wit, technical mastery, intellectual approach and, above all, an unusual blend of his European heritage with his adopted home in the East.

Thanks to his artistic achievements, Bessmertny

has become an icon of Macao, showing how this former Portuguese enclave with its rich cultural past can nourish talents from all backgrounds. The close-shaven, sporty-looking western artist is an unusual face in the local cultural scene which is dominated by Chinese. "He is a rebel and a critic; he is funny and avant garde. He has qualities not commonly seen in Macao but which it needs to maintain its vibrancy as a cosmopolitan city," said a long-time Portuguese friend of his.

In 2007, Macao picked him to represent the city at the prestigious 52nd International Venice Biennale, a global art event held every two years. He created an aircraft-like structure with wheels, from scrap iron, mechanical parts, cartons and other assorted recycled materials. Outside were



graffiti in Latin, English, Portuguese and Chinese. Inside were fake baroque paintings, chandeliers and wallpaper painted with Venetian scenes and Nam Van in Macao. He called this plane that could not fly 'Si monumentum requiris, circumspice'; critics say it is a work that mocks the nouveau riche of the city. Anchored in the sea adjacent to Giardini in Venice, this "aeroplane" attracted several hundred viewers each day.

All year round, Bessmertny's works can be seen in many cultural institutions in Macao. In 2007, he had a comprehensive retrospective of his work in the Macao Museum of Art. His most recent local exhibition -- oil paintings and a five-metre high wooden horse sculpture -- was held at the end of 2009 in the Albergue Gallery, an attractively

restored century-old house.

Bessmertny was born far from Macao, in Blagovesthensk, in Amur Oblast, the Russian province bordering China. By six, he was already nicknamed "the artist" for his passion to create things.

"I have happy memories of myself doing sculptures using clay and other materials, while the other boys were playing football. I was a no-trouble kid, always so busy doing my own art stuff," the jovial-looking artist said.

At 7, Bessmertny won his first prize in painting. At 11, his parents sent him to a local art school. At 20, he began six years of study at the prestigious Institute of Fine Arts in Vladivostok. There he learned and painted for eight hours every day, with a strict regime "just like the 17th century," he recalled.



Konstantin and his five-meter-high wooden horse sculpture

The day began with two hours of drawing with models and sculptures, followed by another three hours of painting, with the classroom door tightly closed during the lessons. In the afternoon, he learned about sketching, art history, anatomy, the technology of materials, perspective analysis and other art-related subjects.

"The training of an artist in Russia in those days involved great discipline," he said. He recalled spending months to complete a sculpture of the head of a Roman in 1985, working on it for a few hours each day.

In 1992, he graduated -- then came the invitation to exhibit that would change his life forever. Macao was "love at first sight"; he came via Guangzhou, which was "chaotic, polluted and overcrowded". Looking back, Bessmertny said there was a China connection even in the early years of his life. "Between six and 16, my best friend was a Russian Chinese. Incidentally, my grandmother also spoke some Chinese."

Bessmertny never thought of settling in Macao for so long, thinking each year that he would leave eventually. But the city has its charms, pulling the artist back despite his global travels. Disciplined and prolific, Bessmertny works for eight



hours or more a day behind closed doors. In the evening, he joins his family and breaks his solitude. "My wife says I am very talkative at home. That is because I am alone the whole day by myself, not talking to anyone."

Bessmertny paints, draws, does installation art and makes sculptures. "I like to do three to five subjects at any time. Sticking to just one style is too boring

for me. I have so many ideas and have, I believe, the creative energy of two or three artists." He paints on canvas, objects and musical instruments and does installation art.

Despite his wide-ranging interests, oil remains his favourite medium. "I believe in oil, as it lasts a long time and can withstand wear and tear. It is a pleasure for me to feel and smell oil.



With oil, you have to discipline yourself. You have to let it dry and sometimes this can take months” he explained. So while he waits literally for the ink to dry, Bessmertny does other things, like drawing sketches and installation art.

Whatever Bessmertny creates, it is always complex, filled with characters, icons, languages and messages. His multi-layered works reflect his thoughtfulness and his cultural background. “One senses that the cultural well from which Konstantin draws is a deep one: from opera, Berlin cabaret, vaudeville, burlesque, cartoons, newspapers to theatre and costume design,” wrote art critic Terence Rodrigues.

“Even the artistic sources of inspiration are multifarious and multilayered: Russian icons, cartoons, ex votos, old master portraits, still lifes, trompe-l’oeil and allegorical painting, from Titian to Vermeer, the Fontainebleau School to Matisse,

Bosch to Brueghel, Chagall to Picasso.”

Rodrigues noted the colourful medley of characters on Bessmertny’s stage, “gamblers, the décollet women of the demi-monde, dictators, Banana Republic generals, cowboys, bourgeois, Mafiosi cigar-smokers, angels in the form of paunchy middle-aged men in saggy underpants and wings, sinister men in suits, naked capitalists, liegemen in 18th century court dress, Zorro, Lenin, Marat - and of course the usual kinky habitus of Konstantin’s work - the cross-dressers and hookers in fishnet tight and stilettos.”

Literary references are also found, from the Old Testament to Erasmus, Brecht, Kafka, Beckett and Ionesco. The words and texts are in many languages: Latin, Russian, Portuguese, English, French and Chinese. Bessmertny himself speaks many languages, although he confesses that he has just started learning Cantonese.

César Guillen-Nunez, a Macao-based art historian, noted that Bessmertny studied and drew inspiration from great artists, from Titian to Picasso and more recently, the Dutch Masters of the 17th century. The painter then blended traditional techniques with his own distinct interpretation.

One example is a painting depicting the handover of Macao to China with Portuguese officials passing the keys of the city to their Chinese counterparts.

“With a fine sense of historical irony, Konstantin quotes Velasquez’s *Rendition of Breda*. In Konstantin’s hands, the chivalrous personages of Velasquez are now contemporary persons, whose egos the artist, Picasso-like, has stripped of all its masks” , Guillen-Nunez observed.

The techniques might be traditional, but the subject



matter is definitely contemporary. "His handling of traditional media produces an effect of instant recognition, as well as feelings akin to joyful surprise. It is as if someone moving through a foreign and unknown land suddenly hears a familiar tongue," he wrote.

Chinese culture, however, does not loom large in his works, although Chinese characters, symbols, the Lingnan architecture of southern China, chopsticks, rice bowls, dim sum and other Chinese artifacts pop up occasionally.

Absurdity, with a touch of humour, is another hallmark of Bessmertny's oeuvres. His world is often a topsy-turvy one inhabited by grotesque figures, invoking shock, surprise and provoking a good laugh from those who see it. Hilary Binks, an art critic, wrote how she was impressed by the style.

"I remember being immediately drawn by one painting, *Ambience IX: Portrait of a Young Man with Sabre on a Horse*. The first thing that struck me was how beautifully it was painted, the excellence of technique. A split second later came a realization of the absurdity of composition: no dashing cavalry officer brandishing his weapon here, but a dumpy little man on horseback inexplicably standing in the middle of an elegant drawing room! A room even furnished with a table whose legs echoed those of

the horse!"

"I love absurdity," said Bessmertny. "To find the true meaning of things, you have to emphasise the absurdity of it. A famous film director once said that if you do comedy and you manage to have people see the serious side of things, you would have succeeded in your art."

"I like my works to be funny, comical and cynical but carry a serious message at the same time. This is my contribution to making a better world, that, through my teasing, people can reflect on things and change for the better."

The fun-loving artist laughs at human vices and follies, especially when they are displayed round the gambling table. He captured this behaviour in a series of artwork entitled *Casino Republic*, the scenes and personages inspired no doubt by what is happening in his adopted hometown, Macao.

Distorted human figures are surrounded by chips, gambling machines, coins, roulettes and dirty carpets are seen in the series' paintings, wood panels and sculptures. "The republic is a city of vice and sin. You have the general in charge and then there are the criminals, prostitutes and others committing a variety of vices, when they are exposed to lots of money, bright lights and a mountain of food in a ridiculously small city," he said.





What is Bessmertny's ambition for the future? More financial reward and recognition? "Why should one want to get more famous? It only generates hatred and envy. There are artists who become very successful financially and quit painting. I want to remain humble. I don't need big projects or to be in art centres like New York. I do not want to be rushed into doing things there."

Bessmertny has done commissioned work, but artistic freedom is his paramount priority. "I have to do it on my own terms and time frame." The KEE Shanghai club hired him to do one painting and two murals. The painting, *Amour Forever*, has life-sized men and women posing in Hollywood gangster-movie style. For the huge murals, *Antichita Romane*, he drew inspiration from Piranesi and his own sketches of Roman sculptures. Alongside the broken sculptures are out-of-context dinosaurs and Latin jokes, done with a touch of his signature ridicule.

"I like to challenge myself," he continued. "I work on something and then come back the next day to have a second look. If I am satisfied with it, I put my name on it. I do not need to consider what other people think. It is the only way I can do art, not for money but for my own pleasure."

Bessmertny has remained true to his own calling; a former school classmate is now director of a university's art faculty and another runs a publishing house. "My nightmare is that I would be unable to fulfill the nickname I was given when I was six: an artist." ■

Photos: Luis Almoater



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Maestro of Macao

By Mark Phillips

There are few, if any cities in the world with a population of only half a million that can claim to have an orchestra of world-class standards, yet this is the ambitious goal that Lu Jia, Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Macao Orchestra, has set for the territory as it begins its second decade as a Special Administrative Region of China.

“Macao will be one of the cultural centres of Asia”, he says confidently as he outlines his bold plans for the orchestra, which he began directing in September 2008.

In the short time that he has been with the Macao Orchestra, he has seen definite improvements but as far as he is concerned, his job has only just begun with this relatively young ensemble.

