

# macao

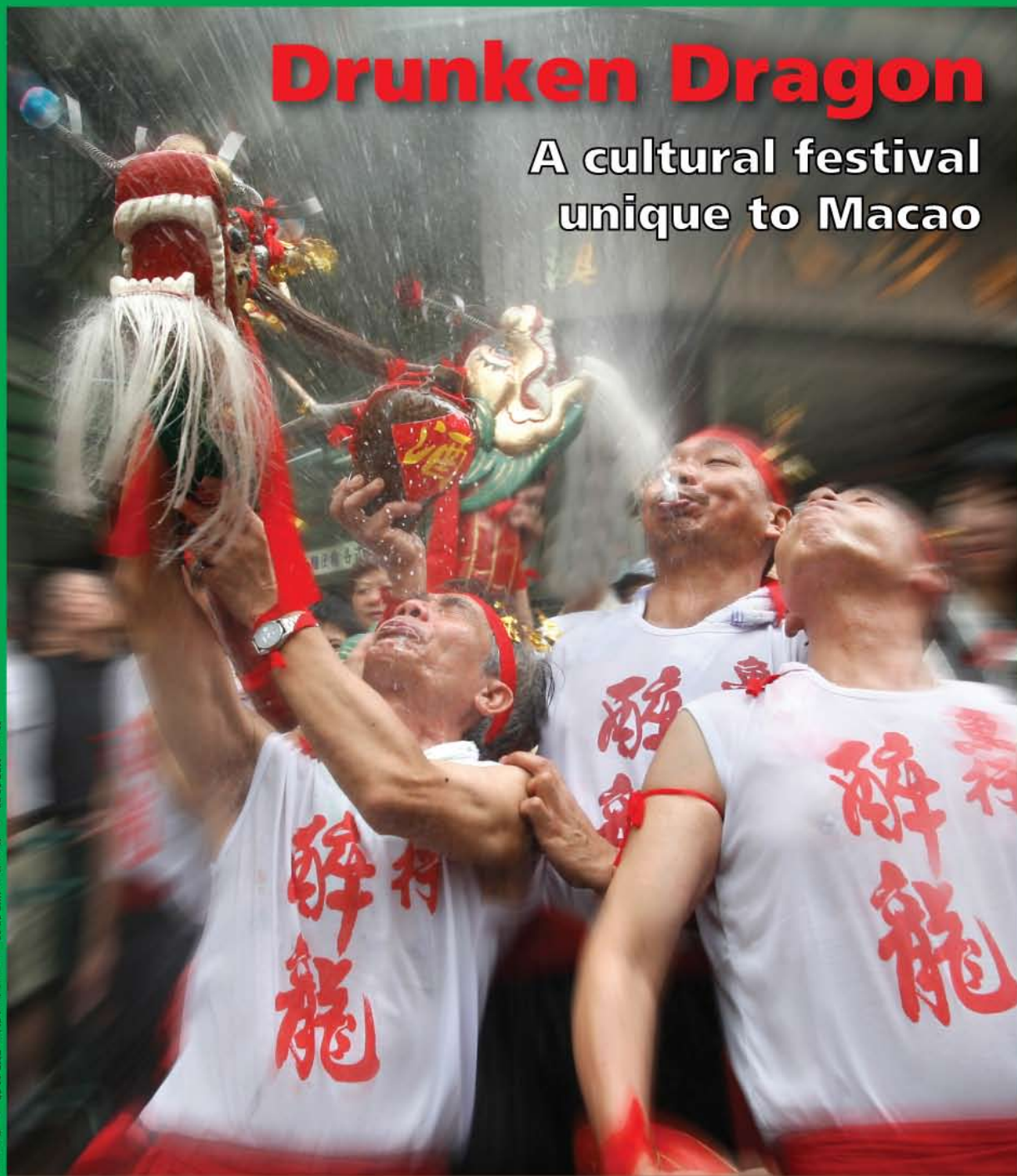
APRIL 2012

Quarterly

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## Drunken Dragon

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**General Ye Ting**  
Macao remembers  
a military hero

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## Forgiveness [Shu]

"Forgiveness is the action of the heart" is a traditional Chinese saying.

In the character for shu 'forgiveness', the 'heart' pictogram is complemented by the character for 'like' or 'equal to', which in turn is made up of a pictogrammatic 'woman' and 'mouth'.

Forgiveness, therefore, is a natural thing - it is 'like the heart' to forgive, for human nature is naturally benevolent.

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



教育暨青年局  
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*Ye Ting (L.) and Mao Zedong statues in the Museum dedicated to the general in Huiyang, Guangdong*



# Military Hero

## Macao remembers famous General of the Revolution

By Mark O'Neill



*General Ye Ting during the military campaign in Wan Nan*

**The government of Macao has opened to the public the former residence of one of the most famous Chinese generals of the 20th century.**

Ye Ting lived there with his family from 1931 to 1937, before he left to join the war against Japan. His wife and children remained in the house until 1942.

Ye played a key role in many historical events of the Republican period. He fought in the Northern Expedition of 1926–27 that helped to unite China, as well as in two revolutionary uprisings in Nanchang and Guangzhou in 1927. He was one of the founders of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and served as a commander of the New Fourth Army against Japan.

He died in an air crash in April 1946, in which his wife and two of his children were also killed.

In October 1988, the Central Military Commission named Ye as one of the 36 military founders of the People's Republic. In September 2009, on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the republic, he was named 'one of the 100 model heroes of New China'.



*Opening of the General Ye Ting house museum in Macao*

## Restoration

Last December, senior officials and members of the Ye family attended a ceremony at his former house in Macao – 76 Rua Almirante Costa Cabral – to unveil a statue of the general, his wife and two of his children, and to declare the residence open to the public.

Those present included former Chief Executive and Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC (the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) Edmund Ho Hau Wah. Also present were Acting Chief Executive Florinda Chan and leading officials from the offices of the Foreign Ministry, the PLA and the Central Government's Liaison Office, as well as Ye Huaming and Ye Zhengguang, the fourth and seventh sons of the general.

In an address, Ung Vai Meng, director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), said that during his years in Macao, Ye had spent an unforgettable period, reflecting the warmth of his family and a devotion to serving his country. To enable the public to appreciate his spirit, the SAR government renovated the building, commissioned the statue and arranged an exhibition of photographs.

The two-storey house is of Western design, with a garden at the front and a total floor area of 180 square metres. It includes photographs and materials provided by the family and by the Museum of Ye Ting in his home town of Huizhou, Guangdong province. It is open to the public every day, including public holidays.

After the family left in 1942, the house was bought by Mr Ho Yin, who later gave the property to the Women's Association to be used as a nursery. In 2009, the Macao government had the idea to restore the property as a museum and offered an alternative site for the association, which moved out in October 2011.

In the first phase of restoration, the IC spent 1.7 million patacas on refurbishing the house. Currently, only the ground floor is open, showing photographs and a film about General Ye made by China Central Television. Studies for the second phase have begun; exhibits will include furniture donated by family members and relatives.

"We aim to complete the work this year, using old photographs and accounts of Ye's three remaining children," said Dr Tang Sipeng, a history specialist at the IC. "For Ye Ting, Macao was a place of shelter, like a bird's nest, where he took refuge during his life."





*The house where Ye Ting lived with the family in Macao*



*Ye Ting Museum in Huiyang, Guangdong*

## Joining the battlefield

A new museum in Ye Ting's hometown of Huiyang, in Guangdong Province, tells the story of his tragic life. Built at a cost of 60 million yuan, it opened last September on a site of 20 hectares next to his family home. It replaced a smaller museum in the urban area of Huiyang that opened in 1991 and closed in March 2010; its items were moved to the new museum.

Ye was born on 10 September 1896, the eighth of 11 children of a Hakka family. His father, who had worked on plantations in Malaya, made a modest living from growing pears and helping his own father in his Chinese medicine shop. At the age of seven, Ye went to the village school; a smart student, he learnt quickly. At the age of 15, he moved to a new school. The country was in revolutionary ferment; in March 1911, after an uprising in Guangdong against the Qing government, Ye and other students cut off

their pigtails – an act of defiance, for which they were expelled.

From 1912 to 1919, he attended military schools in Guangzhou, Wuhan and Baoding; the third was the most prestigious military academy in China at the time.

After graduation, he joined the Kuomintang, and served in an army supporting Sun Yat-sen. In June 1922, he helped to save Sun and his wife Soong Ching-ling when a rival bombarded his palace in Guangzhou.

In August 1924, he became the first member of the KMT to study at the Communist University for Oriental Workers in Moscow; in December that year, he applied to join the Chinese Communist Party.

In February 1926, he married Li Xiuwen, the daughter of a wealthy businessman from Dongguan. She would bear him nine children.







The general Ye Ting during the war against Japan portrayed in the museum

### Switching parties

In August 1925, he and other students returned home via Russia and Japan to take part in the Northern Expedition launched by Chiang Kai-shek to unify China. He played a major role in this operation, leading troops who captured the provincial capitals of Nanchang and Wuchang. As a tribute, they were given the name the 'Iron Army'. But Ye switched from the KMT to the Communist side. In the summer and winter of 1927, he took part in two failed uprisings against the KMT government, in Nanchang and Guangzhou. The Communist leaders blamed him for the failure in Guangzhou and expelled him from the party. He became an 'orphan', an outcast from both of China's major parties. He was forced into exile. For four years, he lived in Europe – Paris, Vienna and mainly Berlin, where he eked out a meagre living; he sold fruit at a stall and ran a small restaurant, selling soya bean and fried dough to Chinese workers. In his spare time, he went to public libraries to study military technology and tactics, and visited German

experts; the country had the world's most powerful army. During his exile, his wife and second son would sometimes join him. After the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in September 1931, he could not bear to remain abroad any longer. In 1931, he and his family took a boat to Macao, where his father-in-law had bought a house. The in-laws lived on the ground floor, Ye and his family on the second floor. The KMT invited him to rejoin their army, but he refused. Yet he was not welcome either by the Communists who suspected him of being a KMT spy. He visited his contacts in Macao, Hong Kong and Fuzhou but was unable to play an active role in national affairs. This period in Macao lasted for six years, and was a time of peace. Several of his children were born in Macao. He had no income, his family living instead off money provided by his father-in-law. "The Macao house was important to him as a refuge," said Gong Shihua, the tour guide at the Huiyang museum. "He had no other place to go. Neither the KMT nor the Communists believed in him."



*Ye Ting statue in the entrance of the museum dedicated to his life*

## General-turned-prisoner

Finally, after Japan launched its all-out attack on China in July 1937, he was able to resume his military career, as the two parties co-operated to oppose Japan.

In September 1937, he was appointed commander of the New Fourth Army. Over the next three years, he led his army in operations in Anhui province and the Huai river basin; it grew in size from 10,000 to 200,000 men. According to the official record, it took part in 4000 operations and killed more than 100,000 of the enemy. He received congratulations from Chiang Kai-shek and other KMT leaders.

But Chiang still regarded him as a Trojan Horse; his long-term enemy was not Japan but the Communists.

So, in January 1941, Chiang laid a trap that became known as the 'Wannan incident', in Anhui province.

Ye and 9000 men found themselves surrounded by a KMT army numbering tens of thousands. After a week of fierce fighting, only 2000 remained; the rest had been killed or taken prisoner. Without food or ammunition, Ye surrendered.

He spent the rest of the war as a prisoner, in five different locations. This was the supreme irony of his life. As a highly trained and outstanding officer, he could not use his talents during the most devastating war of his nation's history. While his comrades risked their lives on the battlefield, he was tending pigs and digging vegetables; he was allowed to go out, under guard, only to buy newspapers and cigarettes. He was a helpless spectator of China's battle for life and death.

He had to wait until the end of the war to be released. It took months of negotiations between the government and the Communist Party before Chiang agreed to free his political prisoners.



Ye finally stepped into the crisp air of freedom at 18:00 on 4 March 1946, after five years and two months in prison.

He re-applied for and was given membership of the Communist Party.

On 8 April, 36 days after regaining his freedom, he took a plane with other freed Communists from Chongqing to the Communist headquarters at Yanan in northwest China; with him was his wife and two of their children. The four aircraft crew were experienced American pilots.

That afternoon, after a re-fuelling stop in Xian, the plane took off and was approaching Yanan when it crashed into a mountain; all 13 passengers and four crew members were killed.

It was a tragic ending for Ye and his wife; he was 50 and she was 39. They left behind five children.

### Poignant photographs

"The cause of the crash is a mystery," said Tang. "Ye's wife had borne nine children but could not enjoy the blessings they brought."

Three of Ye's sons are still alive and have helped the IC greatly in the restoration work. It was they and their children who supplied the poignant photographs which hang on the wall.

They include images of Ye as a military student in Baoding, Germany, as well as meeting American journalist Edgar Snow, riding a horse in military operations in central China, and with two Japanese prisoners.

One room contains photographs taken in Macao, with a Leica camera which Ye bought in Germany; he was a keen photographer. They show his wife, their children and the grandparents, on a trip on an outlying island.

It also contains a book of photographs taken by Ye, including those of his military career and beautiful landscapes in different parts of China.

"Ye was an active soldier for only about four and a half years – one year during the Northern Expedition and three and a half fighting the Japanese," said Tang. "In addition, he served as a bodyguard to Sun Yat-sen. In Yanan, they could hear the sound of the plane before it crashed. It was a tragic end." ■

*Photos by Eric Tam, Louise do Rosario and IC courtesy*



*Family photo in Macao (1939)*





# Education Reformer

Official devotes career  
to transforming local  
school system

By Louise do Rosario

Macao has made great strides in education over the last few decades. The city now provides 15 years of free education for children from kindergarten through to the third year of senior high school. It's a huge change from the minimal tuition subsidies offered in the past. Universities have also thrived, increasing from just one university in 1981 to ten higher education institutions today.

Sou Chio Fai, director of the Tertiary Education Services Office (GAES), is one of the city's senior officials most closely involved in this major transformation.



*Sou Chio Fai*



## A career in education

Sou, 46, started his career as a civil servant in 1989, when he joined the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) as a junior staff member. In 2003 he was promoted to the post of director of the Bureau. In March 2011 he was appointed director of GAES.

"I sometimes joke that my career in education, which has lasted for 23 years so far, resembles that of the educational structure of Macao. By the time I retire, I will have spent as many years working as it takes for a child to complete his or her education from kindergarten to gaining a doctoral degree."

Sou was born in Macao into a working-class family. He received his first degree, in social sciences, with first-class honours, from the then Macau East Asia University. On graduation, he went to Portugal for a ten-month language course, with financial assistance from the Macao government. "Lisbon looked like Macao to me; even the dustbins were the same," he said, adding that he learned much about the Portuguese culture as well as about Europe during his stay.

On his return, Sou stumbled into a career in education by accident. "I went to DSEJ to enquire on behalf of a friend about his application for a student loan. The officer there told me that there were vacancies in the department and asked me to apply."

### Helping needy students

In 1989 the 24-year-old Sou joined DSEJ, where he would eventually stay until 2011. His first task was to handle financial assistance required for needy students.

School tuition was a major burden on low-income families at the time. There was no free education, and 90 percent of the schools were privately run.

At DSEJ, financial assistance was provided for qualified students, first for tuition and textbooks and later on for school meals. The need for such help was great. In 1990, there were about 60,000

students in primary and secondary schools; about 10,000 applied for government aid, according to Sou. "In those days, government resources for education were scarce. The priority then was to help poor students to pay their school fees."

Student assistance disbursed by DSEJ increased rapidly, from MOP 20.3 million in the academic year of 1989–90 (September to June) to MOP 66 million in 2000–2001.

In August 1991, the government passed the landmark Macao Education System Bill, the first official law on education in the city. This comprehensive law laid out long-term objectives and covered all aspects of education, from government involvement to the needs of students. It provided a framework on which new education policies and institutions were to be made.

Sou, as a senior official at DSEJ, was involved in many of the reforms. One challenge was the re-registration of all existing schools in the early 1990s, which met with resistance from some school administrators.

For decades, schools in Macao were run with minimal government supervision. In 1993, a bill was passed requiring all schools to go through the registration process, supplying details of their operation, owners, directors, financial situation and other aspects of administration.

Sou recalls a particularly tough case in 1995, when a Jesuit-run school opposed the re-registration. The incident dragged on for a year before it was resolved.

In the mid-1990s, the focus of the reforms changed to the state of schools, many of which were dilapidated and overcrowded. "I remember visiting schools in 1991–92 that were very cramped, attempting to accommodate over 80 students in one tiny classroom. Some were built in squatter areas, with no air conditioning despite the periods of scorching heat," he said. Teachers were given help too, in the form of financial subsidies and further professional training.



## Great demand for basic education

Macao underwent major demographic changes, with an influx of immigrants, mainly from rural China. This created a huge strain on the city's education infrastructure and demanded a speedy policy response. The government reacted by devoting resources to making education available to more students. Spending on education grew from MOP84.7 million (or 0.8 percent of GDP) in 1985 to MOP\$355.7 million (or 1.4 percent of GDP) in 1990 and MOP\$1.65 billion (or 3.4 percent of GDP) in 1999.

One major marker of Macao's recent educational development is the provision of free education. It was first offered in the academic year of 1996–97, covering seven years of education (one year of pre-school and six years of primary-school education). "It was a Herculean project, involving a great deal of work," he said.

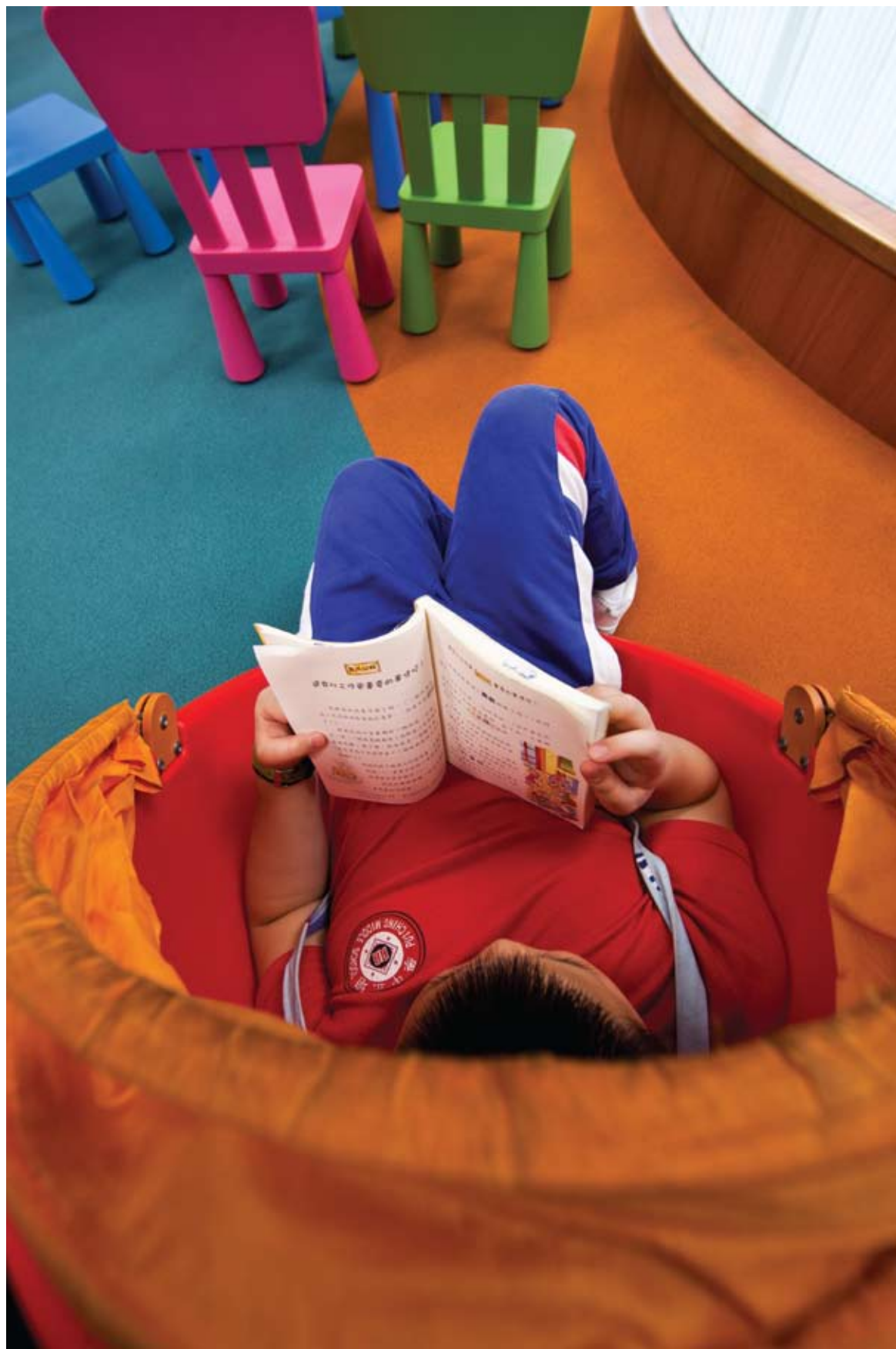
In 1999, the government made education mandatory for all children from 5 to 15 years old. In 2007–2008, the system was further extended to the current 15 years of free education, from the first year of kindergarten to the third year of senior high school. Subsidies to implement the free education programme rose from MOP 58.89 million in 2006–2007 to MOP 108 million in 2010–2011.

Sou, who was made director of DSEJ in 2003, summarised Macao's educational reform of this period into three phases. "The government extended its supervision of schools to cover not only the state schools but also the private ones. The latter included those set up by religious bodies and private associations." At the last count, there were 78 schools, of which 67 are privately run.

The next phase involved setting up a proper framework for standardising and institutionalising educational policies and entities. In 2006, the Fundamental Law of Non-tertiary Education System was passed to replace the 1991 law, laying down all the principles that govern Macao's new, reformed educational system. Among the many provisions was a standardisation of kindergarten and senior secondary education, each to last for three years. Previously, different schools had different systems, with the years ranging from two to three.

In the final phase, Macao's educational policies have shifted the emphasis from quantity to quality. "From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, we were preoccupied with providing enough school places to cope with the sudden rise in population. Since the handover to China in 1999, the situation has greatly improved, with demand for basic education being met. Now, with the drop in population growth, the time has come to concentrate on quality."





## Quality over quantity

Statistics reflect these changes. In 2006–2007, there were 85,306 students in infant, primary, secondary and special education. The numbers dropped to 72,364 in 2010–2011. The number of teachers rose from 4,445 to 5,104 during this period. This has led to a much-improved teacher-to-student ratio, while the average class has 30.5 students in it, rather than the 80 or more of the past.

Backing such progress in basic education is much-increased government funding. DSEJ's annual budget rose from MOP 90.2 million in 1999 to MOP 236 million in 2010. In addition, the Student Welfare Fund and the Education Development Fund (set up in 2006) have provided extra funding of MOP 69 million to support non-tertiary education.

Looking back over his years at DSEJ, Sou said it was an extraordinary period. From 2003 they passed "an average of one bill in less than a fortnight", totalling 204 provisions. "Our hope was to raise the quality of basic education, to consolidate the educational system and to make it accessible to the majority of people. It was a process of exploration, with much trial and error."

## Expanding tertiary education

In his new job at GAES, Sou is facing a different set of challenges: to develop Macao into a world-class centre for tertiary education and provide aid to students at local tertiary education institutes.

At the swearing-in ceremony of his GAES appointment in March 2011, Sou listed three major means of reaching these goals: to revise outdated regulations on tertiary education, to secure funds to develop the sector, and to restructure and redefine GAES functions.

"Tertiary education is becoming increasingly important as an industry. In some countries like Australia and the United Kingdom, the sector has contributed much to the local economy... In Macao, we need to attract more foreign students, who will in turn stimulate consumption, help us to diversify our economy and allow our next generation to have more exposure to different cultures and lifestyles. Foreign students, on completion of their studies, can take home their learning experience and knowledge of Macao's culture."

Sou said Macao's current tertiary education sector is too small, with only 26,000 students at the ten higher education institutions. It needs to co-operate with universities elsewhere, especially those in the Pearl River Delta. ■

*Photos by Luís Almoester*







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# Taking Credit

Pawnshops play a key role in Macao's economic history

By Mark O'Neill



Tak Seng On Museum in Macao





## **On the main commercial street in downtown Macao, one shop stands out from the others.**

The words 'good for six months' beckon in customers towards the high counter lined with steel bars and fronted by a red, wooden screen.

Welcome to Tak Seng On, once the biggest pawnshop in the city, boasting an eight-storey granite warehouse full of gold, jewellery and precious stones.

Pawnshops have a 450-year history in Macao. During the 80 years from the end of the Qing dynasty until the 1960s, they performed an invaluable role – a 'bank' for the poor and a place for the rich to store their valuables. Opened in 1917, Tak Seng On was the largest; it belonged to Kou Ho Ning, a wealthy businessman who owned a chain of pawnshops. A job in a pawnshop was highly desirable and only open to those with a good recommendation. Those who got in worked there for their whole lives.

But the establishment of a modern banking sector, the widespread use of credit cards and the provision of welfare by the government have replaced many of the functions of pawnshops. One after another closed down, including Tak Seng On, in 1993. Those that remain, clustered around the city's casinos, perform a more limited role – providing instant credit to gamblers who run out of cash.

In 2000, the owners of the Tak Seng On building wanted to sell it. Unwilling to see this important part of the city's history disappear, the government stepped in and spent 1.4 million patacas to restore it to its former glory.

It opened officially as a museum on 21 March 2003 and is now visited by 5,000 people each month. The Macao pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo last year included a replica of the Tak Seng On – a sign of its valued place in the collective memory.

## **An ancient institution**

In the mainland, pawnshops have a longer history, spanning 1,500 years. They were places where people could bring all kinds of goods to pawn and receive money in return. The shops charged a rate of interest and gave customers a fixed period in which to reclaim the item. If they returned within

the period, they paid back the original amount, plus the interest, and took back the item. If they did not return in time, they forfeited the pawned item, which the shop then sold to others.

The profession required those who worked in it to have an intimate knowledge of the goods they traded: in a matter of seconds, the cashier had to assess the worth of the item in front of him and what it would fetch on the second-hand market. He would also need to bargain with the customers to get a good price.

The staff of the pawnshops needed years of experience before they were given the job of cashier. The responsibility of bargaining with customers and assessing the value of the goods they were being offered required a great deal of training.

In Macao, the first record of a pawnshop appears in 1557, soon after the arrival of the Portuguese. It served officials, soldiers and ordinary people.

The style and design of the pawnshops mirrored those in the mainland.

In Tak Seng On, the counter was positioned high up, above the height of the tallest customer. This was to ensure that he had to look up to the cashier and feel inferior; it put the cashier in a stronger bargaining position, so he could push the price down. The customer could not see the measuring instrument on the cashier's desk.

The red screen in front of the shop counter hid the customer from the street, so that passers-by could not see him. To visit a pawnshop was a sign of debt and shame; you did not want others to know.

The counter was equipped with a magnifying glass, which the cashier used to examine watches, jewellery, jade and other precious items and assess their value. He also had an instrument to measure diamonds.

The counter had a register to record each item handed in, along with the date, the owner and the amount paid for it. The customer received a pawn ticket, on which this information was recorded.

Then a junior member of staff wrapped the item in brown paper and a piece of string, with the information on its contents attached. On the wall was a notice warning staff not to buy goods for themselves; the penalty was dismissal. The risk of this kind of 'insider trading' was too high.



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*Kou Ho Ning house*

## **Vaults of treasure**

Members of the public were not allowed into the shop, for security reasons; a door with steel bars blocked their entry. The only exceptions were wealthy customers allowed to enter and given a seat next to the cashier; they could sit at the same height as him, a sign of their higher status.

The rich were a different kind of client. They did not use the pawnshop because they needed money but as a place to store valuables. They considered the monthly interest worth paying, compared to the risk of keeping the goods at home, where they might be stolen. Today they would leave the same items in the safety deposit box of a bank.

At the back of the shop, separated by a narrow alley, was the eight-storey warehouse in which the goods were stored. These were among the sturdiest buildings in the city, built to withstand fire, flooding and theft. They were built with granite foundations, thick brick walls and steel plates. Each floor had granite casements and four narrow slit windows.

On the ground floor were safes which contained precious items like gold and jewellery. Less valuable goods were stored in wooden racks, neatly wrapped

and labelled. Junior staff ate and slept in the pawnshop and rarely went out, thereby deterring robbers who wanted to steal the treasures in the warehouse.

Monthly interest rates went as high as 11 per cent, depending on the item and the client.

## **The power of pawning**

Visitors to the pawnshop museum in Macao can listen to the recollections of Leung Wa, the senior cashier of Tak Seng On when it closed.

"You started working in a pawnshop with a recommendation," he said. "Few people came in unknown, without a recommendation. You learnt the job slowly and carefully. You had to learn how to register the items and write the tickets. It was very important to keep careful records. The quality and moral character of the staff were important. We were entrusted with looking after the goods of other people. If you lost them, it was very troublesome."

He said it took years of experience to learn all aspects of the business and rise to a senior position. There were seven grades of employees.





*Old pawnshop house in Macao's Inner Harbour*

"In those days, the pawnshop played an important role in the economy. There were no banks and no deposit boxes. The wealthy left their goods here for safety reasons. People trusted and respected pawnshops."

At their peak, the pawnshops, numbering nearly 100, were concentrated in the city's main commercial district, like the banks of today. "Now they have moved to the area close to the casinos. There are no traditional pawnshops any more.

"One thing I can never forget is people bringing their children to the shop. In those days, the quality of medical care was poor and parents feared their children would not grow up strong and healthy. They had a superstitious belief about pawnshops. We would allow the child to enter and walk around, enabling the shop to rub off on him and give him health and riches in the future. Then the parents would give us a red packet (with money inside it) to thank us."

Leung and his colleagues handled all kinds of goods. The poor brought whatever they had – jackets, coats, clothes, shoes, blankets, leather bags, sewing machines and work tools. They could leave them for a maximum of six months, with a one-month extension. If they did not claim them, they were taken to second-hand shops and sold.

### **The uncrowned king**

The owner of Tak Seng On and the 'king of pawnshops' in Macao was Kou Ho Ning. Born in 1878 into a poor family in Panyu, south of Guangzhou, he lost his father at the age of five. At 14, he left home to work on the streets. In 1911, he moved to Macao where he won an official permit to run a fan-tan parlour (a gambling game). In 1914, with ten friends, he obtained a concession to manage an opium business.

He diversified into shipping, and opened a bank and several pawnshops. In 1937, with an associate, he got a licence to operate a casino, which he ran for more than 20 years. He was an active philanthropist, setting up schools and contributing generously to charities like Tong Sin Tong, the Macao and the Portuguese Red Cross and the Kiang Wu hospital. Kou received a decoration from the Portuguese government and died at his home in Hong Kong in 1955, aged 77. He has a school in Hong Kong named after him and is one of the few Chinese to have a street named after him in Macao.

## Old stigma

Pawnshops on the mainland began in the North-South dynasty (420–589 AD). They fulfilled an important role in economic life and offered a high rate of return and a high risk to those who operated them. In the pre-1949 period, there were more than 300 in Beijing alone.

For many Chinese, the most memorable account of a pawnshop comes in a short story 'Call to Arms' published in 1923 by Lu Xun, one of the country's most famous novelists in the first half of the 20th century. Since his father is gravely ill, the author is forced to pawn many of the family's possessions to buy medicines. "At the pawnshop, the counter was twice as high as me. I handed over clothes and jewellery and borrowed money with a sense of humiliation. Then I went to the pharmacy and bought medicines at a counter which was the same height as me, for my father who had been sick for a long time."

Many people despised pawnshops for taking advantage of the poor and taking goods off them at knock-down prices. The high counter was a symbol of this inequality between cashier and vendor, of the wealth of the pawnbroker and the poverty of his customers.

For its part, the new Communist government regarded the shops as 'exploiting the people' and closed down the industry. The sector did not re-emerge until December 1987 when one opened in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province; it was the first in post-1949 China.

Since 1988, pawnshops have re-opened in Liaoning, Shanxi, Guangzhou, Shanghai and other places. The first in Beijing opened at the end of 1992. Their interest rates go up to three per cent a month, with a maximum retention period of three years.

## Pawnshops in Macao today

In December 1903, the government of Macao issued regulations to standardise the pawnshop industry. They divided them into three categories – Tong, On and Ngat. The Tong made the longest contracts, of up to three years, and charged the lowest interest. The On made contracts of up to two years, with a higher rate, and the Ngat made short-term contracts, with the highest rate.

World War II was a boom period for the industry. The population tripled to 450,000, with a flood of refugees from the mainland and Hong Kong. Everything was in shortage and the cost of basic commodities soared; people needed pawnshops to borrow money as they had nowhere else to go.

The ones which remain today are mostly Ngat, concentrated in the streets close to the major casinos. Their main customers are gamblers who need money quickly and pawn watches, jewellery, earrings, branded pens and other high-value items. Some are open 24 hours a day, to provide the best service to all-night gamblers. The variety of goods they accept is limited – no clothes, furniture or household items as in the past. They only want goods for which there is a ready second-hand market.