The Macao Orchestra in its current form, only truly came into being in 2002, under the direction of its first principal conductor, Shao En. However its beginnings actually date back to much earlier, when in 1983, Father Aureo de Castro of the St Pious X Academy of Music, and a group of local music lovers, founded the Macao Chamber Orchestra. Over the years under the guidance of the Cultural Affairs Bureau and a number of renowned musical directors, the Chamber Orchestra grew and developed, and from 1989, it began performing at the Macao International Music Festival and the Macao Arts Festival every year.



These highly successful events have not only pushed the orchestra to improve, but have given its members the opportunity to work with a number of internationally distinguished musicians and conductors along the way, something that most young orchestras would not normally have experienced.

Since 1997 the orchestra has also toured extensively throughout mainland China and in 1999 it performed eight concerts in five different cities in Portugal and Spain.

No small achievement for this small territory, most widely recognised in recent times as the gaming capital of Asia. But for Lu Jia, Macao is much more than this, and the development and promotion of its orchestra is a critical factor in demonstrating the strong cultural elements of the city.

"Historically Macao was the centre point for cultural exchange between Europe, China and the whole of Asia. It is an incredible story, and the best and most direct way to show the cultural level of Macao today is through music", he notes.

A musical family

Born in 1968 in Shanghai, it was clear from an early age that Lu would follow in the footsteps of his musical parents.

"My father was a conductor and my mother was a singer, so it was very interesting when my first job was as an opera conductor", he muses.

In fact Lu's father was conductor of the Guangzhou Military Orchestra before taking on the role as head of the Chinese National Band.

Little wonder then that Lu Jia began learning the piano and violin at an early age, and at 15 attended a school attached to the Beijing Central Conservatoire. At 18 he began his studies in conducting under the expert tutelage of Professor Zhen Xiao ying, but it still took a few years for him to realise that this would be his life long career.

"In the beginning I was still not 100 percent involved emotionally. I liked it but not so passionately", admits Lu. "At middle school I was



very interested in maths and science, and I was very good at them too”.

The influence of Professor Zhen however, who was then Chief Conductor of the Beijing Central Opera, proved to be critical in moulding the young talent.

“She is a wonderful lady and I learned a lot from her”, he recalls. “The most important thing was the way she worked. She had so much passion, and was so professional, hard working and paid so much attention to detail.

“After an opera, she wouldn’t sleep, but would sit and go over all the scores to mark down what wasn’t perfect, like a scientific study”.

German influences

Another pivotal moment came in 1989, when Lu left China for Berlin to attend classes with Maestro Hans Martin Rabenstein. It was here that he truly fell in love with conducting.

“In Germany, my knowledge and understanding of music totally changed, especially classical music. I realised that as a conductor, you can make anything happen with the music. It is not just about reading the score, but also about how you use your feelings and imagination to combine the colour and sounds. That’s when I thought ‘wow!’

“For some composers like Beethoven and Schubert, you can play all the notes that are written correctly, but for me that’s still only 20 percent. The rest is what you bring to it creatively”.

Remarkably, Lu did not actually finish his formal studies, as fate seemingly intervened, offering a unique and exciting opportunity to begin conducting professionally in Italy.

In 1990 he entered the Antonio Pedrotti International Conducting Competition in Trento, Italy, but initially he was not accepted and was told that he was ‘on standby’. A week before the competition though, he received a letter inviting him to enter and he made the journey by train from Berlin to Venice to Trento.

“I was late arriving and got there just as the general secretary of the competition was locking the doors. We went and had dinner together and became good friends. I really think this coincidence changed my life, and it was only later that she told

me that there had actually been 12 conductors on standby for the competition and I was number 12!”

Despite his late entry, Lu went on to win the competition and one of the jurors quickly offered him the job as principal conductor at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste, a position he held for five years.

“As a young conductor I was very lucky to get the job as an opera conductor. You need to have lots of experience, you need to know the language, how to sing, breathe and phrase”, he notes.

So at the young age of 26, Lu Jia found himself in the somewhat daunting position of conducting operas in Italy. “It was a great challenge, because in Italy if you do it wrong, they’ll kill you!” he jokes.





A prestigious career

Lu never returned to complete his studies in Berlin but instead embarked on a truly remarkable career that has spanned nearly 20 years, accruing a number of impressive accolades and achievements along the way. He has conducted over 2000 concerts in Europe and the Americas, and cooperated with more than 100 opera houses and orchestras. He counts in his repertoire around 60 operas, and in 1995 was the first Chinese conductor to lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and to record the complete works of German composer Felix Mendelssohn.

At present he is the Music Director of the Arena di Verona, in Italy, the world's largest open-air opera theatre, and also the Artistic Director of the Tenerife Symphony Orchestra in Spain.

Returning to the Motherland

But after years of working at the highest levels of the European orchestral scene, gradually Lu has looked for more opportunities to return to his homeland, and to give something back.

"Beijing built a new opera house which gave

me the opportunity to work there. And I wanted to return to China to build an excellent, world-class orchestra", he says.

While working in Beijing around five years ago he met with the Vice-president of the Macao Cultural Affairs Bureau, Alice Wong, and Macao Orchestra Manager, Mr Cao Yi ji, and began to discuss the prospect of coming to Macao. But Lu had one very important condition.

"I asked them why they wanted me to come there and what they wanted me to do", he explains. "If they wanted me to be there as a name only, then I was not interested. I really wanted to do something significant".

Understandably, Lu's condition was gratefully accepted and he began with the orchestra, to continue on the fine work of its first principal conductor, Shao En.

According to Lu, the greatest challenge was changing the mindset of both the orchestra members and the community at large, to inspire them to aim even higher.

"People need to feel proud of the orchestra, and honoured to be a member", he says.

As for the highlights, Lu considers the orchestra's

concert with famed Chinese pianist Lang Lang in Hong Kong last year, and this year's performance at the Shanghai Music Festival, as two of the key moments of his tenure so far.

"All the professional music reviews of our performance (in Shanghai) said that the Macao Orchestra was incredible", notes Lu with obvious pride.

And most recently the orchestra performed for the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Macao SAR, with world famous Chinese cellist, Jian Wang, whom Lu considers to be one of the top three cellists in the world today.

Looking to the future

Such prestigious performances are an important step towards increasing the international reputation of the orchestra. And as the orchestra becomes more well known, Lu hopes to be able to attract more high-calibre players as permanent members.

"The support we have from the government is excellent, and the salary for members is good, but we need more international fame to attract high-profile members".

Currently the orchestra has around 60 members, from a number of countries including China, America, Australia and Russia. Notably the average age of the orchestra is also very young, which Lu sees as a positive.

"Having a blank piece of paper is always a good thing", he comments.

Only one of the current members is actually from Macao, cellist Kuong Pou-lei, and this is something the Music Director would also like to see change, but he is realistic about the challenge.

"Of course it takes a long time to build up local talent", he observes. "Now the age at the conservatory is getting younger and the talent better. We certainly aim to get more local musicians in the orchestra. If they have the same level of talent, then of course they will be given priority".

Other goals for Lu in the future include increasing the repertoire and overall skill level of the orchestra, and planning more international tours.

One crucial issue that he is also very passionate about is having a world-class concert hall in Macao. This is vital as far as Lu is concerned and he offers

three main points to consider.

"First it must have world class acoustics. Second it must be aesthetically beautiful, a landmark like the Sydney Opera House. And finally the capacity must be over 1,500 seats. Even if now in Macao we don't have such large audiences for our concerts, we must think of the future", he advises.

On where such a concert hall would be located, Lu is not particularly concerned. For him more important is when, and the answer is "as soon as possible".

Music for the people

Lu views his responsibilities as more than just to the development of the members of the orchestra. He is also concerned about how to make music a more integral part of the lives of Macao people in general. On this matter his approach is simple – passion.



"Classical music represents a language that is more than 400 years old in some cases. The reason it remains is because of the passion, love, imagination and spirit that went into creating it in the first place", offers Lu. "But if you don't show the passion of the music to the audience, then of course they will be bored. I would be bored too!"

And this is where Lu's love for his job comes to the fore.

"As a conductor, through your ideas about the music, you are completely in command of your work with the orchestra, the sounds and the phrases of the music. And through your passion and charisma you can pass this on to the audience", he explains.

"I don't mind if the audience has a knowledge of music or not, I want to give them something that has an impact".

And how does it feel when he achieves this?

"There are some things that words cannot describe, that's why we have music, but if I had to say... heaven. Only music can give this to you." ■





From Beijing

Sophie Chen Xue qing began playing cello when she was eight years old. She moved from Beijing to study at the Southern California University Music Department, and lived and worked in the States for 12 years. She joined the Macao Orchestra six years ago as it gave her a chance to live closer to her family in China and to work with world-class musical directors and conductors.

"We all work very happily together, and it's easy to have a close relationship with my colleagues. Many are my former classmates from the Beijing Conservatoire", say Sophie. "We are getting better and better every year, so I definitely hope to stay on long term".