In some cases, they have a sister shop in Hong Kong, where clients can redeem their item after pawning it in Macao. ■

*Photos by Eric Tam*







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# Bottoms Up

By Staff Reporter





## Japanese brewer to make Macao Beer international brand

**This year, for the first time, people in Japan will be able to buy Macao Beer, the Special Administrative Region's only local brand.**

The manufacturer is planning to export it to other markets too, including Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

"Macao's reputation is improving more and more, and it's spreading," said Tatsuya Kaburagi, executive vice-president of Kirin Brewery (Zhuhai). "We want our brand to grow with it and become an international brand."

Kirin is one of Japan's two biggest beer-makers, running operations across the globe. It manufactures Macao Beer in a large factory in the Jinding district of Zhuhai, which borders Macao. Annual production is 15,000 24-bottle cases a year, of which currently 99 percent is sold in Macao and one percent in Zhuhai.

It is a premium brand, selling for 20–30 patacas, and competes against European and American beers like Carlsberg, Budweiser and Heineken. It is sold in Portuguese and other Western restaurants, as well as in hotels and casinos.

"It is for those who want to experience the culture of Macao," said Kaburagi. "We have kept its classical European taste. We don't produce it in large quantities as we want to keep it as a special brand. We will gradually increase output and expand the market."

"This year we will begin exporting the beer to Japan. Starting off with 1000 cases, we will sell it in department stores, as a gift set, as well as in restaurants. At first, we will target Japanese consumers who have been to Macao, and then we will build up the core users. We are also in discussions with distributors in other Asian markets – Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong – and plan to start off the process this year or next." And what of the mainland market, we ask? "Chinese people do not like European or American beers as they find them too thick. They like a lighter taste. The market here is in its infancy. After it becomes more mature, people will find that they like the taste of the beer. It will take time," he said.

## American founder

The brand was founded in 1996 by an American who discovered that the city had no beer of its own; he wanted to create a taste suitable for Westerners.

He set up a brewery in Macao, with limited production. The packaging of its cans and bottles depicted images of the old city, including sailing ships and the Guia Lighthouse.

In the same year, Kirin set up a wholly owned foreign invested company in Zhuhai, with registered capital of US\$74 million, and took over a local brewery. It was attracted by the rapid economic growth of Guangdong and the rising demand for beer among its population.

Founded in 1885, Kirin is the oldest brewer in Japan and ranks, along with the Asahi Group, as one of the top two in terms of production.

In 2011, Kirin sold 160.3 million cases of beer, down 5.7 percent from 2010. Its target for this year is 163.5 million. Japan's demand has become stagnant due to its shrinking population, changing consumer tastes and weak economic growth. The situation was made worse last year by the earthquake and tsunami on 11 March, which caused a temporary suspension of production and a sombre mood nationwide that was not conducive to drinking beer.

This long-term decline is forcing Japan's beer-makers to expand abroad. China is the world's largest market, ahead of the US and Brazil. After its investment in Zhuhai, Kirin set up a company in Shanghai in 2004 and acquired a stake in the Qiandaohu Brewery in Hangzhou in 2006.

In August 2011, Kirin paid US\$2.6 billion for a controlling stake in Schincariol, one of Brazil's largest beer and soft-drinks producers.

Kirin owns major stakes in Lion Nathan of Australia, Fraser and Neave of Singapore and San Miguel of the Philippines. It also makes coffee, tea drinks, mineral water, fruit drinks and wine, and has operations in health and dairy foods and pharmaceuticals.

The emblem of the company is the Qilin, a mythical hooved creature that first appeared in books in China in the fifth century BC. It is believed to be a good omen that brings prosperity, and is similar in appearance to a giraffe.

In 1406, during the Ming dynasty, Admiral Zheng He brought two African giraffes to the Emperor in Nanjing after his journey to the east of the continent. The emperor was delighted to see these strange animals and called them Qilin; he proclaimed them to be magical creatures, whose capture was a sign of his greatness.

Their fame spread across East Asia. In Korea, the creature is called the 'ginin' and in Japan the 'kirin'.





Tatsuya Kaburagi

In 2002, Kirin acquired Macau Beer. Kaburagi declined to give the purchase price. "We saw its potential," he said. "The GDP of Macao was growing very fast; it was 9.5 percent that year. It had a very small market share and its production scale was very limited. Beer is a local product. The name is very important. We want to make it an international brand."

The firm saw the granting of new gambling franchises and the fast increase in the number of visitors from the mainland and overseas; it saw an opportunity to develop a brand to sell to this booming market.

In 2006, Kirin spent 500 million yuan to build a state-of-the-art brewery in an industrial zone in Jinding in Zhuhai. It covers an area of 200,000 square metres, has an annual production capacity of 200,000 tonnes, and employs 800 workers. It was, in effect, the firm's custom-built brewery in China. It is close to the expressway that links Zhuhai to Zhongshan, Jiangmen, Foshan and Guangzhou; the road goes all the way to Beijing.

Production in other parts of China has been through joint ventures or acquisitions of existing factories. The company chose Zhuhai as the site for their own factory because of the good relationship it had built up with the city government, who offered favourable terms and a good site.

This brewery produces three brands – Haizhu, Kirin Ichiban and Macau Beer – as well as non-alcoholic drinks.

Haizhu, which sells for four–eight yuan a bottle, is one of the most popular beers in Guangdong province. Kirin Ichiban sells for 10–15 yuan; it is also mostly sold in Guangdong, though achieves some sales outside.

Last year the plant produced 80,000 tonnes, of which Haizhu accounted for 60 percent and Kirin Ichiban for 10 percent. Macau Beer accounts for a fraction of output; it is rising by 10 percent a year.

## Upgrade, repackage

The new factory enabled the firm to use the latest technology for the three brands. It closed the small brewery in Macao and turned the space into an office.

"After the acquisition, we created new packaging for Macau Beer and upgraded the production process," said Kaburagi. They redesigned the bottles in green, the colour of the SAR, and featured



Macao's landmarks on the labels, such as the ruins of St Paul's and the Guia lighthouse. In response to demand from customers, they developed an improved product with 100 percent high-quality malt.

"For the Blonde Ale, the golden label was embellished with an elegant outline of the ruins of St Paul's, complimented by a lively floral pattern," said a company statement. "All this was to celebrate the resplendent and magnificent face of the new and vibrant Macao. It is a full-bodied beverage with a malty aroma and silky smooth finish. It has a rich European texture and quality."





The ingredients include water from a nearby reservoir in Jinding; hops from China and imported hops, including some from the Czech Republic; barley, some from China and some imported; and yeast from Macao. "Our strategy for Macau Beer is not large-scale production but to increase it gradually and retain it as a special brand," said Kaburagi. "We will gradually develop the market."

In the coming years, the brand will carry the name of the city to countries across Asia. ■

*Photos by Eric Tam*





Guangzhou opera house




# Turning Back the Clock

By Thomas Chan



Guangzhou aims to be  
China's culture capital  
by restoring its past glory

A photograph of the Guangzhou skyline at sunset. The Pearl River flows through the city, with a bridge visible on the left. The skyline is dominated by several tall skyscrapers, including the CTF Finance Centre with its distinctive spire. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue. In the foreground, there's a paved walkway with people walking, and some greenery and red flowers are visible in the bottom right corner.

**Boosted by its success in hosting the Asian Games in 2010, the Guangzhou government has decided on a bold approach to revitalise the city's historic legacy.** It is a history that dates back 2200 years, to when the city, then known as Panyu, was the capital of the Southern Yue kingdom on the northern shore of the Pearl River. It was renamed Guangzhou in AD 246.

From the very beginning, Panyu was very different to the imperial cities of the interior. Its peripheral location far from the capital, on the southern edge of the empire, allowed it to preserve many of the local traditions. It also shielded the city from the attempts by the central government to wield its power by using symbols of the emperor and leaning on the machinery of the state. Panyu's location attracted contact and trade with foreigners, who used to make their initial entry into China via the coast near Guangzhou. Local people, both natives and settlers from other places, also used the city as a seaport.

Centuries of foreign trade and easy access to local, regional and national markets led to an openness in Guangzhou that proved attractive to the Portuguese. Having failed to set up trading posts in Zhejiang and Fujian, they turned their attention to Macao, and were successful. It is no surprise that since the Han Dynasty, 2000 years ago, Guangzhou has served as a major starting point of the Maritime Silk Road. It has also been the hub of inter-Asian and cross-continental trade from the Tang Dynasty onwards.

China's open-door policy and economic reform over the last three decades began in the Pearl River, and was centred on Guangzhou. After three decades of disruption caused by Beijing's centrally planned economy, Guangzhou has seen a return to its local traditions and a continuation of its impressive history.





Guangzhou, Tianhe district



## Rethinking the future

In 2011, after the glamour of the Asian Games and the completion of the infrastructure built up to serve the Games, Guangzhou began to re-think its direction for the future. It is no longer content to be a modern city of skyscrapers and monumental buildings. Nor does it want to follow in the footsteps of larger cities in China that have become symbols of industrialisation, such as Shanghai.

The success of the Asian Games shows that a cultural event can transform the image of a city. Barcelona and other European cities have provided good

examples of places that have proclaimed themselves the cultural capitals of Europe. Guangzhou's media often talk about the trilogy of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, yet Guangzhou feels it needs an identity and image that puts it on a par with the political and economic capitals of the nation.

Guangzhou was designated a historical city as early as 1982; but little was done to enhance its historical legacy. Instead, over the last three decades, especially the last ten years, old buildings and districts have been demolished to make way for new and modern urban areas, similar to areas in Hong Kong. The most notorious example was the first fly-over expressway





*Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou*

that runs along Renmin South Road. Its construction has practically destroyed the once busy commercial heart of old Guangzhou – the Thirteen Hongs and the areas around Nanfang Mansion and the New Asia Hotel, close to the river front.

Guangzhou is ancient enough to compare itself very favourably with Beijing and Shanghai. In fact, when Guangzhou was a busy international port city, Beijing was only a small town and Shanghai no more than a fishing village. To compete with the two cities, Guangzhou can look to a colourful and glamorous past.

The historic area of the Thirteen Hongs was burnt

down three times during the Qing Dynasty, and the old city wall and its 18 gates were pulled down during the Republican period – much earlier than in Beijing. Yet Guangzhou still has many Qing and Republican buildings that are a testament to its position in the past as the number one port city of China, and the cradle of the revolution that transformed the nation in the 20th century. It is also a city built on rivers, typical of the landscape of southern China. This marks it out from cities like Beijing, which is landlocked, and Jiangnan cities like Shanghai and Suzhou, who have filled in rivers and streams to create roads and buildings.

The new cultural direction of Guangzhou can be found in the new Master Plan of Guangzhou City (2010–2020), which is currently going through the approval process. The outline confirms the position of Guangzhou as a world city of culture, defined in the following terms – the maritime silk road; a centre of southern China (Lingnan) culture, as defined by the area south of the border of Guangdong with Jiangxi and Hunan;

the source of China's modern revolution; the frontier area of economic reform and open-door policy since 1979, and a place for international cultural exchanges. These attributes sum up the history of Guangzhou, not only in the past, but also the present, and probably the future. As such, it makes a good cultural basis for this new development strategy of Guangzhou, as the city enters a post-industrial phase.



Guangzhou Library





*Old district in Guangzhou*

## Bold plan

The outline incorporates many elements of the revised 'Famous City Preservation Plan', which was enacted in 2003 but has had little impact until now. The revised Preservation Plan focuses on the old city centre. For the first time the historical city is defined clearly, covering an area of 20.39 square metres, taking in most of the districts of Yuexiu, Liwan and Haizhu. The plan has specified 48 historical and cultural preservation zones, 22 of which lie within the boundary of the historical city.

The main restriction set by the Preservation Plan is to limit the height of buildings within the historical city at no more than 30 metres; and the principle of preservation is to reduce the building and population density of the city. The target population will be 600,000, which will involve large-scale demolition of buildings that are not compatible with the plan, and the relocation of some residents to newly developed districts. A typical example is the renovation of Liwan River, named after the lychee trees which grow along the coast, which was completed in 2011.

The project involved the demolition of many recent inappropriate structures, to give way to more green and public spaces along the riverside.

The Preservation Plan's design is based on the concept of one city, two belts – that is, the design takes into account the historical city's traditional axis and the scenic coasts of the Pearl River, as well as many districts that contain places of historical and cultural importance. Of the many preservation areas, the most interesting are the four with stretches of colonnaded streets. Such arcaded streets can be found in most port cities in southern China, including Hong Kong, Macao and Xiamen; they are said to have originated in Guangzhou. Most were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and Guangzhou appears to have the largest number intact.

In 2004, the city conducted a project to preserve and develop its arcaded streets; this is used as the basis for the Preservation Plan. The four colonnaded zones include Da Xin Road – Haizhu South Road, Xiguan district, Beijing Road – Wanfu Road, and Tungfu Road – Nanhua Road.

The zones also contain imitations of Roman, Gothic and Baroque architectural styles as well as Nanyang and more traditional Chinese styles of arcade building. These buildings and streets will be preserved and renovated, and buildings erected nearby will be constructed in harmony with them. The preservation area of 20.39 square kilometres covers the majority of the old city centre, which measures 33.61 square kilometres. The rest of the old city centre will be re-developed, but with the focus shifting from office buildings and orthodox real estate development to culture and commerce, to fit the overall strategy of Guangzhou as a world culture city.

## Strong political will

The total cost of preservation, renovation and re-development will be about 100 billion yuan. The city authorities have dedicated 2.7 billion to be spent on the project over the next three years. The government will lead the project, supported by the relevant laws: plans and policies will be formulated and implemented in the coming years.

In order to preserve the entire old city centre and not just the historical areas, the government is also thinking of restricting the use of vehicles in the city, and changing the primary mode of transport used in the centre to walking, bicycles and public transport,





with particular emphasis on underground railways for the latter option.

The government wants to follow the examples set by the governing authorities of London and Munich, who have set up protection zones in their cities through imposing higher parking and transit charges on vehicles passing through. In October last year, the Guangzhou city government published its Renmin South Road Historical Culture Zone Preservation Plan. The most surprising element of the plan is the proposed demolition of the flyover over Renmin South Road. It was the first such expressway in Guangzhou, and has served as a symbol of modernist construction over the last

three decades. The decision to demolish it confirms the paradigm shift in the city's urban planning.

The success of the re-development of Liwan River this year, and the international acclaim for the plan to preserve the Xin He Chung Historical Culture Protection Zone of 2006, have encouraged the city government to launch a more ambitious programme to restore most of its rivers. Within the urban boundary, Guangzhou has 231 rivers and streams, which form an extensive network of water connected to the Pearl River and the sea beyond.

The Asian Games provided the authorities with the chance to clean up many of these rivers by setting up a modern sewage system for waste water treatment; it has built 38 plants so far.

The overall strategy is to join up the newly built man-made Bai Yun Lake in the north of the city with water gates, and to regulate and add water flow to the rivers. Next in line will be a policy to uncover most of the rivers and streams turned into underground ditches by the recent construction of roads and buildings. Rivers involved include those in the networks of Tianhe and Haizhu districts. In 2011 the government also started the second phase of the coastal re-development project of Shijing River in the Baiyun District.

The Guangzhou government is applying to have the remains of the southern Yue Kingdom and the maritime Silk Road classified as world cultural heritage sites. Whether it is successful is not important. If all of these projects are completed, Guangzhou will have transformed itself into one of the cultural capitals of China. Due to its greater openness, Guangzhou is once again able to move ahead of the nation in this dedication to culture. ■

*Photos by Eric Tam*



*New Asia hotel, Guangzhou*



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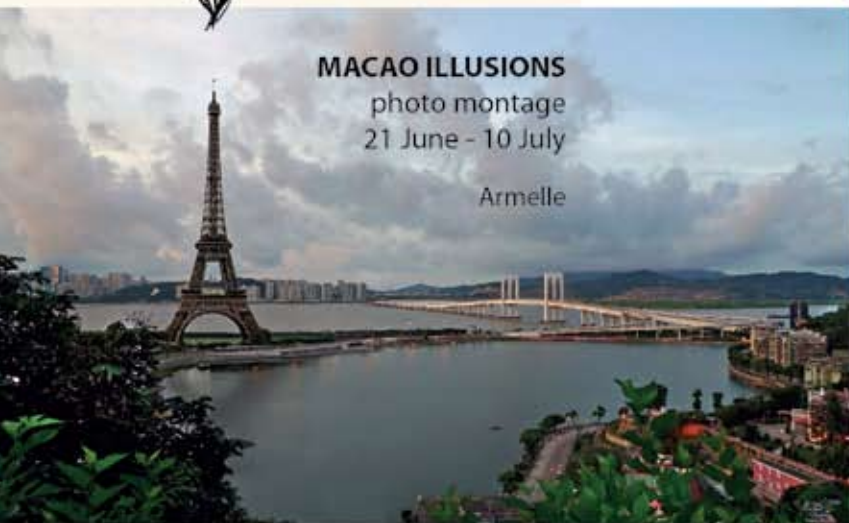
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# Cooperation with Angola

## China leads by example

By António Escobar in Luanda

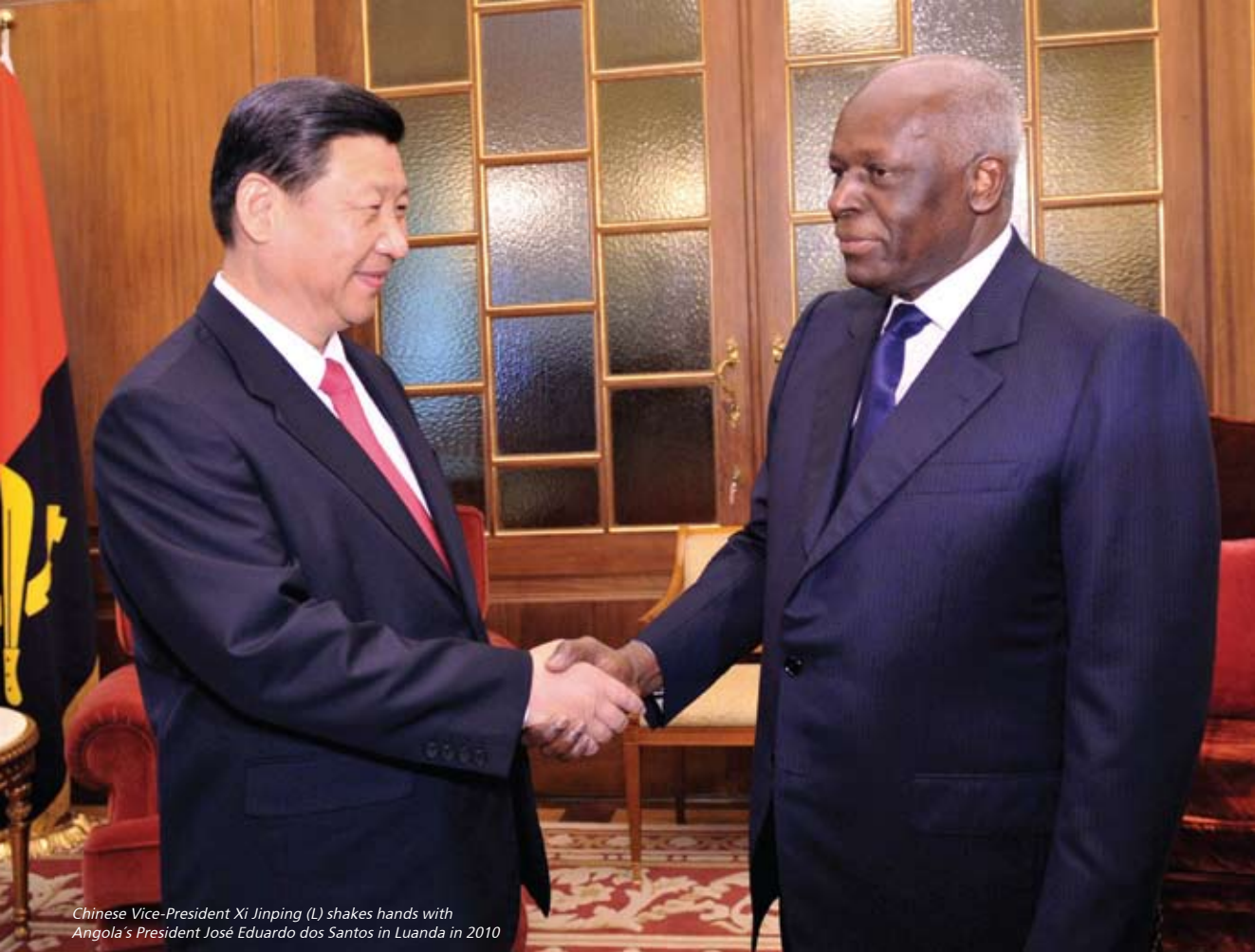
**Chi Xu Fah is an agricultural businessman.** He has recently set up a business project in Angola. Like so many other businessmen, he aims to take advantage of the abundance of resources and the economic opportunities that Angola has to offer. His plan is for his company, Cheang Su Chuimen Silk, to produce cotton, rice and other grains in Angola.

He has “vast experience” in the sector and, as he told Angolan National Radio, he is available to transfer that experience to Angola.

By setting up a project such as this, Chi Xu Fah is tapping into a new phase in China and Angola’s economic relations, in which businessmen like him are increasingly important.

*Luanda*





*Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping (L) shakes hands with Angola's President José Eduardo dos Santos in Luanda in 2010*

## A decade of 'pragmatic partnership'

Ten years have gone by since Angola achieved peace in February 2002. When the guns were laid down, Luanda found it had an urgent need to rebuild roads, railways, schools, and hospitals. The historic effort to rebuild the country, dubbed the 'national reconstruction', would cost tens of billions of dollars. Whilst Western governments were too mistrustful to get involved, China embraced its involvement enthusiastically and became a natural partner.

In the article 'Angola and China: A Pragmatic Partnership', researchers Indira Campos and Alex Vines describe how the focus of the relationship between the two countries rapidly changed from defence to the economy. In March 2004, two years after the arrival of peace in Angola, a funding agreement was signed, worth US\$2 billion, by the Export Import Bank of China (Eximbank), underwritten by oil exports. "Since then, cooperation between the two countries has been characterised by frequent two-way visits by important officials, with a view to boosting the relationship further,"

the article asserts. These frequent meetings have resulted in numerous political, economic, social, and cultural agreements.

"China needs natural resources and Angola wants development," President José Eduardo dos Santos said later on a visit to Beijing in November 2007. That statement sums up the Angola-China relationship, that is, oil for funding offered with attractive conditions – a mutually beneficial transaction.

In a recent article in Angolan newspaper *Jornal de Angola* on relations between the two countries, Angolan journalist Paulo Quaresma noted that when reconstruction began, "Beijing emerged as a privileged and unconditional partner for Angola... This cooperation is a new model based not only on lines of credit, but also on trade. If the West was reducing its aid to Angolan institutions then why not turn to China, a country with high economic growth and attractive financial resources? Why not partner with the Chinese, who need raw materials to continue with their rapid industrialisation and development in exchange for knowledge and financial resources?"



The resources, says Qauaresma, are making it possible to re-launch the economy, boost industrialisation, and build infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, universities, housing, bridges, roads, ports, and airports. "It was in this scenario that the strategic alliance between Angola and China was born...

"What is true, visible and interesting to Angolans is that thanks to that precious help, the government has been able to manage its funds. The results are there for everyone to see. The industrial sector is being launched with visible results. Dams, power supply systems, water systems, and social housing for young people are being built," he says. Not only will the partnership between the two countries continue, but it is also "precious".

Vasco Martins, of the Portuguese Institute for International Relations and Security (IPRIS) explains in a recent article that funding from Beijing was provided at times when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was imposing heavy conditions on Luanda, and Western powers considered it "too risky" to loan the country money. "At a time when international financial institutions were reluctant to provide Angola with the necessary funding, the

Chinese system made use of its natural pragmatism to generate profitable deals and secure access to oil reserves," he said in an article entitled 'Angola and China: Building Friendship Through Infrastructure'. Years later, the "success of Chinese investments" has made it possible to attract investment from other countries. Nowadays, Angola "feels comfortable cooperating politically with China, without fear of giving up its economic, political and cultural autonomy. China's involvement in Angola has largely favoured the population and the government in general," the Portuguese researcher says.

## Great trading partners

In the first phase of Chinese funding for reconstruction, US\$423 million was applied to health and education, as compared to US\$243 for energy and water, "where China's interests lie". "These figures alone point to the immense benefits that Angolans in general have been experiencing by dealing directly with China, thus bypassing international conditions for funding, and challenging the view of the realists that Angola is becoming a client state," the Portuguese analyst says.

*China's Nantong Holding Corporation starts the construction of a house project in Luanda for the Ministry of Defence*



According to official Angolan figures, public works, education and transport projects have benefitted the most from credit concession agreements between the Eximbank and Angola. Chinese funding was increased by US\$500 million in July 2007, via a credit line for complementary projects, and a further US\$2 billion in September of the same year. Selection of the projects is the responsibility of the Angolan side. Via ministerial departments they identify and put forward the proposals for consideration by China's Trade Ministry.

About a year ago, the Chinese ambassador in Luanda, Zhang Bolun, announced that the lines of credit provided by China to Angola since 2004, through a number of state banks, had totalled an impressive US\$15 billion.

Sofia Fernandes, a researcher from Portugal's ISCTE Business School, estimated at a conference in Luanda in 2011 that China had thus far provided Angola with funding of US\$14.5 billion. "In the last two years alone, according to figures from the African Development Bank, an aid package of US\$10 billion has been agreed via three banks: US\$1.5 billion from the China Development Bank, US\$2.5 billion from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and US\$6 billion from the Eximbank," she said, as quoted by Angolan magazine *Exame*.

As well as the impressive figures, Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, a professor and researcher from Oxford University, described what he called the end of the "paternalistic attitude" that Western countries had towards Africa. Financial aid was conditional upon political reforms related to promoting democracy and transparency. In the beginning, the vision for Angola was based on supporting micro-credit and inspired by headline-grabbing humanitarian activities such as the Live Aid concert organised by Bono and Geldof. China, however, had a completely different approach that was much more pragmatic. It focused on a macro view, aimed at large construction projects and modernity, whilst keeping to the principles of non-interference and respect for national sovereignty.

Trade has continued to grow and, a decade later, Angola has become China's largest African trading partner. China imports around 40 percent of Angola's total crude oil exports, which account for 16 percent of China's total oil imports, according to a supplement on Angola published in Beijing by English-language newspaper *China Daily*.

Angola has become "one of the most important sources of oil for China, and its biggest economic partner in Africa," it said. Angolan exports to China totalled over US\$20 billion in 2011 and "are expected to grow in 2012," it added.

Trade between China and Angola, according to information from the Chinese Customs Service published by the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao), totalled US\$27 billion in 2011, or 11.5 percent more than in 2010.

## **New roads**

The economic and financial crisis of 2008 was perhaps Angola's most difficult period over the last decade. The drop in the price of oil affected the country's liquidity. Some construction projects came to a standstill due to lack of contractor payments. The Angolan State accumulated debts to its suppliers, which have only been fully paid off in the last few months.

Investors from the Western countries most affected by the crisis retreated. This resulted in China becoming even more important to Angola, as the Economist Intelligence Unit noted recently. "Given the continuing volatility on international capital markets, reflecting the crisis in the euro zone (...) the government will seek to expand existing financing and credit lines from its partners, notably China and Brazil," it said in one of its latest reports on Angola.

The relationship has got to the point where Angola and other African countries "catch a cold" if China "sneezes". "Specific risk factors include a drying up of trade credit, declining commodity prices and contracting foreign demand for the region's exports, as well as falling remittances, aid, foreign direct investments (FDI) and tourist receipts," the EIU economists said. At this stage the relationship between China and Angola continues to become closer.

This trajectory of closeness and growing economic interdependence between the two countries, as well as new roads opening up in two-way relations, is clear from the cooperation agreements signed by Angola and China in May of last year in Luanda, during a visit by the leader of the Chinese parliament, Wu Bangguo.





*Xi Jinping with Angolan workers while visiting a house project constructed by China's CITIC*

## Joint agreements

One of the documents was signed by the government of Luanda province and the consortium made up of CITIC Construction Co., Ltd. and the Urban Planning and Design Academy, both from China, to draw up the inter-municipal plan for the municipal areas of Quilamba Quiaxi and Belas.

The Angolan secretary of state for Cooperation, Exalgina Olavo Gâmbôa, and the deputy Chinese trade minister, Fu Ziyang, signed an agreement for economic and technical cooperation as well as a separate document for China to donate 50 million yuan (around US\$7.7 million). Documents were also signed involving donations from the Chinese government of anti-malaria medication and equipment and materials to the anti-malaria centre.

The director of the Angolan National Telecommunications Institute (Itel), Américo António dos Santos, and the vice president of telecommunications

group ZTE, Zhang Renjun, signed a memorandum of understanding to donate equipment to a centre for staff training.

According to the EIU, despite these agreements being "relatively modest (...) they are symptomatic of a much larger trend" of expansion of China-Angola economic relations.

A clear sign of the importance given by Beijing to Angola was a visit to the country by Xi Jinping, China's vice president, who is seen as the likely successor to the current president. The "future leader", as he has been called by some Western publications, visited the Kilamba Kiayi housing project in the south of Luanda, where Chinese construction group CITIC is building 20,000 apartments. New cooperation agreements focused on the transport, mining and construction sectors were also signed. According to figures published at the time, the number of Chinese companies operating in Angola total 450, of which 400 are private and the remainder are state-owned.



## Win-win relations

A recent text published by the Chinese embassy in Luanda noted that common interests and the mutual needs of China and Africa were increasing further due to global economic difficulties. The two sides were "facing complex global challenges, [but] also a rare opportunity to accelerate development". "The economies of China and the African countries are highly complementary, and cooperation between the two sides looks very promising," it concludes.

In terms of development aid, "effectiveness is high", whether that be in the construction of "schools, hospitals, roads, bridges or water supplies", or training of "specialists in agriculture, medical teams and young volunteers".

"China, as one of the biggest developing countries, and Africa, as the continent with the most developing countries," have followed "a common and highly effective path" says the document issued by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Angola's Economic and Commercial Advisory





Section. Investment by China in Africa currently totals US\$40 billion, of which US\$14.7 billion was in direct investment. Over 2000 Chinese companies are investing in Africa. And Angola is one of the most sought-after countries to invest in, because of its stability and its welcoming attitude.

Trade rose from US\$129.6 billion in 2010 to US\$160 billion last year, making China “the biggest trading partner in Africa”.

One of the noteworthy aspects of the document is the projection given for the next few years, perhaps

even decades, which sees Angola as a partner par excellence for Beijing.

The aims for trade include “promoting balance and improving quality”, opening up the markets in China to African products, and “actively applying a policy of tax exemption on products exported by Africa to China” to encourage these exports, “especially those with more added value”.

“At the same time, China is considering carrying out exhibitions of products of Chinese brands in Africa to promote exports of more high-quality products, in order to make ‘Made in China’ a designation of origin in the minds of African people,” it said.

A second aim is to “expand investment in Africa and improve industrial capacity”, transferring “more technology and management experience to Africa to alter ‘Made in China’ to African manufacturing thus helping African countries to increase the added value of products, train technical staff and promote local jobs”.

Chinese cooperation will continue to expand in the agriculture, education, health and human resources sectors.

In terms of infrastructure, the aim is to encourage “financial institutions and companies from China to take part in the construction of electricity, telecommunications, transport and other projects”, to gradually improve investment, trade and the environment”, and also to promote the process of regional and economic integration.

## Agriculture sector

Ten years ago in Angola, economic discussion focused on how to find funding, but increasingly the focus is shifting to concerns about the time “after the oil”. The drive of agriculture, in a country with hundreds of thousands of hectares of uncultivated fertile land, is seen as fundamental to offset the future drop in oil reserves as well as having strategic importance in order for the country to become a food exporter par excellence.

According to Africa Monitor, which is published in Lisbon, President José Eduardo dos Santos is heading a commission recently set up to outline the agricultural development strategy, which involves the minister of state and the head of Angola’s Civil House of the Presidency, Carlos Feijó, agronomist Carlos Alberto and jurist Ngunu Tiny.



*High ranking officials from Angola and China during a visit to a farm in the South of Luanda*

The need for an effort by the state to place sufficient value on the agricultural and agri-industrial sector was important for prioritising the primary sector in the Angolan economy, the newsletter said. Amongst the countries that have been instrumental in persuading the Angolan authorities to focus on the importance of the agricultural sector are China and the United States. Both of these countries have also provided Angola with support to develop agriculture. In China's case, this has involved credit lines.

The agricultural sector was the economy's most dynamic during the period of Portuguese

administration, until 1974, and accounted for half of the country's exports. It also employed 40 percent of the working population, in 6500 large agricultural companies. The country was at one time the world's third largest coffee producer, as well as a significant producer of maize, cotton, sugar cane and sisal.

In an interview with Angolan newspaper *Jornal de Angola* in 2011, the Chinese ambassador in Luanda, Zhang Bolun, set helping Angola to become "self-sufficient in terms of food" as one of the aims of future cooperation. Chris Alden, professor and researcher at the London School of Economics and the South African Institute for International Relations





(SAIIA) believes that going forward, agriculture and industry will be priority areas for cooperation, as will financial services. China already has a stake in South Africa's Standard Bank.