From California

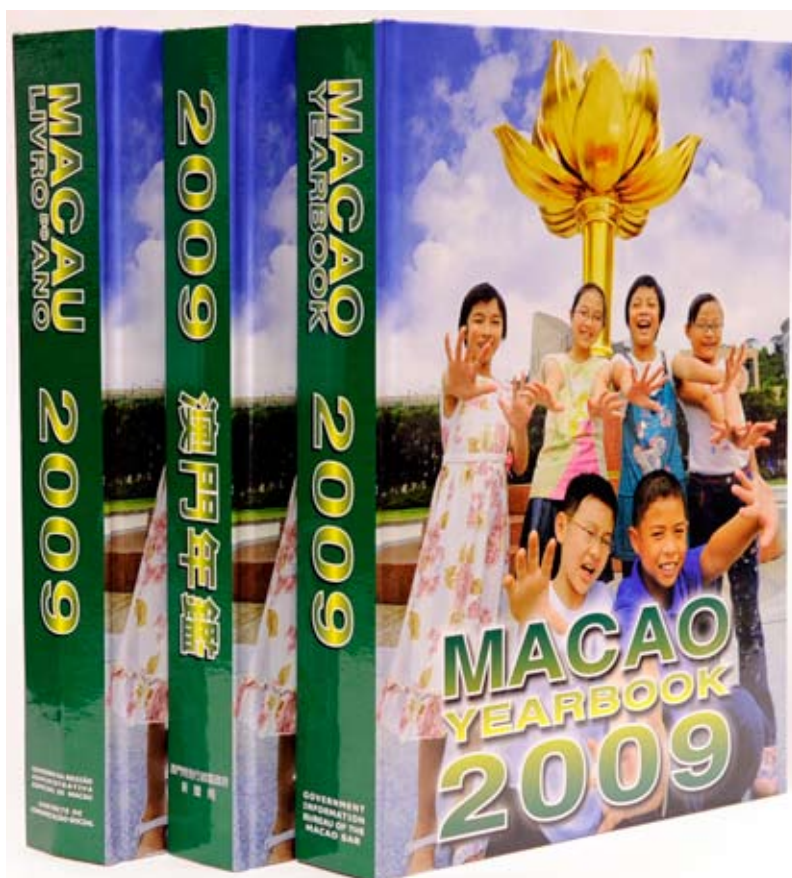
Now in his third season with the Macao Orchestra, Principle Trombonist Christian Goldsmith is also a graduate from the University of Southern California. His wife is Principle Flautist with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, and being a member of a young orchestra like Macao's has given him opportunities that he might not otherwise have had.

"It has been a very dynamic experience and it requires a lot of flexibility. This has been my first contracted orchestral position, so to be given a principle position in a full-time orchestra has been a big learning curve".

Photos: Carmo Correia and Luís Almoester

MACAO YEARBOOK 2009

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THE RICHLY ILLUSTRATED BOOK AIMS TO PROVIDE ITS READERS WITH A COMPREHENSIVE AND OBJECTIVE RECORD OF THE PROGRESS OF MACAO'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS IN 2008. THE WELL-EDITED YEARBOOK IS MEANT TO PROVIDE DETAILED AND ACCURATE INFORMATION, IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS AND CONCISE DATA TO ALL THOSE WHO WISH TO KNOW MORE ABOUT AND BETTER UNDERSTAND MACAO.

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Macao SAR shows its history

Beijing is the first leg in a touring exhibition to commemorate the first decade of Macao as a special administrative region of China – a virtual journey through its history

By Maria João Belchior



The Capital Museum of Beijing was the first city to host an exhibition that commemorates the 10th anniversary of Macao as a special administrative region of China. It was opened on December 11 by the former Chief Executive Edmund Ho and attracted thousands of visitors during the month it was open. It used modern multi-media techniques and aimed to show visitors the dynamism and importance of the principle “one country, two systems”. Entrance was free.

The ten years of Macao as an SAR were divided in four different themes. The first showed the history of the Macao Basic Law, which was presented in its Chinese and Portuguese versions. Through photos, video and touch screen, it showed the key moments and documents from the first meeting in 1985 between late leader Deng Xiaoping and the Portuguese government to the most recent one, when Premier Wen Jiabao recognised Fernando Chui Sai On as the next Macao Chief Executive.

Macao achievements

Macao’s gross domestic product (GDP) tripled during the last ten years and reached MOP171.87 billion (\$21.48 billion) in 2008. Each year since 1999, the GDP grew at an annual average of 14 per cent, making Macao one of the most dynamic regions of Asia.

The second part, called “Biding ties between Macao and the motherland”, focused on different achievements of the SAR, with the support of the central government in Beijing.

Since the handover in 1999, more mainlanders have come each year to visit or work; Macao and its neighbouring city of Zhuhai have developed closer ties. This part included a model of the plan for the extension of the University of Macao which will have a new campus, with one square kilometres, on Hengqin Island, in Zhuhai. There was a model, with a virtual map, showing the peninsula of Macao

Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping visits the exhibition with Macao officials





Macao's tri-dimensional model

and its two islands. Another model showed the Macao Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo 2010. Named the Jade Rabbit, the project came from an idea by architect Carlos Marreiros and was illustrated by an animation movie. The rabbit is 19.99 metres high – a reference to the year of Macao's return to China.

This section also showed the stamps and bank notes of the SAR over the last 10 years.

The third part showed the achievements of the last decade and different activities in Macao. It is a platform for tourism and for economic and cultural co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

The fourth part showed the improvements in areas from education to health care.

Lei Hou, Ni Hao, Olá

"In Macao, one can find this mix of cultures" said Victor Chan, Director of the Government Information Bureau (GCS). To show the centuries of history and peaceful relations between Portugal and China, the exhibition had a model of the ruins of the Saint Paul's Church, where visitors like to pose for pictures. Next to it was a pond totally made of





screens that covers 1,400 square meters.

The virtual pond had its own lotus flower, the main inspiration of the exhibition. Children who went to the exhibition loved to see the fish swimming in the water on the screens.

Visitors were invited to write on a screen a message to Macao; each message was stored in a special file and a space appeared for a new message.

Visitors could see a slide show, with images of different streets of the city taken and sent by its inhabitants. The historical centre of the city became a UNESCO World Heritage List in 2005.

There was also a holographic movie which takes the viewer on a tour of the city, from its old town to the circuit of the Grand Prix; he could hear different languages and see different buildings and styles of life and architecture. It closed with the message – “Xiexie, Thank you, Obrigado”.

From Beijing, the exhibition will travel to other cities in China before going back to Macao. It is one of the best ways to present the SAR to mainlanders who have not had the chance to visit. Last year, Macao received 23 million visitors. Many felt that Macao is a place like no other in the world – exactly what the exhibition wants to show. ■

Photos: GCS



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- A welcoming Lantern for the China Pavilion "The Oriental Crown".
- Adjacent to the "Oriental Crown", signifying Macau as special Administrative Region of China.
- The success of "one Country, Two Systems".



Macau Case of Urban Best Practices Area - Tak Seng On

- The MSAR Government was awarded an Honorable Mention Prize in the 2004 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for the conservation of Tak Seng On



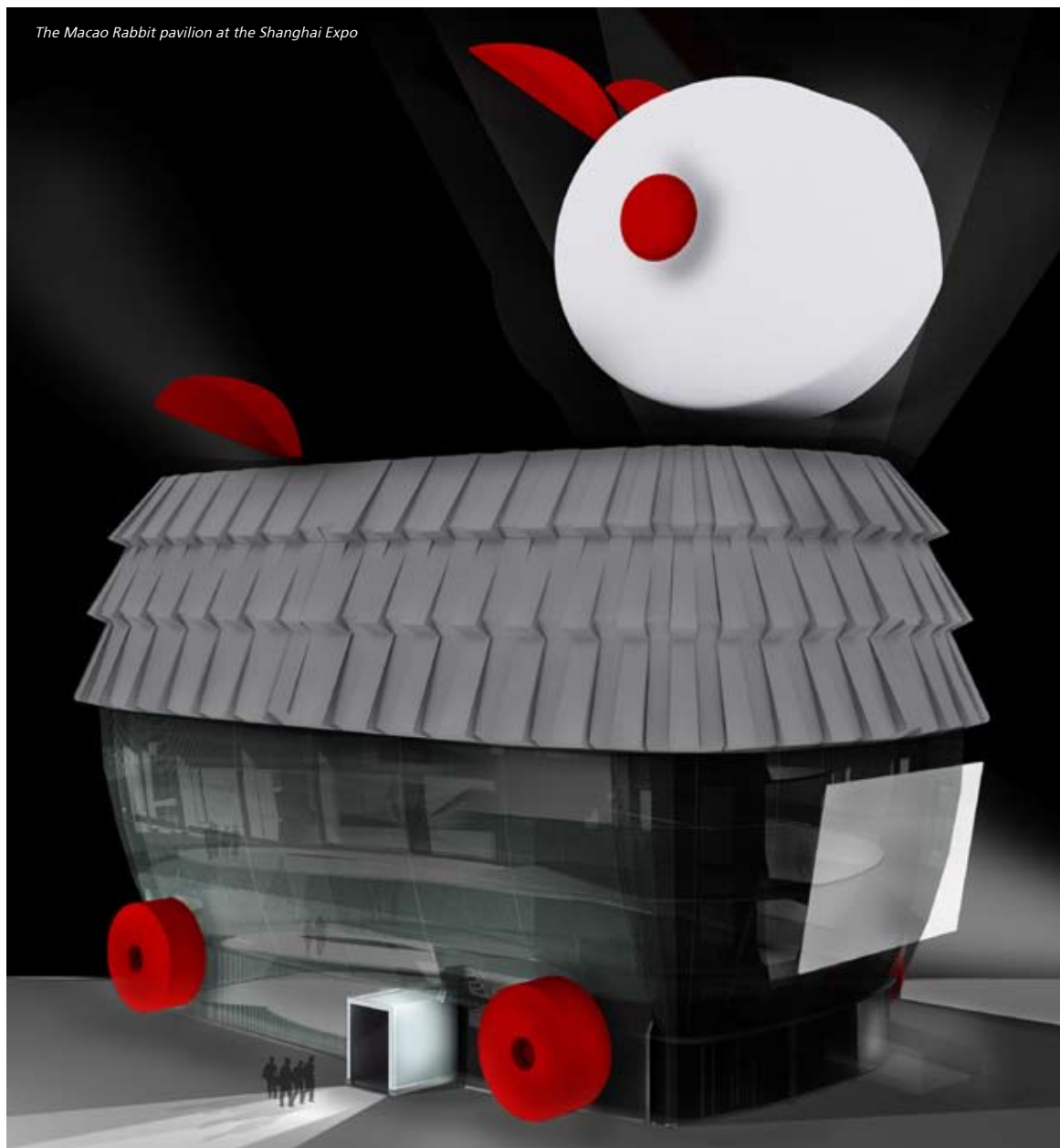
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Transformed Rabbit Pavilion to welcome Expo

By Staff reporter

The Macao Rabbit pavilion at the Shanghai Expo



Last July, Macao chose a rabbit-shaped lantern as the design for one of its two pavilions at the upcoming Expo in Shanghai. The other pavilion was to be a replica of the famous Tak Seng On, a century-old local pawn shop.