The China Development Bank has shown it is available to open up a credit line of over US\$1 billion for Angolan agriculture. "We are ready to provide a credit line worth over US\$1 billion, but we think the amount is insufficient and that it could be increased to meet Angola's concrete needs in the areas of agriculture, grain production, and processing agricultural products," noted the chairman of the bank, Chen Yuan, after a meeting with the Angolan

head of state, José Eduardo dos Santos in 2009. Plans for tourism

Another area of diversification in which Chinese and Angolan paths seem to cross is tourism, where Angola also has great potential. The recent Tourism Master Plan shows that Portugal (24 percent), China (14 percent) and Brazil (13 percent), are the countries accounting for most of the tourism in the country in economic terms. The document aims to change the sector's current framework, as it has a deficit of qualified staff and outdated laws, and needs to increase its efficiency, as well as carry out an inventory and describe its tourist assets.

Angola plans to welcome around 4.7 million tourists a year by 2020, according to Carlos Borges, consultant for the Hotels and Tourism Ministry, noting that the target would represent growth of over 1000 percent on current tourist numbers. That number of tourists would provide US\$5.5 billion, accounting for 7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Angolan government plans to put the country on the map of main international tourism destinations by 2015.

According to Borges, Angolans account for two thirds of the country's tourism, which is why the strategic plan for the sector focuses firstly on domestic tourism, followed by regional and then international tourism.

The strategy, according to the plan, also includes increasing the number of flights to priority markets, reducing the price of aeroplane tickets and improving roads, railways and ports.

In March, Angolan airline Linhas Aéreas de Angola (Taag) launched a second weekly flight between Luanda and the Chinese capital. Until January Taag had been the only airline with a direct flight from Africa to the capital of China, a route it had offered since November 2007 and operated using a 254-seat Boeing 777-200 ER. This flight served as a vital link between Africa and China.

## Large housing projects

Now that many large road and rail projects funded by the Chinese credit lines have been finished or are in their concluding stages, housing is the main focus of Chinese-Angolan cooperation, and is the sector of work most visible to Angolans. Housing projects have recently been launched on a grand scale, to respond to the lack of accommodation that Angola is facing, increasingly outside of Luanda.

One of the latest projects involves building 3000 houses in the city of Lobito, Benguela province. It is in the hands of the China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC), according to information from Angolan news agency Angop.

In Dondo, in Angola's Lunda Norte province, contractor Pan-China Construction Group has given assurances that it will finish building 419 new buildings by September. In May the first 1600 apartments will be delivered for the new city of Dundo, in the Samakaka neighbourhood, completing the first of a total of 5004 apartments outlined for



the project. As well as residential buildings and a hospital containing 95 beds, plans include a nursery with 24 rooms, and a school for 1300 pupils. It will have the capacity to house 30,000 people in a 500-hectare area. The project, which began in 2009, has provided work for over 2300 Chinese workers and 1900 Angolans.

Near Luanda, in the new urban area of the city of Kilamba, thanks to a partnership between the government and China International Fund Limited (CIF), 5000 new houses are scheduled to be built by 2013. This project, which was launched by President





*Xi Jinping during a presentation of a CITIC construction project near Luanda*

José Eduardo dos Santos in 2011, is part of the Master Plan for the City of Kilamba and will be developed in an area of 250 hectares.

## Joint ventures

On his visit to Angola in 2011, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping pointed to the focus of Angolan companies on his country as a new chapter in Chinese-Angolan relations. Angolan state oil company Sonangol has become a vehicle for the internationalisation of the Angolan economy and has investment all over the

world. In this area, China is a partner with strong business links and acts as a model for funding infrastructure used in Angola that is ripe for being implemented in other developing countries.

China Sonangol International Holding Limited, which has its headquarters in Hong Kong, focuses on investment in and exploration of oil, gas and mining products, crude oil trading and even "large-scale national reconstruction projects", according to official information from the company. It has offices in China, Singapore, Indonesia, Africa and Latin America.

Its ambitious mission is to promote “South-South cooperation, consider mutually beneficial situations as the key criteria for making profits, share experiences and the results of economic reform in China with developing countries, explore a new framework for Chinese companies to expand abroad”, as well as bring to China ideas and concepts from the countries in which it is involved. It has provided other countries with the most visible aspect of the expansion of Chinese-Angolan partnerships, based on the model of mineral resources in exchange for infrastructure. Guinea Conakry was the first step in this direction, although the projects fell by the wayside due to political turbulence in the country. Zimbabwe soon followed and, by 2009, it was present in Tanzania, the Ivory Coast, Russia, North Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the United States. In New York it bought a building owned by the bank JP Morgan Chase on Wall Street.

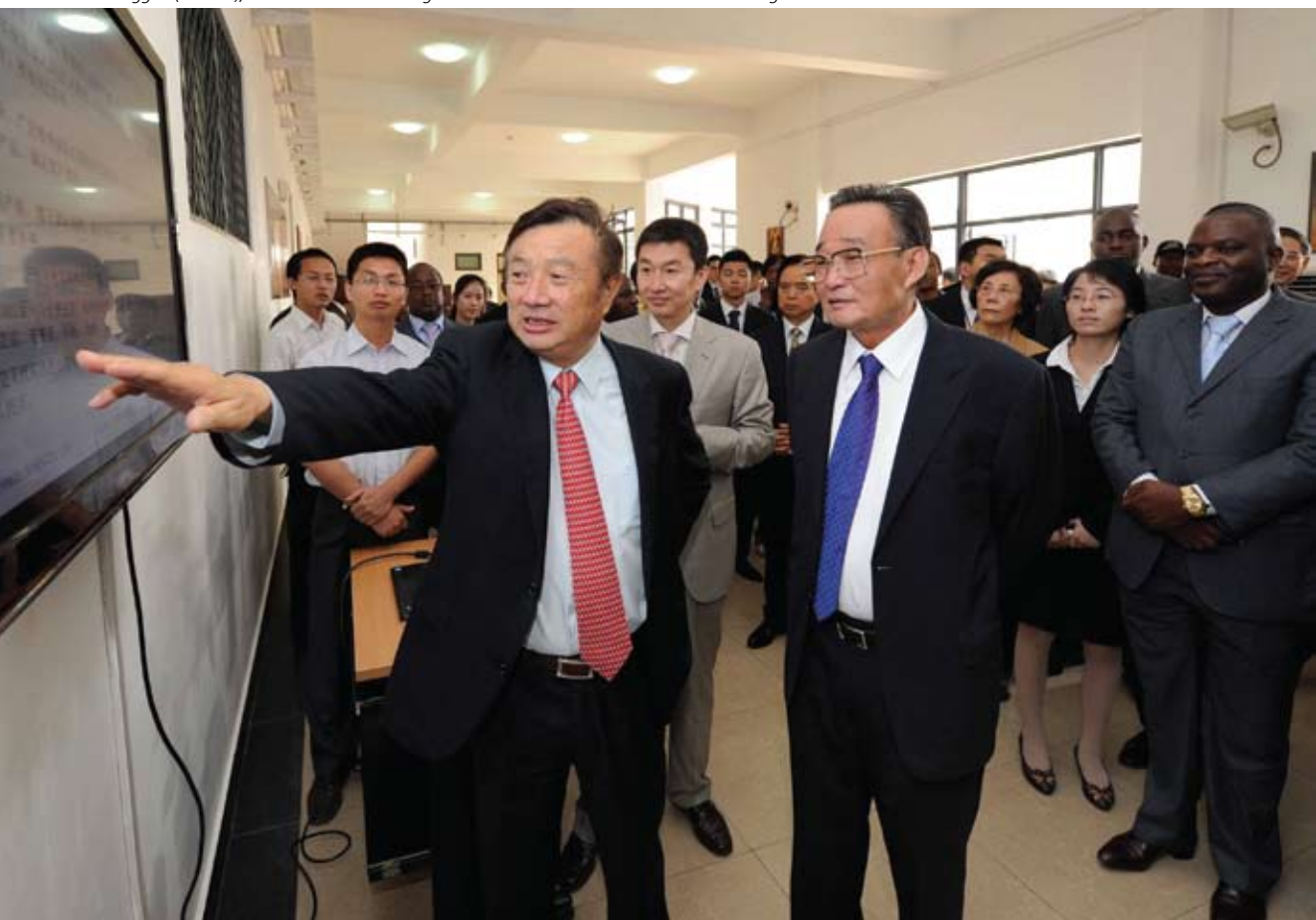
In Luanda and Beijing, the cooperation model tested in Angola is seen as being ready for export, and many countries in the southern hemisphere, which have a

wealth of mineral resources, have ambitions rapidly to expand their infrastructure, thereby preventing their economies from being held back. For Angola, it is a way of affirming itself on the continent and in the region, as well as a way of taking advantage of its business experience with China and moving towards the partnership with the Asian giant being increasingly one between equals.

In a 2011 article about Angola, researcher Loro Horta said it was “unlikely that Angola would accept a position of dependence on China”, pointing to the efforts to diversify its economic partners. He cited East Timor diplomat Roque Rodrigues, who holds the record for being the longest-serving diplomat in Luanda, as talking of “the pride and independence of Angolans” in the way foreign policy has been implemented since independence. “Through history they have learned to balance the foreign powers who were eyeing up their rich country. To say that Angola is in Chinese hands is really to know nothing about Angola and its people.” ■

*Photos by Xinhua*

*Wu Bangguo (R. front), chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC of China visits a training centre of Huawei in Luanda.*







# ANGOLA-CHINA

## Partners in Africa



**CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA**  
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# macao **newsline**

## **Macao's Chief Executive meets EU President**

Brussels, 10 Jan - Macao's Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, met with the President of the European Commission (EU), Durão Barroso, at the Headquarters of the EU and both agreed to step up co-operation in a wide range of areas.

Chui said after the meeting that both sides had reviewed the work and achievements of co-operation in the past, and they had also agreed to enhance co-operation in future business activity, higher education, culture and creative industry and environmental protection.

## **Macao receives 28 million visitors in 2011**

Macao, 11 Jan - Macao received 28 million visitors in 2011, a figure which represents a rise of 12.2 percent on 2010, the director of Tourist Office (DST), João Costa Antunes, announced.

Citing provisional figures, the director of the DST said that the number of visitors from Greater China (Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) was almost 25 million people, a year-on-year rise of 13.5 percent whilst the number of international visitors rose by 2.2 percent.

## **US think tank ranks Macao world's 19th 'freest' economy**

Macao, 13 Jan - The 2012 Index of Economic Freedom released by the Washington-based Heritage Foundation ranks Macao as the world's 19th "freest" economy among 179 countries and territories. Among the 41 countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region, Macao was ranked 6th - after Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan. Macao's "overall score is well above world and regional averages," the statement said.

10 JAN



11 JAN



13 JAN



10 JAN



13 JAN



16 JAN

## **Arts Cinema of Macao to open by the end of 2012**

Macao, 10 Jan - The Arts Cinema of Macao will open by the end of the year near the ruins of St. Paul, according to a spokesperson from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC).

The Arts Museum will be located in two buildings, with 3 floors each, rented to local Chinese associations near the ruins. The new facility will show films, keep video recordings and sell made in Macao creative products.

## **Macao issues banknotes for Year of Dragon**

Macao, 13 Jan - The Bank of China in Macao and Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) respectively issued a piece of commemorative 10 Pataca banknote to celebrate the upcoming Year of the Dragon.

The banknote is featured by Chinese paper-cut dragon on the face and the building of Bank of China or the building of BNU on the back. The A-Ma temple in Macau has been adopted as the foil scene.

## **Macao airport's passengers and cargo drop in 2011**

Macao, 16 Jan - Macao International Airport's passenger movement and cargo throughput dropped last year, according to official statistics released by the facility's government-controlled company (CAM).

The airport in Taipa logged 4.045 million passengers last year, a drop of 0.8 percent from 2010. The figure is a far cry from 2007 when the airport logged 5.498 million passengers and 2008 when 5.097 million passengers passed through the single-runway facility.



## Macao's forex reserves reach US\$ 34 billion in 2011

Macao, 16 Jan - The Macao Special Administrative Region's foreign exchange reserves amounted to 272.4 billion patacas (\$34.03 billion) at the end of December 2011, according to figures released by the Monetary Authority of Macao.

The reserves for December rose by 2.8 percent over the previous month, and, when compared with a year earlier, the reserves increased by 43.2 percent, the figures indicated.

## Inflation climbs to 5.81 percent in 2011

Macao, 24 Jan - Macao's inflation rate reached 5.81 percent last year, the highest rate since 2008, which stood at 8.61 percent, according to official statistics. In 2010, the rate amounted to 2.81 percent, while it stood at just 1.17 percent in 2009.

## The Script Road literary festival kicks off in Macao

Macao, 29 Jan - The Script Road, the first ever Literary Festival organised in Macao, opened with Lusophone writers asking for a new beginning in the relationship between the Portuguese speaking countries and China.

"The objective of the literary festival is to reignite the pleasure of reading and writing and I am sure that many in Macao will be inspired by these visiting authors," said the director of the Script Road, Ricardo Pinto.

16 JAN



24 JAN



29 JAN



18 JAN



26 JAN



03 FEB

## Macao's gaming and gambling revenues in 2011 total US\$ 33.6 billion

Macao, 18 Jan - Gross gaming and gambling revenues in Macao totalled 269.058 billion patacas (US\$ 33.632 billion) in 2011, according to figures published by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (GICB).

Gambling in the Macao's 34 casinos, accounted for 267.867 million patacas, or 99.55 percent of total revenues, and the remainder - 1.191 million patacas or US\$ 148 million - was accounted for by greyhound and horse racing, Chinese lotteries and scratch cards and sports betting such as on football and basketball games.

## Chief Executive urges solidarity with elderly, vulnerable

Macao, 26 Jan - Macao's Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On has underlined the importance of showing solidarity with the elderly and vulnerable as well as all those who need society's help.

Chui made the appeal in his Chinese New Year speech on Lunar New Year's Eve.

## Macao record a trade balance deficit of US\$ 6.99 billion in 2011

Macao, 3 Feb - Macao's imports rose 41.2 percent to US\$ 7.78 billion in 2011 according to the Statistics and Census Service.

The total value of exports - comprising domestic and re-exports - increased a mere 0.2 percent to just 6.97 billion patacas, resulting in a record merchandise trade balance deficit of 55.96 billion patacas and an export-import ratio of 11.2 percent.

**Cirque du Soleil show in Sands China casino closed**  
 Macao, 19 Feb - Cirque du Soleil's Zaia show at Sands China Ltd.'s Venetian Macao resort closed after 3 1/2 years of performances and the casino operator said it will redesign the theater.  
 The combined cost of creating the show and the custom-built theater for the Quebec Zaia entertainment company exceeded US\$ 150 million.

**Price of residential units in Macao rises 1/3 last year**  
 Macao, 20 Feb - The average price of residential units rose 33.6 percent year-on-year to 41,433 patacas per square metre last year, according to official statistics from Macao's Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). According to the DSEC, the average price of office units rose 53.5 percent to 35,076 per square metre, while that of industrial units increased 72.4 percent to 12,001 patacas per square metre.

**Macao economy expected to post growth of 9.8 pct in 2012**  
 Macao, 29 Feb - The Macao economy is expected to see growth of 9.8 percent this year and 13.5 percent in 2013, two years in which investment will be in line with growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) according to the latest report from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).  
 Following growth of 27.1 percent in 2010 and 20.8 percent in 2011, the Macao economy is expected to see more moderate growth rates in 2012 and 2013, an average of 11.7 percent per year.

19 FEB



20 FEB



29 FEB



21 FEB



27 FEB



01 MAR

**Macao starts light rail construction**  
 Macao, 21 Feb - Macao's Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system started in Taipa island after 10 years of preparatory work.  
 The first phase of the public works project which includes 21 stations connecting Macao, Taipa and Cotai over a 20-kilometre track will cost 11 billion patacas and will be ready by 2015.

**Population rises to 557,400 at end of 2011**  
 Macao, 27 Feb - Macao's total population - comprising residents and imported workers - was estimated at 557,400 at the end of 2011, an increase of 16,800 or 3.1 percent compared with the revised figure of 540,600 at the end of 2010, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) said.  
 Based on Macao's total land area of just 29.7 square kilometres, the city's population density stood at 18,767 at the end of last year - the highest of any country or territory in the world.

**NPC official says no universal suffrage for Macao legislature guaranteed**  
 Beijing, 1 Mar - National People Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Vice Secretary-General Qiao Xiaoyang said that "it cannot regulate the election of all members of the Macao Legislative Assembly (AL) through universal suffrage" regardless of how the method of electing the legislature is amended.  
 Qiao also said that the Macao Basic Law states that the majority of the members of the AL must be elected. He said that this was requested by the Portuguese government in the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration on the Question of Macao in 1987, adding that "universal suffrage" was never a choice enshrined in the Macao Basic Law - unlike in its Hong Kong counterpart.



## **Macao's GDP growth rate slows to 20.7 pct in 2011**

Macao, 16 Mar - Macao's economic growth rate slowed to 20.7 percent in real terms last year, reaching a record nominal GDP of 292.1 billion patacas, while nominal per capita GDP stood at 531,723 patacas (US\$66,311), according to the Macao Statistics and Census Service.