Construction work of the giant pawn shop is proceeding as planned, but that of the rabbit lantern pavilion has undergone drastic changes. "Except for the shape of the rabbit, we have changed completely both the exterior and interior of the original design," said Christiana Leong Pou Yee, Director of the Office for the Preparation of Macao's Participation in the Shanghai World Expo. "Thanks to the hard work of various teams, we have transformed a little rabbit into the Jade Rabbit Imperial Lantern, which will provide a dazzling visual experience for visitors who walk in," she said.

The original plan was to build an all-transparent rabbit-shaped structure that would be largely hollow inside. The idea, created by architects Carlos Marreiros, Tang Meng Wai and Lei Sai Cheong, was based on the winning proposal of the Macao Pavilion Concept Design Competition held in May 2009.

Visitors were to move on a long sliding ramp up the pavilion, while learning about the history of



Macao, as shown on the plasma television and LED screens hanging around them. There were also to be two small cinemas to show Macau-related films for a maximum of 45 people in both sessions.

Now, after a complete makeover, “the pavilion has become a more attractive, high-tech place to showcase the many developments of our city,” said leong. There is now a five-storey high escalator installed in the middle; surrounding it are ground-to-ceiling videos and other moving images to tell visitors the story of Macao’s growth from a small fishing port into a world-famous destination. The story, told through the journey of a young boy through history, continues to unfold when visitors finish their escalator ride and move on to a ramp where they see more stunning sights and sounds. leong said the transformed pavilion will be able to host a maximum of 4,000 visitors a day, five times more than the proposed plan. “We hope to receive close to 700,000 visitors within the six months of the Expo.”

The many revisions were made for safety and other practical reasons. “The proposed design was made from a purely architectural point of view. We have revised it with many other considerations such as people traffic, and most importantly, the need

to complement our pavilion with the neighboring pavilions of the central government and Hong Kong,” leong explained.

The rabbit concept was picked out of 31 entries for the design competition “Many of the participants submitted dragon designs, which we did not choose, because the dragon symbolises the whole of China and we wanted to be modest and not claim to be a dragon. We picked the rabbit instead because this small and agile animal embodies the qualities of Macao. We thought that the cute animal could at least attract children to take a picture outside our pavilion and then bring their parents inside.”

But, when leong and her teams started working on the details, they encountered problems in how to turn the design on paper into a structure that met the requirements of the Expo organiser and Macao’s own marketing objectives for the event. leong herself flew to Shanghai every few weeks for on-site inspection and coordination work between the various international teams hired for the work.

They include award-winning Israeli, Hong Kong, Singapore and Macao producers, engineers and interior designers. Construction and engineering designs were mainly prepared by Tongji University of Shanghai. The main contractor is Shanghai Construction Group, the

Work inside the Macao pavilion





contractor for the China Pavilion.

"We started to have second thoughts about the proposed design when we looked and failed to find a way to move visitors smoothly to the top of the pavilion. If we had kept the proposed draft, guests would have to move up and down the pavilion on the ramp, an arrangement which would not meet the minimum safety standard of the Expo. The Expo authorities were also concerned about how we would regulate the flow of people on the ramp," she said.

The planned 100% transparent, curved external wall also posed problems, as it was technically difficult to construct and any leakage would require extensive repair work. In the revised plan, only ten per cent of the structure is transparent and the hollow space inside is turned into a 360-degree multi-media exhibition area. "Suddenly we have much more space for exhibits and this will create a bigger visual impact on visitors than the original small television screens that were proposed. The

external wall will now be made of reflective glass. "leong added: "With the new design, visitors will be able to see the reflection of the China Pavilion on our pavilion screen and this means we have China in our hearts. We have also added a LED screen outside and this has created more exhibition space area and will attract crowds from afar. We are making many changes to ensure that our exhibition is of a high standard, that it will meet the technical requirements of Expo and will complement the China Pavilion. We have also been working together with Hong Kong on the management and decoration of the common public area."

The ramp is now much shorter but the visual exhibits placed next to it still require much work. "As the ramp is slanted and curved, we have to use a large number of projectors and meticulously adjust them to the same angle of the curving ramp inch by inch. This process is painstaking, like making an Armani dress," she said jokingly.

The rabbit's head now looks very different from

the draft. It now moves sideways, rather than up and down, the latter of which Chinese interpret as the ominous act of a person hanging himself. Its ears, eyes, tails and wheels are now painted red, not the cyber silver originally suggested. "When I went to the site and saw the China Pavilion was painted all red, I knew that our rabbit had to be of the same kind of red to complement it."

leong also managed to convince Expo officials that the rabbit's height had to be 19.99 meters, a reference to the year of Macao's return to China.

"They did not want the pavilion to exceed the height limit of 20-meters. I explained that the Jade Rabbit, with its 10-meter tall head, is an imperial lantern that beckons people to visit the China Pavilion. To echo the Expo theme of "Better City, Better Life", we have come up with our own "Return to the Motherland, Macao a Better City". In addition to symbolising harmony and family, the Macao Pavilion also symbolises Macao's return to her motherland. This is the success of 'One Country, Two Systems'."

All participants were required to sign a confidentiality agreement, so that no-one could disclose any information or promote their own company.

On the challenges of working with an international team, leong said, "As an international team with many parties involved, we have to work around the clock, as we live in different time zones. My office has to work on the exhibition content and co-ordinating the whole team."

"At times we were under tremendous pressure because we were always competing with time. Even though there were so many problems with the original design, we all enjoyed the process.

It is like making the impossible possible – we have successfully transformed a little rabbit lantern into a Jade Rabbit Imperial Lantern to welcome the Expo." ■

Photo: Eric Tam

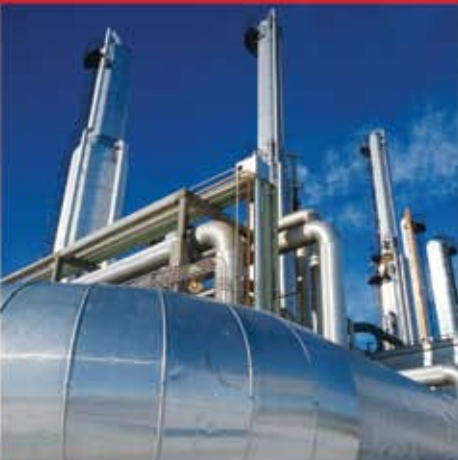
The Rabbit pavilion under construction near the China pavilion





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Japan wins 21st Macao International Fireworks Display Contest

Macao, China, Oct 05 - Japanese team Tamaya Art Pyro Technic won the 21st Macao International Fireworks Display Contest, which ended on 1st October. Second place went to La Tirrena Fireworks from Italy, and the third to Platinum Fireworks from the Philippines.

05 OCT



19 OCT

Macao Trade fair nets deals of US\$ 540 million

Macao, China, 27 Oct - A total of 60 deals worth 4.3 billion patacas (US\$ 540 million) were signed during the 14th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF) that ended Sunday, said Jackson Chang, executive director of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), which organised the event.

27 OCT



27 OCT

Macao respects religious freedom, US Department of State report says

Macao, China, 28 Oct - The Macao government generally respected religious freedom in practice, according to the 2009 International Religious Freedom Report, released by the United States Department of State.

28 OCT



06 NOV

CTM loses monopoly on fixed local and international telephone service and data transmission

Macao, China, 09 Nov - Companhia de Telecomunicacoes de Macau (CTM) and the Macao government signed a new contract which will liberalise fixed local and international telephone service, telegraph, telex, and switched data transmission from the end of 2011.

09 NOV



09 NOV

Local student crowned Miss Macau

Macao, China, 19 Oct - University student Laura Li, 21, won the Miss Macau 2009 pageant at the Venetian in Cotai. The Miss Macau 2009 2nd Runner-Up title went to another 21-year-old local university student, Joyce Huang, according to The Macau Post Daily.

Brazil present at Macao trade fair to increase exports and attract investment

Macao, China, 27 Oct - Brazil took part in the 14th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF) to boost its ties with China, by increasing exports and attracting investments, the representative of the Brazilian export promotion agency Apex said.

Chinese architect He Jingtang to design UM's campus in Hengqin island

Macao, China, 06 Nov - The University of Macau (UM) announced that Chinese architect He Jingtang, has been invited to take charge of the master plan and design of the university new campus on Hengqin Island, near Macao.

Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute sends mission to Taiwan

Macao, China, 9 Nov - The first Taiwan visit of a delegation of Macao representatives from the commercial and manufacturing sectors occurred on 1-4 Nov and was organised by the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (Ipim), according to Macauhup.

Galaxy reschedules Macao mega resort opening to 2011

Macao, China, 12 Nov - The Galaxy Entertainment Group's (GEG) mega resort in Macao is scheduled to open in the first quarter of 2011, the group's chairman, Hong Kong tycoon Lui Che Woo, told a press conference held at the Galaxy StarWorld Hotel.

Macao Pavilion expects 1 million visitors at Shanghai Expo

Macao, China, 18 Nov - The coordinator of Macao's participation in the Shanghai World Expo Christiana leong Pou Yee said she expected to have at least one million visitors to the jade rabbit lantern-shaped Macao Pavilion during the six-month event that will start next May, in Shanghai.

Gabriele Tarquini wins WTCC title in Macao race

Macao, China, 22 Nov - Italian driver Gabriele Tarquini (47) secured the 2009 WTCC driver's title with a fifth-place finish in a second race in Macao today.

State Council appoints principal Macao officials

Macao, China, 24 Nov - The State Council appointed several principal officials in the government of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), according to a statement released through Xinhua. Cheong U was appointed Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture to replace Chui Sai On.

12 NOV



12 NOV

18 NOV



21 NOV

22 NOV



22 NOV

24 NOV



27 NOV

Angolan consulate in Macao wants to extend jurisdiction to Guangdong province

Macao, China, 12 Nov - The Angolan Consulate-General in Macao will present proposals in Beijing to widen its jurisdiction to the neighboring province of Guangdong to respond to interest from Chinese companies investing in Angola, the General-Consul for Macao said.

Stuart Easton wins Macao Motorcycle Grand Prix again

Macao, China, 21 Nov - Defending champion Stuart Easton, the 26-year old British rider, Saturday won the 43rd Macao Motorcycle Grand Prix on a Honda 1000 on the 6.2-kilometre Guia Racing Circuit, considered one of the most difficult in the world.

Italian claims F3 Macao GP victory

Macao, China, 22 Nov - Italian driver Edoardo Mortara took a hard-fought victory in the Macao Grand Prix on Sunday after triumphing in a race-long duel with Signature team-mate Jean-Karl Vernay.

Macao official predicts a monthly gaming revenue of US\$ 1 billion in 2010

Macao, China, 27 Nov - Secretary for Economy and Finance Francis Tam Pak Yuen said he expected next year's monthly gaming revenues to be US\$ 1 billion (8 billion patacas), according to The Macau Post Daily.

macao newsline

China approves 3.6 sq km land reclamation proposed by Macao

Macao, China, 30 Nov – China's State Council approved Sunday a proposal by the Macao government for a 3.61 square kilometre (361.65 hectare) land reclamation project, announced the chief executive Edmund Ho Hau Wah.

Macao launches international public tender for light railway

Macao, China, 3 Dec – The Macao light railway system is due to be in operation 49 months (4 years and 1 month) after its contract is signed, according to an announcement from the Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT) published in the local press.

Air China injects around US\$ 20 million into Air Macau

Macao, China, 07 Dec - National flag carrier Air China has injected 158.7 million patacas (US\$ 19.84) into the share capital of Air Macau, raising its initial shareholding in the local airline from about 51 percent to 80.86 percent, the Beijing-based airline announced in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange

Casino Oceanus opens in Macao to cater for mass market

Macao, China, 16 Dec - Casino Oceanus at Jai Alai, the latest casino owned by Stanley Ho Hung Sun's Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (SJM), opened its doors to the public on Tuesday, with the casino operator aiming to target the mass-market. It's SJM's 21st and Macao's 34th casino.

30 NOV



02 DEC

03 DEC



06 DEC

07 DEC



14 DEC

16 DEC



16 DEC

Democratisation to be 'gradually promoted': Fernando Chui

Macao, China, 02 Dec - The democratisation of the local political system "will be gradually promoted in accordance with the Basic Law and the social reality of Macao", the chief executive designate Fernando Chui Sai On said in an interview with Portuguese news agency Lusa.

Ukrainian wins 2009 Macao Marathon

Macao, China, 6 Dec – Ukrainian runner Mykhaylo Iveruk today won the 2009 edition of the men's marathon in Macao with a time of 02:17:45. In the women's marathon, Ethiopian Roman Gebre Gessese won with a time of 02:37:08.

Macao wins 8 gold medals in 2009 East Asian Games

Macao, China, 14 Dec - Macao won eight gold medals in the 2009 East Asian Games that closed Sunday in Hong Kong. On the last day of the events Qin Zhijian won gold in Wushu - Sanshou 60 kg Men and Cai Liangchan in Wushu - Sanshou 70 kg Men.

China starts building Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

Macao, China, 16 Dec - Construction of the world's longest sea bridge linking Hong Kong to Zhuhai and Macao began on Tuesday, in a bid to bolster the integration and future growth of the Pearl River Delta. Starting from Lantau Island in Hong Kong, the Y-shaped bridge, with a total length of 50 kilometers, will cost over 73 billion Yuan (US\$ 10.7 billion) and will be completed in 2015.

Fernando Chui Sai On sworn in as the new Macao Chief Executive
Macao, China, 20 Dec - Fernando Chui Sai On was sworn in as the new Macao Special Administrative Region Chief Executive here Sunday morning. The swearing-in ceremony was administered by China's President Hu Jintao.

Visitors rise 2.7 pc to 1.89 million in November
Macao, China, 28 Dec - Macao's number of visitor arrivals rose 2.7 percent year-on-year to 1.89 million in November, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) announced.

Chui presents proposals for Macao to promote nation's 'peaceful reunification' with Taiwan
Macao, China, 31 Dec - Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On presented Wednesday four proposals for Macao to play a more active role in promoting the nation's peaceful reunification with Taiwan.

2009 casino revenues hit record US\$ 14.875 billion
Macao, China, 5 Jan - Macao's casino industry logged record gross gaming receipts of US\$ 14.875 billion (119 billion patacas) last year, an increase of around 9.4 percent on the previous year, The Macau Post Daily on Tuesday quoted informed sources as saying.

20 DEC



21 DEC

28 DEC



29 DEC

31 DEC



31 DEC

05 JAN



06 JAN

President Hu Jintao asks Macao officials for good governance
Macao, China, 21 Dec - President Hu Jintao said Sunday he hoped Macao's principal officials would do a good job in administering, building and developing Macao under the leadership of Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On and by closely relying on the Macao people.

Macao to launch inoculation of H1N1 vaccines for all residents
Macao, China, 29 Dec - The Macao government decided to offer free inoculation of H1N1 flu vaccines for all its residents from January 1 2010, in an effort to combat a second wave of H1N1 flu, Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On announced.

Macao extends financial support until the end of March 2010 to stimulate tourism industry
Macao, China, 31 Dec - The government of Macao Wednesday announced that it has decided to extend the "Plan to Support Macao Tourism Industry" to the end of March 2010, in a bid to stimulate local leisure tourism, business tourism and the aviation industry. The plan's overall budget from January to March 31, 2010 is 126.4 million patacas (US\$ 16 million).

Macao to host China/Portuguese-Speaking Countries ministerial meeting in May
Macao, China, 6 Jan - The ministerial meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-Speaking Countries should be held in May, Macao Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On has announced. The meeting will coincide with the opening of the Shanghai Expo 2010 in China.

■ 12|12|2009-07|03|2010 ■

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ANIVERSÁRIO

Macao Mansion hides story of wealth and tragedy

By Staff Reporter



One of the best-known Chinese mansions in Macao once belonged to the city's wealthiest man, who killed himself at the age of 59 due to financial problems.

The house is now a world heritage site and it tells a story of success and failure.

Down a narrow street in central Macao is an elegant two-storey mansion with spacious reception

rooms, high ceilings and stained glass - evidently the home of a man of wealth and importance.

The Lou Kau Mansion, a UNESCO heritage site, is a popular spot for tourists. They go both to see its blend of Chinese and western architecture and attend artistic performances, such as puppet shows, musical recitals and calligraphy exhibitions. They can enjoy the art of the present in a setting that

takes them back to the past.

What most of them do not know is that the hand-carved furniture and painted eaves tell a Shakespearian story of wealth and tragedy, of success and betrayal - a family that became the wealthiest in Macao but lost its fortunes by the third generation.

The Mansion was built in 1889 by a merchant named Lou Kau, the first man in Macao to be awarded a gambling franchise. He also invested in finance, property and the pork business. He was a great

philanthropist, funding hospitals, schools and charities for the poor in Macao and the mainland.

But on November 11, 1906, he hanged himself on a beam in his spacious mansion, aged 59. The Guangdong government had suddenly reversed its policy on gambling, saddling him with debts he could not repay. He had made one enormous bet – and it failed.

Opportunity comes knocking in the middle of 19th Century

Lou Kau was born the third of four sons of a modest family

in Xinhui, Guangdong province on October 11, 1848. In 1857, the family moved to Macao to seek its fortune. It was a pivotal moment in the former colony's history.

After their victory over China in the first Opium War (1839-42), the British had established a deep-water harbour in Hong Kong, just 50 kilometres away. Macao had lost its monopoly as the port for China's foreign trade and could not compete with the deeper harbour and better facilities of Hong Kong.

Seeking an alternative source



of income to replace its losses from trading, the colonial government made gambling legal in 1847. The young Lou, a short, stocky man with a large head, was an able and ambitious businessman, eager to seize any opportunity.

He started in finance, opening a private bank in 1867. Then he went into pork imports, buying pigs in Guangdong and selling their meat in Macao. One of the government's principal sources of revenue was opium; it contracted the opium franchise to Lou, which made him his first fortune. In 1881, he started gambling operations in neighbouring Guangdong province.

The next year he obtained a gambling licence in Macao. He started operations in the house of a rich man which he converted into a casino offering the game Fan-Tan, one of the most popular Chinese forms of gambling. Next was a game called The White Pigeon (Pigeon Lottery), so named because the birds were used to send messages containing the names of the winners across China.

"According to legend, the game began in the Han dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD) when the ruler of a besieged city had to find a way to raise money to support his army without raising taxes", wrote the Reverend Lobscheid of Hong Kong, based on Chinese documents. He took 120 characters from a popular poem and made subdivisions of eight. Punters had to guess the eight characters. It was a lottery played with characters rather than numbers.

The game became popular across China and pigeons were used to inform the happy winners. It is still played in Macao today, in a modernised format, in a crowded shop opposite the Lisboa Hotel.