Macao's GDP growth rate is the highest in the world last year and its per capita GDP the world's third highest after Qatar and Luxembourg.

## **9th Macao Chinese Film Festival opens in Macao**

Macao, 22 Mar - The 9th Macao Chinese Film Festival kicked off in Macao Macau, with seven selected Festival movies to be screened.

Highlights of the 2012 Macao Chinese Film Festival include the Star and the Sea. Set in Macao and directed by Li Qian Kuan, the award-winning movie tells the moving life story of Xian Xinghai, a famous Chinese musician who was born in Macao.

## **China launches US\$1 billion fund in Macao to boost relations with Portuguese-speaking countries**

Macao, 27 Mar - The Macao secretary for the Economy and Finance, Francis Tam Pak Yuen, announced the creation of the Fund for Cooperation and Development between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries with initial capital of US\$200 million, of which US\$50 million will be the responsibility of the Macao government.

The US\$1 billion fund will be managed by the China Development Bank Capital Corporation Ltd (CDBCL), which will be partnered, as a Macao government representative, by the Macao Industrial Development and Commercialisation Fund (FDICM).

16 MAR



22 MAR



27 MAR



22 MAR



26 MAR



29 MAR

## **Macao Arts Festival to be held in May and June with 128 performances**

Macao, 22 Mar -The 23rd Macao Arts Festival will be held from May 1 to June 2, presenting more than 128 performances by 33 local and overseas production teams, making it the biggest Macao Arts Festival to date, with a budget of US\$ 2,8 million.

The foreign production teams this year will come from Argentina, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, with a record 17 local productions scheduled to be presented in this year's event. Mainland production teams will also be present.

## **Macao power utility posts US\$ 59,8 million net profit in 2011**

Macao, 26 Mar - Macao's electricity monopoly operator Companhia de Electricidade de Macau (CEM) reported a "final net profit" of 479 million patacas in 2011, a seven percent drop from the previous year. A Chinese-French group mainly made up of Suez and NWS Holdings Limited own 42 percent of the capital and a Chinese-Portuguese group, in which Portugal's EDP has a majority stake, also has 42 percent.

## **Air Macau posts US\$ 31,25 million revenue in 2011**

Macao, 29 Mar - Air Macau announced that it posted a revenue of 250 million patacas in 2011, resulting in a net profit of 16 million patacas.

Air Macau Chairman Zheng Yan said that after a reorganisation of shareholders, the government now owns 21 percent of the company, up from an initial five percent. Zheng added that the Macao government injected about 700 million patacas in 2011 to help the airline improve its performance.



A-Ma Temple







## Chinese New Year in Macao. Year of the Dragon

Photos by Eric Tam







海外商場 誠聘熟練  
黎海生學大師  
專業設計 價錢少  
訂座電話 8427234 黎海生

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Kung Hei Fat Choi

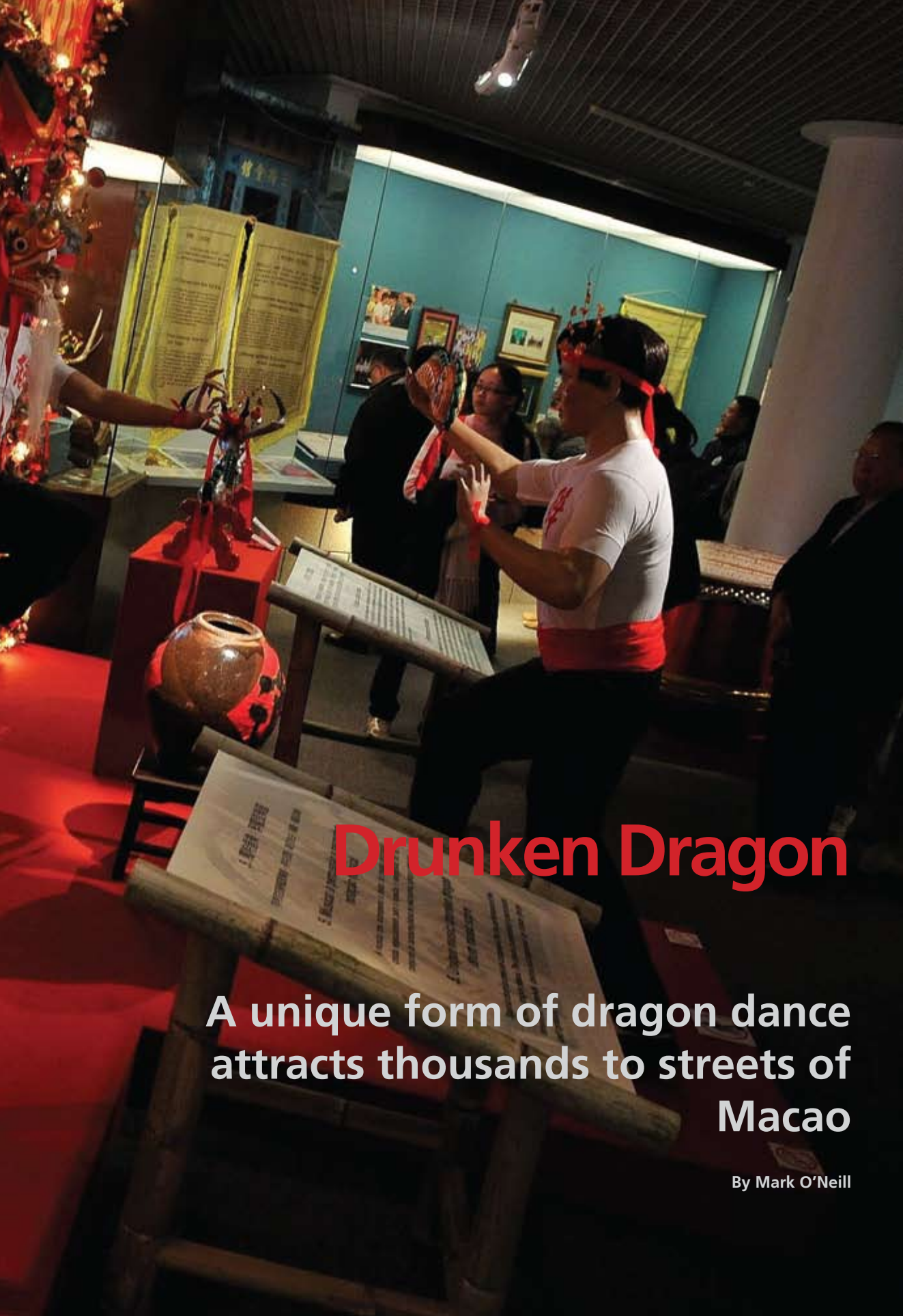






Drunken Dragon Exhibition in the Macao Museum





# Drunken Dragon

A unique form of dragon dance  
attracts thousands to streets of  
Macao

By Mark O'Neill

**The story goes that the residents of a district in southern China were suffering from a terrible plague.** On the birthday of Buddha, a group of them carried his statue across a river in the hope of finding a cure.

Suddenly, a giant snake leapt out of the river. Terrified, all of the people fled except for a monk, who cut the snake into three pieces using the sheer strength of his hands. The reptile's blood poured into the river. When the people later drank the water of the river, they were miraculously saved from the plague. This led to the belief that the snake was the incarnation of the dragon.

The remarkable legend, originating from Xiangshan, Guangdong province, lives on today every year on Buddha's birthday. The date falls on the eighth day of the fourth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, and is celebrated in the form of the Drunken Dragon Festival: performers carry out an elaborate dance in honour of the dragon and parade through the streets of Macao, in front of thousands of spectators.

The organisers distribute free helpings of 'dragon boat longevity rice' throughout the day to thousands of local residents, who believe that it will bring them good health, a long life and good fortune. For many people, it is one of the most important days on the calendar.

In May 2011, the Ministry of Culture in Beijing included the dance on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List. From January to April this year, the Macao Museum has been holding an exhibition to showcase the history of the festival from the past till the present, including photographs, documents, wax figures and replicas of the wooden head and tail of the dragon made by local school children. It aims to inform Macao people, especially the younger generation, of the importance of the event.

## Kung Fu Monk

"The people saw the dragon as a symbol sent from heaven to bless them and save the world," said Grace Lei, chief of the museology, conservation and restoration division at the museum; it was she who organised the exhibition. "The monk who saved them was drinking wine. That may be the reason why the dragon became a drunken dragon." Historians do not know exactly when the residents of Xiangshan (now Zhuhai, on the border of Macao)



started to celebrate the festival. The first written record appears in an official document in 1547, during the reign of Jiajing, Emperor of the Ming dynasty.

"Monks cleanse all Buddha statues, offer sacrifices to gods and turn the dragon's head on the eighth day of the fourth month of the lunar calendar," reads an entry in the Journal of Xiangshan County





that year.

During the second half of the 19th century, hundreds of Xiangshan people moved to Macao to avoid the wars and upheavals of their homeland, and they brought the festival with them. It was first celebrated here in the 1890s.

In Macao, the festival was and is organised by the Macao Fish Trade General Association (MFTGA),

which has records of the event dating back to the 1900s. Since then, they have held it every year, except during two periods of hardship and upheaval. One was World War II, and the other a period of two-to-three years during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), when many fishermen moved to Hong Kong to make a living and could only hold the dinner but not the dance.



### Three events

The festival comprises three events, on the night before and during Buddha's birthday.

On the night before, the participants, their families and members of the MFTGA hold large dinners at several outdoor markets, to celebrate the event.

At midnight, volunteers begin preparation of the large quantities of longevity rice to be served the following day. They work through the night, making two different servings to go with the rice, one with meat and one without, for vegetarians and meat-eaters.

The performers, all members of the MFTGA, spend weeks rehearsing their performance. The troupe includes more than 40 members, and they all wear a uniform – a white T-shirt emblazoned with the characters for the drunken dragon, white socks, black trousers, black shoes, a red sash round their waist and a red band around their hands. They carry the head and the tail of the dragon, both carved out of precious wood, such as camphor, elm or teak. To this is attached the horn of a deer.

Originally, the dance included three parts of the

dragon – to match the three chopped up pieces of the snake – but performers found it too complicated, so reduced the number to two. One of the members plays a large drum.

The performance begins outside the San Jie Hui Guan (Third Street Meeting Hall). At the invitation of the members, Taoist priests are in attendance, pouring water on the wooden models of the dragon, to purify them, and burning incense in front of a statue of the dragon.

There is no Buddhist element in the festival now, even though it was a Buddhist monk that saved the villagers from the plague and it occurs on Buddha's birthday.

The performers are supposed to be in a state of mild inebriation, to imitate the monk. In the past they drank rice liquor but now beer is also consumed.

"The alcohol content is not high," said Lei. "They mix it with water and often spit it out. They are not drunk at the end. The drink simply enhances their energy and excitement."



The performance attracts thousands of spectators, some of them tourists, including many photographers who want to capture images of this dramatic spectacle. The dancers perform for 30 minutes in front of the meeting hall, to the sound of beating drums and the cries of the audience. Then they parade through the streets of the city and offer blessings through dance in front of shops and other institutions. Since 1999, Buddha's birthday has been a public holiday, giving many people the opportunity to participate. In earlier times, the troupe went to Taipa and Coloane, the other districts of Macao, and the festival lasted

for two nights and three days; but now it only covers the peninsula and lasts for one day. "In the past, the spectators were mainly local people and those who came to take photographs," said Lei. "There were not so many tourists from outside. But, since its designation in 2011, we have been promoting it more as a tourist and cultural event." It was in 2009 that the SAR government included the festival in its Intangible Culture Heritage List. The Cultural Affairs Bureau collected material, including documents and other information from the MFTGA showing the importance of the event, and submitted it to the Ministry of Culture in Beijing.



## Lucky rice

A key part of the festival involves serving the 'dragon boat longevity rice' at two outdoor markets during the day. One box is given free to each family, who sit around tables in the open air. It is a crowded and festive atmosphere. Preparation of the food requires weeks of work to buy the ingredients and hours of work cooking through the night by dozens of volunteers. They serve more than 40,000 helpings.

"People believe that one mouthful of the rice will give you blessings," said Lei. "This belief is commonly held by people of my mother and grandmother's generations. You could say that it is a form of superstition. It is a big day for the older generation."

They remember an era when life was not as comfortable as today and many families did not have enough to eat; they see the evening dinner as a precious opportunity for a nutritious meal as well as sitting together with family and friends.

Young people do not feel so strongly about the importance of the rice but enjoy the excitement and sense of community.

The listings by the Macao and central governments will help to sustain the festival in the future. Historically, fishing has been one of the most important industries of Macao, with the wholesalers and retailers who make up the membership of the MFTGA playing a key role.

But the arrival of large chain stores and supermarkets who buy in bulk directly from the fishermen has reduced their role; many family-owned fishmongers have closed, and young people are reluctant to go into this profession, with its long hours and tough working conditions, especially during the sweltering summer months.



It is increasingly harder to persuade young people to join the dragon dance troupe; they have many other forms of entertainment which do not require such physical exertion. The majority of the 40 members of the troupe are over 40 years old.

But, with its new status and support from the government and civic associations, the festival will live on and continue to attract people from Macao and overseas. ■

*Photos by Eric Tam and Xinhua*



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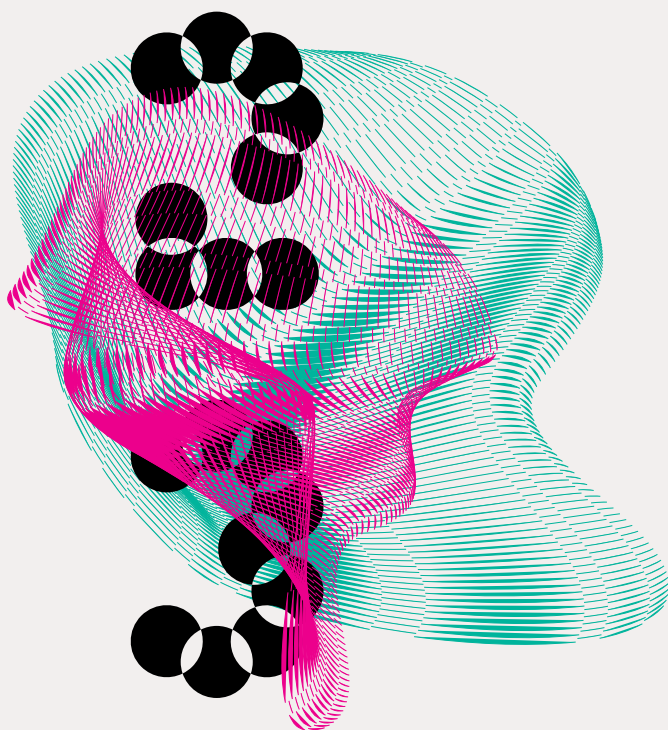
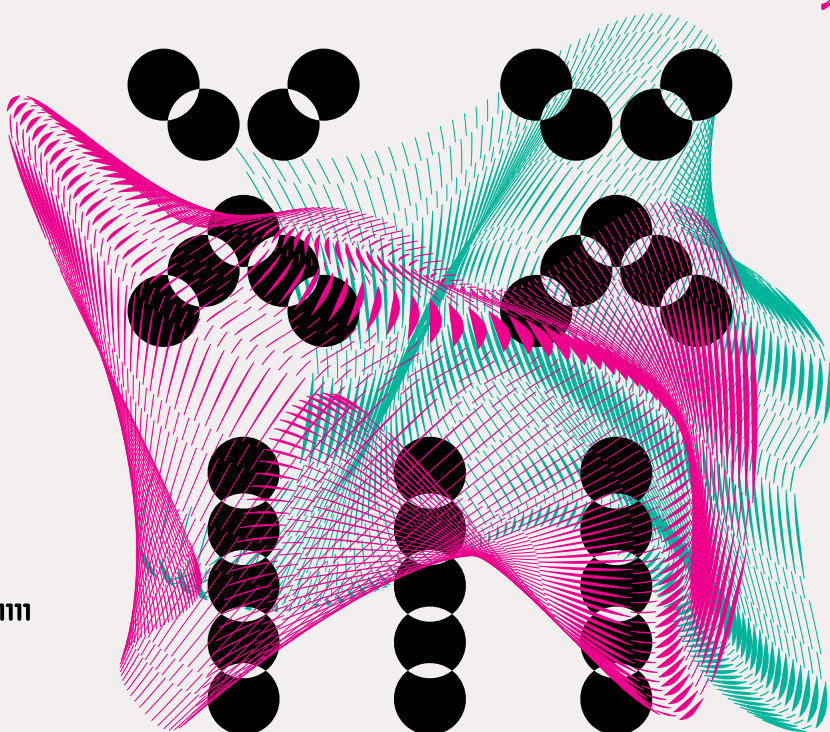
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# Greater than a gallery

## A former abattoir becomes the cutting edge of Macao's art scene

Macao's art scene is flourishing in the most unlikely of places – in the old slaughterhouse near the Canidrome. You can't miss the building, just behind the Canidrome, where Avenida Almirante Lacerda crosses the busy Avenida Coronel Mesquita. Passers-by find their eyes drawn to the ageing yellow building with its brown windows, its former incarnation as a slaughterhouse still evident. In here, the rustic and the contemporary rub alongside each other in the most peculiar way. Art is created here every day, and artists thrive in the atmosphere of learning, sharing, caring and a sense of freedom regardless of nationality or boundaries. The place is called the Ox Warehouse and is the brainchild of photographer and artistic director Frank Lei.

By Filipa Queiroz



Frank Lei

We meet Frank on the 2nd floor of the Ox Warehouse, in a cosy staff room next to a showroom where an exhibition is on display. The artists who exhibit here are usually young people just starting out on their careers. Surrounding us hang pictures of groups of people, plus posters, and bookshelves full of art books.

"When did you move here?" I ask. "In 2003," replies the artistic director. "It started out as just a group of four or five friends." These friends became the members of the Ox Warehouse, which operates as a private, non-profit art association, formerly known as The Old Ladies' House Art Space.

"The Government provided us with the building. In Macao you usually have to seek the support of the government to obtain this kind of space," the artistic director explains, seated on a yellow and brown seventies-style sofa. The artistic group asked the government to lend them the building with a view to turning it into a cultural venue. Although the association wanted a long-term contract, it had to content itself with a yearly contract signed by the Municipal and Civic Affairs Bureau (IACM). The Bureau oversees any maintenance work that is needed in the building.

Despite the temporary nature of the contract, the Ox Warehouse was born. It took a lot of work. "At the time, the building was not in use. It was empty even though it is very, very nice. It has now undergone a huge transformation," says Lei.

Before moving to the old slaughterhouse, the artistic group had their base in The Old Ladies' House in the São Lazaro neighbourhood. The group also took the name of The Old Ladies' House as their association name, though they recently changed it to Ox Warehouse. "We stayed in the Old Ladies' House for two years. The place was empty and in disrepair and didn't have the right conditions. But we still organised a lot of activities and exhibitions at a time when these kinds of activities were scarce in Macao," Lei recalls. "When we started our events, many people came. We also invited artists from outside of Macao – from Hong Kong, Taiwan, the USA, etc. They stayed at the Old Ladies' House and organised a lot of things, such as performances, movie screenings, etc. We made the venue very active."

Now the group operates from their new address, which, despite being "very special", has a significant disadvantage. "We are very far from the city centre," Lei admits. But although the artistic director is concerned that it is not as close to the tourists, on the other hand he believes it is a good opportunity to become closer to the permanent residents. "This place is near to the Northern District. Whenever we can, we organise something close to the people living around here. Although we run our activities mainly inside the Ox Warehouse itself, in the future we want to take it out to other places. Art is not limited to this building."





## A place for reflection

The Ox Warehouse exists because of, for, and with art. This is why the concept of a cultural venue is not merely limited to being a museum or a gallery. The group wants to be more active by not only providing a space for exhibitions but also being an intermediary for meditation, discussion and creation. One of its guiding principles is cooperation between local and non-local artists. "We like to invite artists from overseas every year to work with our local artists, because it means we can see training, practice and collaboration in action. It pushes local artists to accomplish something along these lines," he says.

Thus the Ox Warehouse also serves as an artistic residence. "The artists work here in our workshop. They stay for a month or two, and we watch how they create, as well as sometimes collaborate with them. For example, in previous years we have invited artists from Korea (and also took some of our artists there), Switzerland, France, mainland China and the USA," says Lei.

In terms of local talent, the association is interested in encouraging a connection between itself and the city. They achieved this last summer with their exhibition 'The Disappearing Neighbouring Villages – the Rediscovery of Hengqin Island Photographic Exhibition'. The project involved Lei inviting 18 local artists to capture their view of the place that

he describes as "closely related yet still unfamiliar to Macao". It led to the artists discovering Hengqin Island in a creative sense, by searching, exploring and using monographic photography. The exhibition included scenes of village life, the mangrove area under destruction, a bird's-eye view of wind turbines on the mountain-top, as well as quiet landscapes that were once popular but may eventually disappear. "We don't want only to show works of art, we want to have ideas and make people think about the things they see here," says Lei.

## Space to create

At the bottom of a narrow wooden staircase is the reception area of the Ox Warehouse, where receptionist May sits behind the counter amongst a plethora of books, leaflets and exhibition catalogues. Some of these publications are to sell, and some are just for people to browse. Lei picks one up. It is 'Cuba, Cuba', a book about one of his solo exhibitions based on a trip he made to the Caribbean island in 1992.

As we go outside, the artistic director leads us to the workshop area. There are lots of buckets of paint, brushes, plastic bags and pottery wheels left behind after what we imagine were many hours of creative work.

"Every weekend we have pottery classes, but the students can also come here during the week and use the materials," Lei explains. The classes are only offered in Cantonese. "For now," says Lei. Next to the workshop there is a large showroom boasting high ceilings and a generous amount of space. It was originally a cow-shed. "It was for the cows and animals to eat in, but in the 80s they moved the animals somewhere else and the building became empty," Lei tells us. He points to the windows. "You see those? We can physically change them whenever we need to, depending on the exhibition. You can cut things; move things; have windows; not have windows," he explains. There's only one thing that's really missing, he says. "Air-conditioning. Especially in the summer. It's very, very, very hot."

### Packed with projects

Every year the Ox Warehouse carries out at least one big group project. Last year's EXiM 2011 – the Asian Experimental Video Festival in Macao – and the Macao International Performance Art Festival are examples of such projects. "It depends on the yearly plan that we have to present to IACM every year in December," says Lei. Thanks to their financial support, every exhibition held at this cultural venue has had free admission. Only the workshops are paid-for events, in order to cover the cost of the materials.

Currently eight people work voluntarily at the Ox Warehouse. Frank, Tong Chong and Gigi Lee work as exhibition curators, Ng Fong Chao and Bianca Lei work as curators and artists, and Cora Si as the programme curator. Anson Ng, a local like all the others but currently living in Taiwan, is the music programme curator for concerts and sound workshops. Jane Lei, Frank's sister, is involved as an artist and theatre programmer for both adults and children. "We can all use the office and we share the work," Lei says.

Most of the workshops held at the venue are held in Cantonese. "During the summer we have a project with children. They come from schools, and work with our artists. At the end of the project we put on an exhibition to show the final results. Last year's was the third such exhibition that we've held," says the artistic director. Lei sees working with the children as a focus on the present that prepares the way for the future. It is a



future that Lei envisages continuing "in the same direction", producing new and refreshing ideas, and "maybe one day growing physically". There is a part of the house that is still used by the IACM. "We have already asked to use the space, because often the artists that come from overseas to work with us don't have enough space to create in. But they haven't given it to us as yet," he says. "For us it would be invaluable. We need to develop, to continue working on more projects."

Some projects are already scheduled and underway for this year. The season opened with Yolanda Hao's





illustration exhibition in January. Chinese artist Huang Xiaopeng will be the artist-in-residence in July and August, followed by Irish artist Chad Kay in September and October. The summer will also be the time for the theatre season at the Ox Warehouse, and Gukzik Lau will have a solo exhibition of her contemporary artwork in November. She is a graduate of Toronto's Ontario College of Arts, with a Master's Degree from the Royal College of Art in London. She currently lives and works in Hong Kong, focusing on creating art and art education. The Macao International Performance Art Festival will

also return in May, at the same time as the exhibition of Hong Kong-based writer, art critic, curator and organiser, John Batten. The Asian Experimental Video Festival returns in mid-October.

### **The Ox man**

Frank Lei is a dreamer. Back when he was a student he dreamt about the Nouvelle Vague, (the French 'new wave') and moved to Paris. Later he dreamt about making art flourish in the city he loved, and felt he could not stop until he had done it.



Frank was born in Beijing, as was his younger sister. His parents are from Macao but moved to the mainland to work. The oldest daughter (artist Jane Lei) remained in Macao.

"Those were hard times, with the cultural revolution and all. The first time I saw my older sister, I was six years old," Lei recalls. Four years later he found himself returning to Macao. "That was in around 1973," he says. But he didn't stay long. Years later, Lei left the city again, this time on his own, to study journalism at Jinan University, in Guangzhou. "There weren't many options to choose from. My character was not even suited to journalism, but I liked to write and to read, so I thought perhaps it would be the closest to what I was meant to be," he says.

After Lei finished his studies, he worked for the Chinese-language newspaper Macao Daily News for a year. But then he decided to leave again. "I really liked cinema at the time, so I went to France to study cinema. It was kind of a dream to go to Europe. I loved the Nouvelle Vague."

Lei ended up studying at the Sorbonne University first, and then at the Fine Arts School in Paris. After that he returned to Macao with two new passions: photography, and his current wife.

In Macao, Lei started teaching Photography and Graphic Design at the Macao Polytechnic Institute. "They were just starting out," he says. "We opened an art school there." But it was not enough. "We also wanted to do something connected with art for

the people. So some friends, my sister and I started organising things, even when we didn't have a space to do it in. There wasn't even an Art Museum in Macao at the time. There was nothing. It was then that we thought that if we found an empty building, we could use it." That building was The Old Ladies' House Art Space. Together with Comuna da Pedra, the non-profit cultural organisation of the same name established in 1996, they worked to create and promote the dramatic and visual arts.

Over a couple of years around 200 local art activities were held in the house in the São Lazaro district. They included exhibitions, art fairs, artist-in-residence schemes, movie/video screenings, lectures and seminars, theatre and musical performances, workshops, overseas art exchanges and art-promotion activities.

In January 2003 the association was given notice to move out and stop operating, as the building was due to be closed for maintenance. That was when this group of Macao artists changed its name to Ox Warehouse and moved to the old yellow house on the crossroads between Avenida do Coronel Mesquita and Avenida Almirante Lacerda.

But dreaming about a lively, dynamic and free art scene in Macao is not easy in Lei's opinion. He regrets that, for example, Macao's art teaching "is still very traditional". This even includes MPI, where Lei teaches graphic design. "I would like to train some young artists but the school is traditional.





Frank Lei at the entrance of the Ox Warehouse

Macao needs a real art school, with teachers from other places besides China.” That is where the Ox Warehouse has a part to play. “If I find that the work of one of my students is interesting, I invite him to come to the association and exhibit it there, or to do a workshop.”

Lei admits that in the last decade the Government has been doing a lot for arts and culture in Macao, but he believes that things must be done in a more sustainable way. “These days they give you money for you to pursue projects, but for us it is more important to have sustainable and long-term financing. By which I mean funds for development, not only for immediate purposes,” he notes. He also has little time for the mercantilist approach

of creating art mainly for profit. For him creation is the most important thing. “We like organising exhibitions not only because it is our work, but to make people think, to stimulate them. Even if we use simple materials, creativity is still within them.”

He is a fan of the masters Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Frank, and has held several solo exhibitions in and outside of Macao, such as ‘Night in Paris’, ‘Rencontre Fortuite’, ‘Sleeping City: Macao’, and ‘Cuba, Cuba’. He has also taken part in group exhibitions such as ‘City-Sight’, ‘Biennale Off’ and ‘Another Photographic Vision in Trip’. In 2006 he published a photography and literary book entitled ‘Watching While Walking’.

Photos by Gonalo Lobo Pinheiro



# A Taiwanese Picasso

Artist takes untrodden path  
to find nature's inspiration

By Hélder Beja, in Taiwan

A-Sun is one Taiwan's most famous sculptors, along with fellow sculptor Ju Ming. But although A-Sun is most known for his sculpture, he reveals to us that primitive paintings are his real passion.







## An unconventional career

How many men at the age of 37, with a wife and children to support, would risk everything by grabbing a video camera and going off to Africa for a year? That is precisely what Taiwanese artist A-Sun decided to do when he reached that age. "He was already middle-aged," says his daughter Gina Wu, with a smile. "He was supposed to have a proper job!"

We are inside a car, driving across Taipei with A-Sun's daughter and her husband. We're leaving the city and heading to the suburbs where the artist has a studio that, in reality, is closer to a factory than a studio. Although the studio is located here, A-Sun spends a large proportion of his time in Paris, next to the Quartier Latin and to the people who can promote his work.

Gina Wu tells us amazing things about this man, who was one of the invited artists for the Beijing Olympics. Born in 1942, he studied Fine Arts at Taiwan Normal University. In 1970 he left for Spain to attend classes at the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid – the place where he first connected with the cubism movement. Three years later he moved to the United States of America and remained there until 1977. The most decisive trips of his life, however, were yet to happen.

### Tribal travels

In his late thirties, the artist travelled to Congo, Somalia, the Ivory Coast, Mozambique and many other countries in Africa. He also went to South America, visiting Bolivia, Amazonia and Brazil. Through his contact with aboriginal people and their art expressions, A-Sun developed a real taste for primitive art. And it was that fixation that changed his career.

Back in Taiwan, A-Sun was considered exotic, and his works were not that well appreciated at first. "My grandfather saw my father's exhibition and thought his son was a poor artist," laughs Gina Wu. People just could not understand what he was doing at that time. "For almost a decade he couldn't sell a single painting or sculpture," she recalls.

Now things are different. The innocent touch and tribal influence of A-Sun's works started to be admired first in Japan and later all over Asia and Europe, where they have been extensively shown.







He has achieved a status where he can afford a place like the one we are visiting now. This ‘factory-studio’ outside Taipei contains a huge proportion of A-Sun’s creations over the years. Security is tight: the collection includes hundreds of paintings and dozens of sculptures, some of them built on a massive scale. The Oceanic totems, as well as the African masks, are a key feature in his works. The work of Picasso has also had some influence, as the artist himself admits.

## Ancestral energy

“I was influenced by Picasso but I built my own artistic style after my trip to Africa,” A-Sun tells us. “I thought I had to go to a place where I could be close to nature, so I chose Africa,” he explains. In this reinterpretation of his origins, A-Sun wanted to find his true self. “Taiwanese people are part of the Polynesia family, so I went to Papua New Guinea, to Indonesia. I wanted my work to be about the inner energy of life,” continues A-Sun.

Rocks, wood and other natural materials are A-Sun’s favourites to work with when making his sculptures. He once said, “If I could, I would show trees without sculpting them.” And there is a reason behind A-Sun’s desire to create something larger than life. “Nowadays we are surrounded by technology, but once we used to be part of the universe. We used to understand the weather, the wind, the clouds. I want people to feel that again,” he remarks. Gina Wu tells us that her father is a very pragmatic man. He wants to keep on working, and produce creations as quickly as he can. “Because his work is very physical, he knows he only has ten or 15 years left of working like this.” After that, A-Sun’s goal is to write about his life experience and maybe even try some fictional prose inspired by his remarkable journeys. Indeed, in terms of journeys, this long-living traveller is not done yet. There’s a region in the globe the 70-year-old still dreams of discovering: the Middle East. And, believe us, he’s going to go for it. ■

*photos by Hélder Beja and A-Sun courtesy*



*A-Sun in Amazonia*





Gina Wu





*Works of A-Sun in his Taipei studio*







一代宗師

佛山平岡堂

廣東省博物館藏  
一九九二年十月



葉問  
1893-1972

Ip Man bust in the Foshan museum



# Kung Fu icon

## Martial arts king remembered in native city

By Staff Reporter



Ip Man museum

**We are in a grey brick, two-storey building in the historic centre of Foshan.** Before us is a statue of a man whose mastery of combat created the world's most popular form of martial arts.

More than two million people in over 60 countries practise Wing Chun. Born here in 1893, Ip Man was responsible for making this famous style of martial arts popular.

The Ip Man museum sits on one corner of a complex of temples and museums in Zumiao (Museum of the Ancestors). It attracts thousands of fans from China and abroad. From very close to home, local residents can be found playing chess and cards beneath the trees, attempting to escape the heat of the summer.

Ip had hundreds of students who took his techniques around the world. The most famous was Chinese-American Bruce Lee, who made Wing Chun renowned through his blockbuster films. Kung fu has been a staple of Hollywood ever since.

Ip himself made no such fortune. His life was scarred by the anti-Japanese war, his escape to Hong Kong, an opium habit, and separation from his family for 13 years. He died of throat cancer at his modest home on Tung Choi Street, Hong Kong, on 1 December 1972. He was 79 years old.

But his legacy lives on in sports clubs from Tehran to Tunis, and Berlin to Buenos Aires, where people of all nationalities learn his martial art.



*Ip Man with some of his students in Hong Kong*

## Birth of a legend

Ip was born on 1 October 1893 into the family of a wealthy silk merchant in Foshan. One of the most prosperous cities in southern China, Foshan was famous for its porcelain, textiles, dyeing and casting. It was also the centre of several forms of martial art. According to local accounts, the residents there developed the art form as a way of protecting their wealth.