Official records show that, in 1882 and 1883, Lou paid the Macao government 8,800 silver dollars for the monopoly to sell opium and operate Fan Tan casinos in Taipa, an island that is one of the three districts of Macao. In 1885, the price had risen to 9,320 dollars. In 1885-1886, he paid 130,000 dollars for the right to run Fan Tan casinos in the peninsula of Macao, then, as now, the richest and most densely

populated part of the city. From 1886 to 1895, he paid 145,000 dollars a year to continue the Fan Tan operations.

Giving back to society

By now a wealthy man, Lou became active in many sectors of society. He donated to charity, including Kiang Wu Hospital, first established to cater to the colony's Chinese population. He and his eldest son, Lou Lim leoc, both served as its president. He donated money for schools and rice to the poor.

He set up a relief committee to help victims of disasters in



northern China and headed the committee that welcomed the crown prince of Tsarist Russia in April 1891. In April 1895, a plague swept through Macao. The community set up a large tent in Taipa for the victims; Lou Kau was the most generous donor.

In May 1888, Lou took Portuguese nationality. In 1892, he founded Tong Shan Tang, a charitable association for Chinese. In 1890 and 1894, he received awards from the King of Portugal for his contributions to Macao society and, in 1898, an award from the Chinese emperor.

Like other rich Chinese of his time, he took several wives. Historical accounts give different numbers; the largest is 10 wives, with 17 sons and 16 daughters. He had more than a dozen properties where the wives lived. One lived in the Mansion that visitors can visit today. His wives and their staff in the different homes did not know when he would come but had to prepare for his arrival at any moment.

At the end of the 19th century, Lou was at his zenith – the richest man in Macao, with a large family, highly respected in society and with the ear of the colony's governor. When he left his home in Xinhui over 40 years before, he could not have imagined such good fortune.

Turn of fate due to new measures by the Chinese authorities in Guangdong

But events in his native Guangdong would turn this happiness into tragedy.

Gambling in the mainland was different to that in Macao. The colonial government regarded it, with opium, as one of its main sources of revenue and protected the operators. It was little concerned with the negative impact on the Chinese who accounted for the vast majority of the customers of both.

The government of Guangdong, and other provinces in China, took a more ambiguous view. They knew that gambling was endemic to Chinese and, whether legal or not, people would gamble. If it was legal, the state gained revenue, which it badly needed – to equip its military to repel foreign invaders.

But the officials knew gambling was a curse that turned wife against husband and children against their parents, destroyed families and



drove businesses into financial ruin. They saw its devastating effect on the fabric of society.

In 1897, the Guangdong government invited operators to bid for a monopoly gambling franchise. For Lou, this was a far larger market than Macao; the province then had a population of over 30 million, against less than 100,000 in the colony. He put together a company named Hong Feng, with nine investors from Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macao and registered capital of 720,000 taels of gold.

It made a bid of one million silver dollars and, on May 18 that year, won the franchise for eight years. The government required the operator to pay the franchise fee for the full period, which amounted to three million dollars. This was an enormous sum at that time, but Lou and his partners believed it better to pay up front; future governors would then not be able to raise the annual fee arbitrarily.

Things did not go well for Hong Feng. The government did not move against illegal operators who continued their casinos and paid no fee to the authorities. This diverted some of its business.

More bad luck with the gaming ban by Guangdong and Guangxi

Worse followed in 1900, when Li Hongzhang, one of the highest officials of the Qing government, came to Guangzhou and said that the franchise period of eight years was too long.

This gave the cue to Cen Chunxuan, Viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi and a bitter opponent of gambling. He said that social chaos threatened the province and gambling was the principal cause. Supported by other officials, he announced a ban – and refused to return the fee paid by Hong Feng.

Worse, he increased the total Lou had to pay to 4.75 million silver dollars, including interest and missed payments. Facing financial ruin, Lou appealed to the Portuguese government for help, on the grounds that he was one of their citizens who deserved help in recognition of all he had done for their colony.

Negotiations continued during the summer of 1904. At a meeting in September, Cen stunned his Portuguese counterpart by showing him documents dating from 1898 – ten years after Lou had taken Portuguese citizenship – that showed he had given it up and returned to being a Chinese. “According to our law, Lou could not be a Portuguese again. He can only have one nationality,” Cen announced triumphantly. “This has nothing to do with you. This is an internal Chinese affair.” The Portuguese side could do nothing.

Cen had another grudge against Lou; he had helped a corrupt official to flee to Macao. After strong pressure from Beijing, the colonial government handed him back on June 23, 1904.

Lou now had debts greater than his considerable assets. With no help from the colonial government, he sought loans from foreign and Chinese merchants in Hong Kong and Macao. But how was he going to repay them?

In despair at the debts and the fierce hostility of Cen and his supporters, he saw no way out. On November 11 1906, he threw a rope over a beam in his principal home – the Mansion – and took his own life. He was 59.



In his father's shadow

It fell to his eldest son, Lou Lim leoc, then 28, to take over the family business. He followed in his father's footsteps, running the gambling operations in Macao and branching into a theatre, silver, pharmaceuticals and pawn-broking. He was a major shareholder in the Nanyang Tobacco Company and the Bao Xiang Bank.

In 1913, he served as the first chairman of the Macao Chamber of Commerce. He was also a major philanthropist, giving money to Kiang Wu Hospital, where he served as chairman for four years. He set up a Confucian school to provide education to the poor at primary and secondary levels and served as its chairman. Like his father, he received awards from the Chinese and Portuguese governments.

One of his legacies is the Lou Lim leoc garden. This was an area of vegetable patches which his father had bought in 1870. He commissioned a well-known Hong Kong architect to turn it into the only Suzhou-style garden in Hong Kong and Macao.

Construction began in 1929, two years after his death. The family later sold most of it. The government bought it in the early 1970s, restored it and opened it to the public in September, 1974.



Lou Lim leoc died on June 17, 1927, aged 49; more than 1,000 people attended the funeral and he was buried in the White Cloud Cemetery in Guangzhou.

In 1937, the gambling franchise of the Lou family expired and was put up for public tender. Another company obtained it and made its fortune during World War II, when Macao became a haven for the rich from Hong Kong and mainland China. Since Portugal was neutral in the war, Macao was the only major city in southern China not occupied by the Japanese military.

The loss of franchise brought the decline of the Lou family. It had to sell some houses and rent out others, including the Mansion; at one time, it was occupied by 20 families.

Chinese see this is an example of a popular saying – ‘fu wu san dai’ – which means ‘wealth does not last longer than three generations’; in other words, the first generation makes a fortune, the second spends it and the third starts again from nothing.

Descendants of Lou Kau live on in Macao, with some operating sportswear shops. But they keep a low profile and avoid the media; some are uneasy about their famous ancestor, who made his fortune out of two of the biggest vices of Chinese.

Not well maintained, the Mansion fell into disrepair, until the government bought it in the 1960s. After Macao’s return to China in 1999, the government relocated its tenants and hired specialists to carry out a painstaking restoration.



The architecture is a mixture of East and West, like Macao itself. The western features include stained glass, like those in neighbouring churches, white ceilings and decorations above the door. Some windows are latticed in the Portuguese style.

It contains a room where Lou honoured his ancestors; there are bird sculptures on the wall, symbols of success and longevity.

It has become a popular venue for cultural and artistic activities. ■

Photos: Eric Tam and Wong Sang





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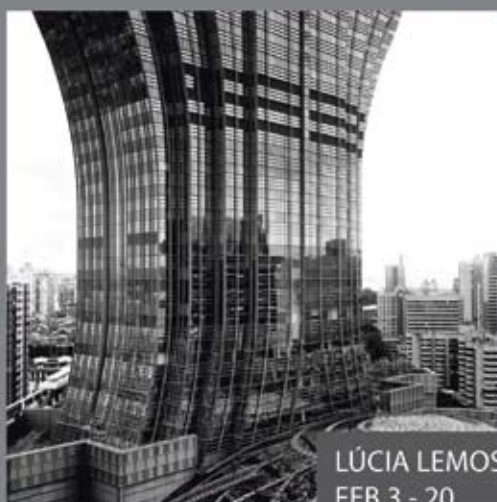
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Traditional festivities marks Macau life

By Maria João Janeiro



Lions and dragons dance in the streets.

Its citizens parade through in honour of Our Lady of Fatima, dance in honour of Saint Nino and the drunken dragon and remember the Stations of the Cross. They bathe statues of the Lord Buddha and

celebrate the birthdays of divinities. They race dragon boats and venerate their ancestors, decorating the city with coloured lanterns, good luck verses and mythical images. They celebrate Christmas and the Chinese New Year with equal fervour.



Fishermen honour goddess A-Ma at Lunar New Year

The Lunar New Year is coming and fishing junks anchor in the Inner Harbour for several days, from the final day of the last lunar month until a specific day in the new year set by divination. On that day, they venerate the spirits of Ancestors, the Sky and the Water. The junks go to the entrance of inner harbour and, in front of the Barra temple, people perform the ritual of worship of the goddess A-Ma.

Other rituals take place before the Lunar New Year. One is held on the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month; one is the replacement of Chou Kuan, the Stove God, so-called because he lives behind the stove. The believers burn his image so that, through the smoke, he may start his journey to heaven, where he will present a report to the Jade Emperor on the behaviour of families during the year. In order to prevent unpleasant reports, the believers sometimes cover the image of the god with honey or another sweet substance or seal his lips. Some

prefer to get him drunk, by offering him wine.

Others offer him lavish banquets, so that he will forget their bad deeds. Seven days later, the faithful place a new image of the god in the niche, where it will stay for a year.

It is not only the image of the Stove God that is renewed. The red and gold lucky papers placed at the entrance to the house are also replaced with new ones; and each house gets a new tangerine tree full of small ripe tangerines, a sign of good luck for the whole family. So everywhere, in markets and small street stalls, tangerine trees are on sale, along with chrysanthemums and peach blossom, both symbols of prosperity, as well as scented narcissi known as Soi Sin Fa or Water Genie Flowers. There is a legend about Soi Sin Fa and its sale at Lunar New Year: an unfortunate young man, who owned only a rocky and muddy patch of land, received a visit from an old man who rose from a pool of water and gave him three bulbs and a flute. He planted the bulbs in the pool, amongst the stones. Afterwards he wandered through towns and villages with his magic

flute playing for the people. Later, on his return at the end of winter, he found the pool covered with beautiful ivory-coloured flowers. There were so many of them that he decided to sell them in the flower market. But nobody had ever seen such a flower and, when he was asked what it was called, he replied: "They are flowers that spring up from the stones, they are the Water Genie Flowers."

People let off firecrackers, beat drums and decorate the city with good luck couplets and coloured lanterns. The city is visited by the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac, always accompanied by the Three Stars, or Sam Seng, the Gods of Fok (happiness or prosperity), Lok (dignity or high Rank) and Sau (longevity), a variety of music and dancing lions and dragons. To end the Lunar New Year celebrations, Cheng lan Chit (Spring Lantern Festival or known as the Chinese Valentine's Day) takes place on the first full moon of the new year, the 15th day of the first lunar month. Tong un, or glutinous rice balls filled with sugar cane and sesame, are traditional on this day and symbolise the full moon.

People celebrate the birthdays of the gods,

such as Tou Tei, the Earth or Neighbourhood God, Pak Tai, the Supreme Being of the North, a hero immortalised for his courage in fighting the Demon King, the Goddess A-Ma and the child gods Tam Kung and Na Tcha. At all these festivals, held next to their temples, people let off firecrackers and perform lion and dragon dances and Chinese operas. They also offer fruit and flowers, incense and paper money which is to be burnt.



In October, on the top of a hill in Coloane, in a complex dedicated to the Goddess A-Ma – the A-Ma Cultural Village - another festival is held in honour of A-Ma or Tin Hau, the goddess of fishermen and people linked to the sea. It is called the Festival of



Culture and Tourism and includes a procession and cultural activities such as opera performances and exhibitions.

People hold festivities at the temples of the Goddess Kun lam, the Goddess of Compassion and Mercy. But it is at Kun lam Tong, on Coronel Mesquita Avenue, where the biggest number of worshippers gather on the 26th day of the first lunar month, the day on which Kun lam “opens the coffers” to “lend” money to her believers. This event, known as Kun lam Hoi Fu, is only celebrated in Macao and Hong Kong. It brings crowds of worshippers to her temples; their offerings include incense, fruit, flowers and windmills, fake money and gold bars.

The Feast of the Drunken Dragon

Tchoi Long or the Feast of the Drunken Dragon, organised by wholesalers of fish and people associated with the sea, takes place on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month. It is at the same time as the “Bathing of the Lord Buddha”, when the faithful clean and purify statues of the Buddha. Both

festivals celebrate the Buddha. In the case of the Drunken Dragon, legend has it that, while he was bathing in the river, the Buddha fought a dragon to the death. Later, the dragon’s head and tail were found by a drunken fisherman who searched widely but was unable to find the rest of the dragon’s body. Another version of the story says that the blood of the dragon purified the waters of a river and thus cured the population of an epidemic. In this festival, which begins in the early morning at the Kuan Tai temple next to the São Domingos market, fishermen march through the streets towards the Inner Harbour, carrying just the head and tail of the dragon, dancing animatedly in search of the dragon’s body. On their way, they visit store owners and residents, drinking wine and eating rice until they can move no more and are replaced by others as they get drunk. The feast, which also takes place near the Red Market and S. Lourenço market, ends with a large meal of “good luck rice.”

On this, the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, there is in Coloane a celebration of Tam Kung, the child god that protects people involved





Dragon Boat festival

in fishing and naval construction. The festivities include a parade through the streets, the letting off of firecrackers next to the temple where people perform Chinese opera on a bamboo stage in the square.

Dragon Boat Festival evokes Chinese traditions

The Tung Ng (Dragon Boat) Festival with its famous races on Nam Van Lake, is also known as the “double five” as it always falls on the fifth day of the fifth moon of the lunar calendar. The festival dates back to sometime between the fifth and third centuries before Christ and commemorates the death of the poet Qu Yuan, also known as Wat Yun in Cantonese, a high-ranking counsellor at the imperial court and an honest man. According to legend, Qu Yuan was upset by the corruption and intrigue in the court and killed himself by jumping into a river. Fishermen tried to save his body before it was eaten by fish and monsters, by stirring up the water with their oars in order to scare away

bad spirits; they also threw in rice cakes to keep the fish away. The dragon boat races are a symbol of the fishermen’s efforts to find the poet’s body. The Tchong, glutinous rice cakes with smoked meats steamed in bamboo leaves in the shape of a pyramid, are associated with the legend. As the fishermen were unable to find the counsellor’s body, they continued to throw the rice cakes to feed the spirit of Qu Yuan; but they were devoured by the sea monsters. Then the spirit of the counsellor asked the fishermen to wrap the cakes in bamboo leaves, which were as sharp as blades, so that the monsters could not eat them.

Young single women and lovers also have their own festival, the Maiden festival, which is associated with the legend of Tchek Noi, the lady weaver. The story goes that, once a year, magpies disappear from the earth and with their wings form a bridge in the starry sky so that the lady weaver Tchek Noi and her lover Ngau Long, the shepherd could meet. The Mother Goddess did not approve of their love; she separated them by drawing a line across the sky with her hairpin, which turned into a raging river. On one side of the river – or the Milky Way - there were three stars, Ngau Long and his twin sons, fruit of the forbidden love. On the other was a single star, Tchek Noi, the lady weaver. Moved by so much unhappiness, the magpies decided once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, to form a bridge over the river so that the two could meet.

People even celebrate souls in grief. Known as the Feast of Hungry Ghosts, this aims to calm roving and hungry spirits that wander the earth. It is held in the seventh lunar month, when the gateway to the Other World is opened on the 14th day and the spirits can roam freely across the earth. These are the souls of the unfortunate people who have no descendants to honour them; they are the restless souls – such as those who died accidentally, who drowned and who committed suicide. These wandering spirits are malicious and should be kept at a distance; to do this, people try to calm them by offering them ghost food, clothing and money. As they are the souls of strangers and not of family members, people always lay the offerings outside





Photo by Carmo Correia

From the book Macau-Colours of Culture

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the home, on pavements or on the side of the road, where they are burnt. The Feast of Hungry Ghosts or Yu Lan Chi ends on the 30th day of the seventh moon; satisfied and satiated by the offerings, the wandering souls return finally to the Other World.

Venerating ancestors

Twice a year the Chinese worship their ancestors: in the spring, it is Cheng Meng, the Festival of Pure Clarity, and in the autumn, Chong Yeong Tchim, or "the Double Ninth Festival." On these days, people go to cemeteries to visit the graves of their relatives laden with gifts and delicacies; they invite their deceased to a banquet that is eaten next to their graves. The origins of Chong Yeong, also known as "Double Nine" as it is celebrated on the ninth day of the ninth moon, go back to the Han dynasty (206 B.C – 220 A.D.). According to legend, a virtuous and wise man called Hang Keng lived in a village in China. He studied the arts of magic with a famous wizard, who one day advised him to go with his family to the highest point of the mountain range and remain there until sunset. He explained that, on the ninth day of the ninth moon, a great calamity would destroy the world; he should seek the highest mountain so that nothing would remain between the sky and the land except him and his family. Hang

Keng carried out those instructions and went to the highest mountain in the range. He took food and wine flavoured with chrysanthemum, a symbol of the sun, of longevity and of marriage. The following day, when he returned to the village, he found a desolate scene – there was no sign of life and nobody had escaped the tragedy. From that day, the custom of visiting the mountains on the ninth day of the ninth moon was established, together with a festival to commemorate the continuation of life. This festival moved from the mountains to the cemeteries where people visit their ancestors and are never short of food or drink.

Lanterns decorate the Mid-Autumn Festival

The Mid-Autumn Festival is held on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month and is called Tchong Chau Chit. It is also called the feast of the moon, feast of the moon cakes or the lantern festival; the night is lit not only by the full moon but also by the many lanterns with which children and adults carry through the streets and parks and along beaches. In China, the moon festival is linked to the moon cake, and is given to friends and family on that day. On the top of the ut-peang or moon cake are images that symbolise the hare, the lunar rabbit or three-footed frog, legendary characters that live on the moon.



A legend linked to the Mid-Autumn Festival is that of the Lunar Rabbit, which goes back a long time and has its origins in Indian Buddhism. In ancient times, there was a rabbit whose virtues were praised by the other animals, such as his generosity and readiness to help those weaker than himself. The Buddha wanted to meet him, but the journey was a long one. Close to the end and tired, the Buddha fell asleep. Whilst he was sleeping, he turned into a beggar monk, whose appearance was pitiful. All the animals got ready to help him, offering him fruit and fish. But the monk would not eat. Distressed because they saw the monk wasting away, the animals decided to ask the rabbit for help. Moved by the sight, the rabbit offered himself as food for the monk, as he believed that fresh meat could save him. To the surprise of all the animals, just as the rabbit was preparing to cast himself into the fire, the monk once again became the Buddha and stopped him from sacrificing himself. The Buddha then gave the rabbit a place in the lunar palace and his image, known as the Jade Rabbit or Lunar rabbit, is represented by a hare or rabbit with short fore paws and long back paws who pounds the jade or immortality elixir in a mortar.

Burmese, Thais and Filipinos celebrate their Gods and Saints

The Burmese community in Macao celebrate Thingyan or the Water Festival; Thingyan means "to pass from one year to another", with the spirit purified by water. Organised by the Macao Myanmar Overseas Chinese Association, it includes dance and traditional music performances and is generally held on the last weekend in April. For its part, the Thai community in Macao celebrates with traditional dances the birthday of the Four-Faced Buddha, as part of a Buddhist ceremony held in November, next to the Altar of the Four-Faced Brahma on Taipa island.

The Catholic festivals begin on the third Sunday of January when the Philippine community celebrates Santo Niño de Cebu. To the rhythm of the drums, they dance the sinulog to honour the Child Jesus. Two steps forward and one back, the dancers sway



their bodies in imitating the waves of a river. The word sinulog means exactly that -- the movement of river water, specifically the Pahina River in Cebu. It is an ancient ritual that pre-dates Christianity but was assimilated by it and to which Santo Niño (the Holy Child of Cebu) became associated; his image was given to Queen Hara Amihan by Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan. The story goes that years later in 1565 when the Spanish occupied the Philippines, a chest was found containing, along with the sinulog idols, the image of the Holy Child given by Magellan; this is the reason it is linked to the sinulog.

There is another Philippine festival, in honour of San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers. This is the San Isidro Pahiyas Festival, which includes religious celebrations such as Mass and a procession as well as a gastronomic festival, concerts and traditional dance. Organised by the Quezonian Association of Macau, the festival takes place at Praça da Amizade on 15 May.



Catholic procession in downtown Macao

Processions unique in China: Our Lady of Fatima

During Lent, festivals are restricted to religious celebrations. On the eve of the first Sunday in Lent, the faithful hold a procession of the cross and take the image of Christ from Santo Agostinho Church to the Cathedral, where it stays for a night of vigil. The next day they bring it back to the church of Santo Agostinho, along the Via Dolorosa. It is one of the most popular Catholic processions, held in Macau for centuries. On 13 May, believers hold another popular Catholic procession, in honour of Our Lady of Fatima; it runs through the streets of Macau between the church of S. Domingos and Our Lady of Penha de França.

June is the month of the popular saints. Saint Anthony is celebrated on June 13 with Masses in Cantonese and Portuguese and a procession from the saint's church to as far as the Camões Gardens. Saint John, the patron saint of the city of Macao, has his festival in the S. Lázaro neighbourhood, with food and drink stalls, music and traditional dancing - a very Portuguese party.

In November, the town of Taipa fills with colour and aromas when people from Portuguese-speaking countries set up kiosks with their cuisine and handicrafts. The Lusophone Festival includes

music and dance performances and traditional games, such as sack races and table football.



On 8 December, there is a celebration of the Immaculate Conception, a day that is a public holiday in Macao. The streets and squares are filled with stands and lights hung like silver chains, heavily decorated Christmas trees and cribs, sleighs, reindeer and snowmen. Like everywhere in the world, people here celebrate Christmas – and Macau residents do it in their own special way, with a rich variety of cuisines on Christmas Eve. ■

Note: Names of Chinese gods and festivals mentioned in this article are in Cantonese spellings

Photos :Carmos Correia, Eric Tam and GCS

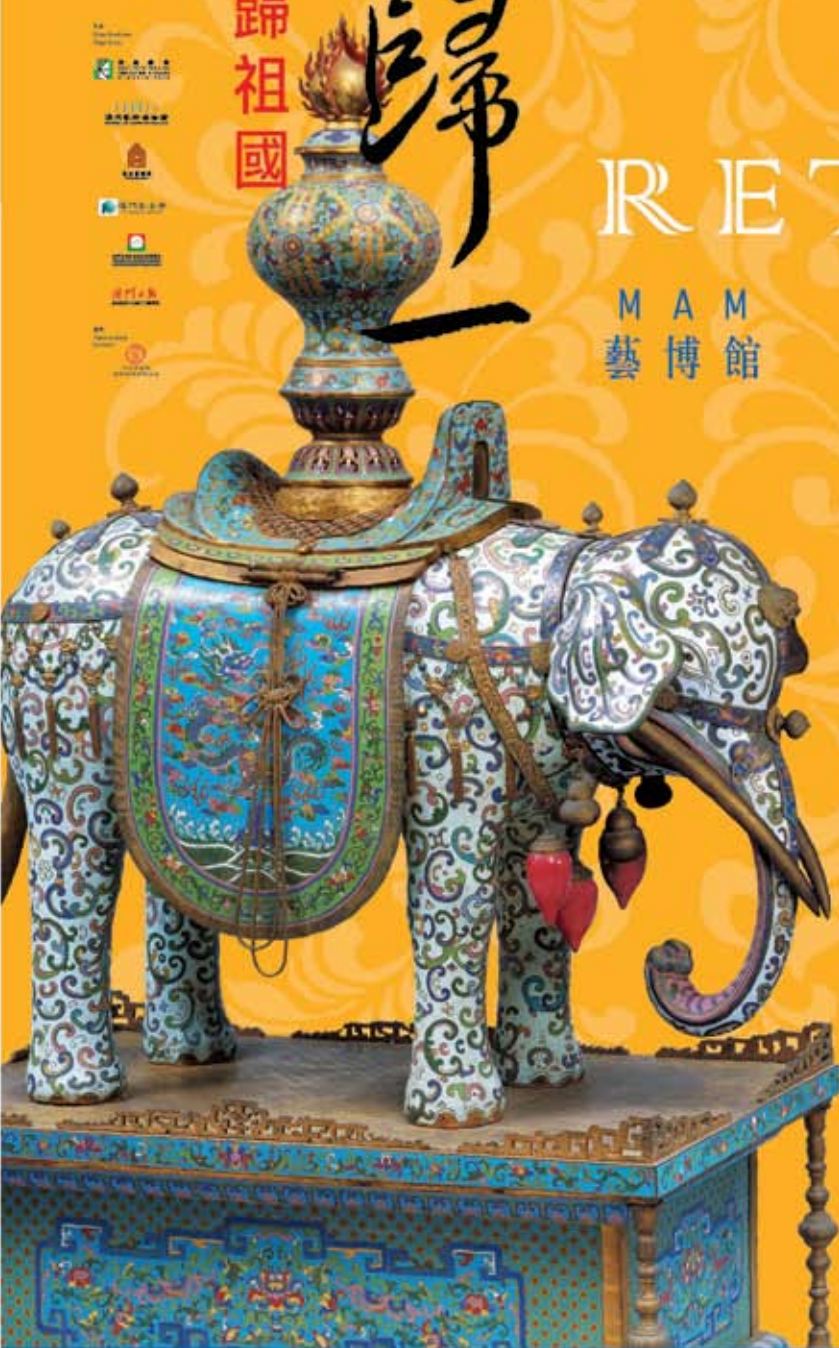
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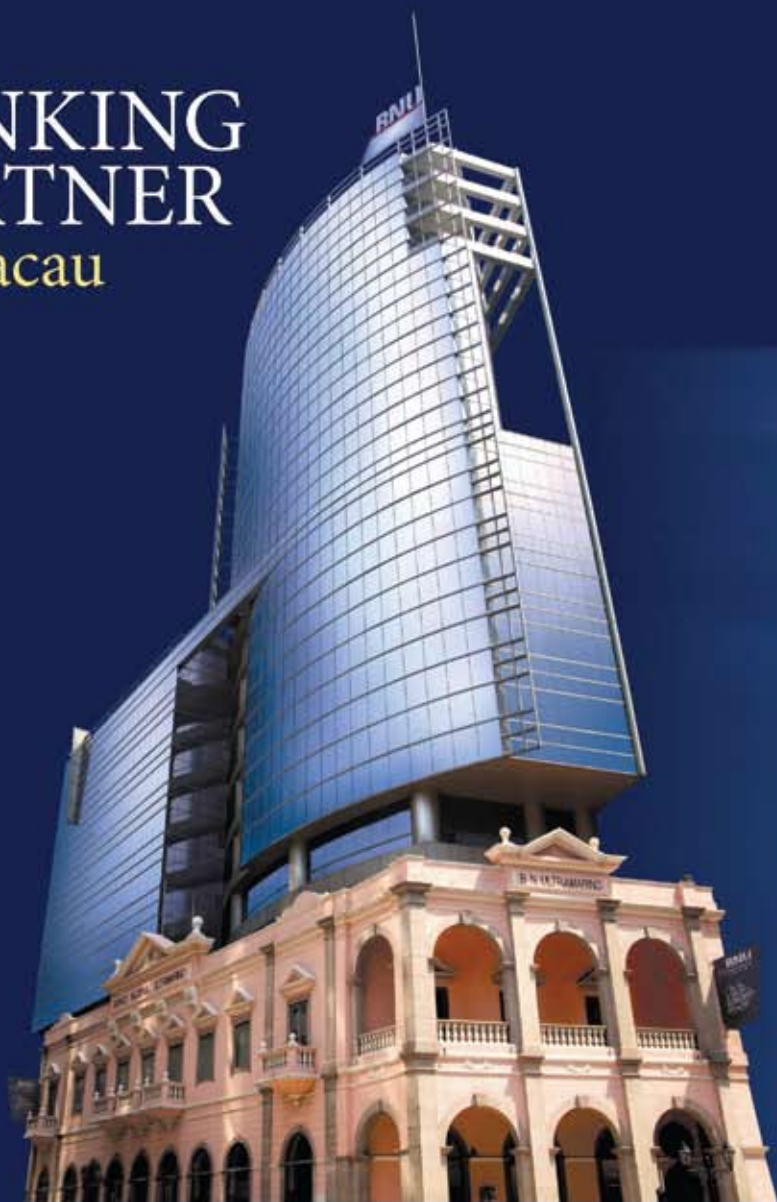
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