"Ip did not invent Wing Chun," said Li Mei, a guide at the museum. "It was invented in Fujian province in the late Qing dynasty. But he developed it and took it to a new level."

According to oral tradition, Wing Chun was invented by an abbess from a monastery in Fujian province that had been destroyed by Qing forces. While the abbess was escaping to the south, she saw a fight between a snake and a crane. Combining the techniques she observed in that fight with her own knowledge of Shaolin kung fu, she created this new form of martial art.

Then she came to know a beautiful woman named Yim Wing-chun, who was being forced into marriage by a local warlord. The abbess taught the woman what she had learnt, which Yim Wing-chun used on the unwanted warlord. It proved successful,

and Wing-chun was able to go on to marry for love rather than from force. Wing Chun takes its name from this beautiful lady.

Aged five, Ip began his education at a private school. The following year, he began classes in Wing Chun. His instructor was Chan Wah Shun, one of the most famous practitioners of his day, then aged 70.

Ip was his last private pupil.

While receiving a traditional education, Ip continued lessons with Chan for six years. Then in 1895 his parents sent him to Hong Kong to attend St Stephen's College, a private school for wealthy Chinese and foreigners. So the lessons had to end. But Ip did not let his martial arts skills drop. In Hong Kong, he began to use them against foreigners who were harassing Chinese women. In one account, he attacked a British policeman and, in another, a group of sailors. Ip emerged from both encounters with many bruises, but his pride and patriotism intact.

In 1914, he returned to Foshan and joined the police. He remained on the force, on and off, for the next 30 years. He trained fellow officers in Wing Chun and became famous in South China for his skills.

He married a local woman, Cheung Yung-sing, who bore him two sons. One source has it that he was also an opium smoker and made many high-level contacts through sessions in the city's opium centres.



## Wartime struggles

The war between Japan and China, from 1937 to 1945, was the darkest period of Ip's life. After its occupation of Foshan in 1938, the Japanese army confiscated the family home. One of the most comfortable residences in the city, the Japanese kept it for their own use and paid no compensation to the family.

According to one source, the Chinese government sent Ip to the southwestern province of Guizhou for training as an intelligence officer, and then back to Foshan to work underground.

There he was challenged to a martial arts fight with a senior Japanese officer. Knowing that it would have a negative outcome whatever the result, Yip refused the invitation several times. But in the end he was forced to accept. He defeated the officer with a series of lightning moves, then quickly left the scene. Fearful of retaliation, he went into hiding for a period.

After the end of the war, he returned to the police force, rising to the rank of colonel. He was put in charge of a district in Guangzhou, where he is credited with solving many murders.

## Bruce Lee The Famous student

In 1949, Ip went to Hong Kong via Macao. He left his wife and two sons in Foshan, planning for them to follow him once he had settled there. It was in Hong Kong that he became a professional teacher, holding classes in different rooms and studios in Kowloon.

In 1951, the new government closed the border, meaning his wife and sons were unable to join him until 1962. He took a second wife in Hong Kong and had one son by her.

He became a famous martial arts teacher in Hong Kong, with a wide range of students, including policemen and foreigners. He moved several times, in order to find larger spaces for the classes. During the years when Hong Kong suffered from a lack of effective law and order, he joined citizen groups in patrolling the streets at night, confronting criminals. The government rewarded him for his efforts with medals commending him as 'an outstanding citizen'.

He had hundreds of students, the most famous of whom was Bruce Lee.

*Bruce Lee giant statue in Foshan, Guangdong*





*Bruce Lee statue in Hong Kong*

Lee was born in November 1940 at a hospital in San Francisco's Chinatown. He was the son of a leading Cantonese opera and film actor. Despite the likelihood of an attack by Japan, his father took the baby back to Hong Kong when he was three months old.

The young Bruce grew up in an affluent and privileged household. But after 1949 the neighbourhood became flooded with refugees from China. The streets were now ruled by gangs. Lee liked a challenge and took on the gang members. The level of violence of his encounters increased.

Eager to protect him, his parents decided to give him martial arts training. At 13, after losing a fight with a rival gang, Lee began learning Wing Chun with Ip Man. He became one of Ip Man's favoured pupils.

But his school record was poor, and he became increasingly involved in street fights. In one of them, he beat up the son of a feared triad family. In response, the son's father put out a contract for his life. So, in April 1959, for his safety, Lee's family sent him to live in San Francisco with his older sister.

In the US, he began teaching martial arts, which then led to film and television roles. The films, in Hong Kong and Hollywood, gave martial arts – especially Wing Chun – a global audience for the first time.

Lee died on 20 July 1973, at the age of 32. The cause of his untimely death was probably due to an acute cerebral edema as a result of a malignant reaction to a drug he had taken.



IN THE LAST GREAT WAR ONE MAN DEFIED AN EMPIRE...

DONNIE YEN

# IP MAN

MENTOR OF ICONIC LEGEND  
BRUCE LEE

*Ip Man portrayed in a Hong Kong film*



## Legacy lives on

From 1965, Ip no longer gave group classes due to his advanced age. Instead he accepted only individual students. In 1968, to promote his legacy, he set up the Wing Chun Athletic Association in Hong Kong. His students provided him with financial support to help him in his old age.

He died on 1 December 1972 from throat cancer at his home in Hong Kong. He was 79 years old. His funeral was a major public event, attended by hundreds of people from the world of martial arts, including Bruce Lee.

In 2008, a film 'Ip Man', loosely based on his life, was released, starring Hong Kong actor Donnie Yen as the master. The success of the film has given rise to a sequel and a prequel. These films have increased Ip's fame in the Chinese-speaking world.

The museum in Foshan contains many precious items from Ip's life. One such piece is the wooden pole which he used to perfect his technique, with several pieces sticking out of it at different angles. There are photographs of Ip's ancestral home in Foshan, which now houses a large shopping centre. Other photographs show the college he attended in Hong Kong, and are complemented by books on martial arts, which he studied.

The museum has notebooks and letters from Bruce Lee, in English and Chinese. And also on display are

Ip's fountain pen, ivory cigarette case and stick, and the only photograph of him in a Western suit. As a martial arts master, he preferred to wear Chinese clothes.

"He was reserved and reticent in daily life – every inch a traditional Chinese," a notice in the museum reads. If you did not know him, you would never have known he was a martial arts master.

After his death, his students, including his sons Ip Chun and Ip Ching, took Wing Chun around the world. One of them, Leung Ting, set up the International Wing Chun Association in the 1970s. He also wrote books and made films to popularise the practice.

"It is recognised internationally as the most effective and useful form in the world of martial arts," reads another notice in the museum. Li Mei, the museum guide, said that over two million people around the world practise it.

The museum has photographs of clubs practising Wing Chun in many countries – Brazil and Argentina, Australia and New Zealand, Turkey, Iran, India and Sri Lanka, South Africa, Tunisia, the US, and many countries in Europe.

There are magazines in many languages, including English and Arabic, as well as Chinese. The School of Martial Arts at Manchester University gave Ip Chun a doctorate. ■

*Photos by Eric Tam*



*Museum dedicated to Ip Man in Foshan, Guangdong*





Ip Man Museum



Ip Man Wooden Dummy



Temple Zumiao

寶進財招

福





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# The Earth God

## A deeply rooted Macao tradition since the 18th century

By José Simões Morais

As you walk through the streets of Macao, you cannot fail to notice the many small niches carved into the walls of the buildings, often at pavement level, or just above the ground, to prevent pedestrians from treading on them. Made from red stone and shaped to symbolise a house, these niches contain tablets inscribed with golden characters.

At shop opening and closing time, it is very common to see someone lighting three incense sticks in front of the niches, holding them at head height and bowing three times, turning in a different direction each time. After placing the sticks into a small incense holder or onto an offering – usually of fruit – votive papers are burned and put inside a red metal pot, which acts as a furnace.

These niches are quite common in Macao but have all but disappeared in post Cultural Revolution China. The plaques on display are representations of Tu Di, the Earth God, or Spirit of the Earth. Other gods linked to Tu Di are also found, such as Shi Gan Dang (Sek Kom Tong in Cantonese) in places affected by bad influences, or Tai Shan, the spirit that protects the Sacred Mountain of the East (the etching on these plaques spell out 'Tai Shan Shi Gan Dang' in Chinese characters).



Mitra Altar

## The tradition of Tu Di

There has been a strong tradition of worshipping Tu Di in Macao since the 18th century. Believed to be the god who guards inhabitants of small areas of land, as well as of the land itself, Tu Di is considered to be the god of the family.

The worship of the Spirit of the Earth is one of the oldest traditions of the Middle Empire and was made official in 198 BC by the founder of the Han dynasty, Liu Bang, who decreed that it was the people's duty to worship the Spirit and make sacrifices to it. At that time the spirit was known as She (Se in Cantonese). Special reference had already been made to She in the Book of Rites (Li Ji), one of the Chinese classics, at a time when spiritualism was not used to govern society or explain the Universe, but rather Dao philosophy.

As a country governed by philosophy, China only came to know a religion in the 2nd century. Buddhism arrived in China from outside of the

country, and was immediately widely accepted as it offered people the comfort of a belief in spirits and divinities that helped mortals to save themselves and achieve enlightenment. Images were brought into China depicting pure spirits, Buddhas (enlightened beings) and Bodhisattvas (divinities that remain on earth to help mortals).

By contrast, Dao philosophy was only understood by the intellectual elite, who incorporated it into their daily social activities, leading to confusion on the part of the rest of the population, who did not understand the reasons behind the intellectuals' gestures and ways of behaving. Thus, when Buddhism appeared in China, it immediately gained many believers and forced those promoting Dao philosophy to review its principles and practices, which led in turn to the founding of Taoism.

The new religion of Taoism established a pantheon of gods with a number of roles and hierarchies similar to those seen on earth, where people were able to see themselves reflected.





## The advent of Taoism

Taoism is a polytheistic religion, its pantheon made up of heavenly divinities, pure spirits, gods of the mountains, rivers, earth, and immortals. The latter embody the virtues and magic forces that link the five elements. They include royalty and commoners, whose lives passed through an earthly existence ruled by the ethics of being, and after passing through this world, were chosen by the authorities and inhabitants to be their gods and protectors.

Once Taoism had been embraced, the Spirit of the Earth, She, became a local god (Tou Tei in Cantonese, or Tu Di in Mandarin), or the Heavenly Rural Guardian, and was deemed responsible for the jurisdiction of a specific area. The size of a particular area defined which of the gods linked to She were involved. An area could contain the god of the Land, She Ji (Se Tchek), who protected a large area

such as a province or prefecture, as well as the god of the City, Cheng Huang (Seng Vong in Cantonese), and the God of the Earth, Tu Di, amongst others. Temples appeared only in walled cities.

## The qualities of the Earth God

Having started out as an abstract entity, the God of the Earth became the incarnation of the spirit of a person who lived in a particular area and passed on to a new life afterwards. The area's inhabitants recognised him through his virtue or supernatural powers and chose him as the protector of their place. However, if he did not carry out the role of guardian, by protecting the area and the people who lived in it, the residents could, and still do, replace him with another who, during his earthly life, showed the virtues needed to carry out the role. This second person takes over as the protective spirit.



## Omnipresent in almost every street

In some niches on Macao's streets, the plaques with characters representing Tu Di have been replaced with sculptures. These creations started out as simple stones or crude, misshapen images sculpted from stone or clay. Nowadays they are usually made of porcelain and depict a wise old man, sometimes accompanied by his wife on his right hand side. There are references to a third type of image of a smaller shadowy figure placed on the left of the ancient god, representing his concubine, but no niche or altar depicting two female images has ever been found. Sometimes, though, Tu Di's wife can be found on his left hand side.

## Spirit in and out of the home

It is normal in Chinese homes to find an altar of the spirit of the earth, as he is considered to be one of the family, and the person to whom people tell their secrets and ask for advice and consolation in times of need. As the god of the family he protects it and brings it luck, and is thus not forgotten at times of great joy, when generous offerings are given in thanks.

It is quite common to see both the God of the Earth, resting on the floor, together with the God of the Sky, placed above head height.

As well as the niches in the old part of Macao, small temples dedicated to Tu Di can also be found between the houses and in the plazas, or even in the middle of the street, particularly in the Chinese Bazaar. These are not positioned based on the principles of feng-shui, but rather at the whim of the people who ordered them to be built. They often stand stranded in awkward positions following the building of new roads. Many of them were built by people who wanted to thank their god after a big win at the casino.

For each of the altars and temples of Tu Di, you will find a dedicated person looking after it, usually an elderly person or one of humble means, who cleans it and ensures that its lamps do not go out. It is common for the people living nearby to donate incense or money to buy lamp oil and to help the

person taking care of the temple as they pass by. The reason the Tu Di niches are found on the ground is explained in a story about the first Ming Dynasty emperor, Tai Zu (1368–99). During a particular journey he took, he stopped to have dinner at an inn. All the tables were full except for one with a chair that had an image of Tu Di occupying it. He picked up the image and placed it on the ground. After the emperor had left the inn, the innkeeper put the god back on the chair. That night the innkeeper dreamt about the spirit of the earth, who told him he did not want to go against the emperor's order but wanted to remain on the floor. That is the reason why the image of Tu Di came to be placed on the ground permanently thereafter.





*Patane Temple*

## Macao's oldest temple

As well as the niches at almost every door, there are altars on some of Macao's streets, as well as around ten temples of Tu Di, two of which are noteworthy for their age and size.

The temple of the Earth God, located in the Patane neighbourhood (Sa Lei Tau in Cantonese) on Rua da Palmeira, (Ma-tchi kai), was built by the neighbourhood's residents at the end of the Southern Song dynasty and is one of the three oldest temples in Macao. The second, called Chong Kuok Tou Tei Miu, is located next to the Mitra market and was built much later. There is a plaque inside it bearing the date 1886, and there is evidence of a previous temple on the same site [from the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736–1796) in the Qing Dynasty], which was demolished when roads were opened up in the Horta da Mitra area. When the temple was rebuilt, as a thanks from the neighbourhood residents to Governor Tomás Rosa, this plaque was laid in the patio at the temple's entrance.

The temple, the threshold of which is carved with

the characters Fok Tak Chi (Temple of Happiness and Virtue), is made up of a single atrium, at the end of which, on the left-hand side, is the guard's house. On the other side stands a small chapel.

On the main altar, the God of the Earth and his wife are represented as porcelain statues. Between them is a wooden stele carved with ten Chinese characters, informing us that this is the god Tchoi Pak Seng Kuan. Also known as Choi San (the God of Fortune), this god is responsible for Macao's wealth and abundance. Tu Di often has this role in Macao, although in northern China these two gods are treated as separate gods. Many other gods also stand at the altar, in front of which a sacrificial table is always overflowing with offerings

Back outside the temple, on the corner of two intersecting streets, there used to be a porcelain statue of a cheerful old man holding a crook in his right hand and a gold ingot in his left. That statue has since been replaced by one of an old couple. On the wall above it, at head height, is a small wooden niche with a red plaque engraved with golden characters representing the God of the Sky.

## The legend of Patane temple

At the Patane temple altar the statue of the Earth God is of an old man with a long beard and grey hair. He is accompanied by his round-faced, white-haired consort who has her hands resting on her knees. The statues of these gods are now being replaced in some temples by statues that are younger-looking, with black hair. The preciseness of form and detail of these newer statues point to the use of moulds for their creation.

There is a legend about the origins of the construction of the Tu Di temple in Patane that long pre-dates the arrival of the Portuguese in Macao. It tells of the attempted desperate act of a young man who was helped by a local god.

Lam Seng lived with his parents in the area where Rua da Pedra (Seak kai) is now located. One day his father, Lam Mau, was put in prison for a crime, and his heartbroken mother then died. With no means of subsistence, the boy decided to hang himself on the branch of a large tree that was used by local residents to offer sacrifices to the Spirit of the Earth. He tied his rope to the tree three times, but it broke every time, thwarting his attempts to end his life.

A man passing by saw the boy's desperate attempts and asked him why he wanted to do such a thing. After he had heard about the boy's predicament, the man gave him some silver coins and told him to play the lottery using numbers that he gave him. Lam Seng followed the man's advice, and when the lottery was drawn that night he won a small fortune, which enabled him to pay for his father to go free.

When they heard the story, the locals came to believe that the unknown man was a local god who had taken on human form to reward the boy for the love he had shown towards his parents. The people then decided to join together to build the temple of Tu Di by way of thanks. In order to support the project, they set up the Association of Mutual Assistance of the Patane Neighbourhood, which puts on traditional festivals to honour the local gods every year.

The festivals are held on the second day of the second lunar month, the Double 2, when the anniversary of the god of the earth is celebrated with a lion dance, a dragon dance and an opera put on by local residents. ■

*Photos by José Simões Morais*

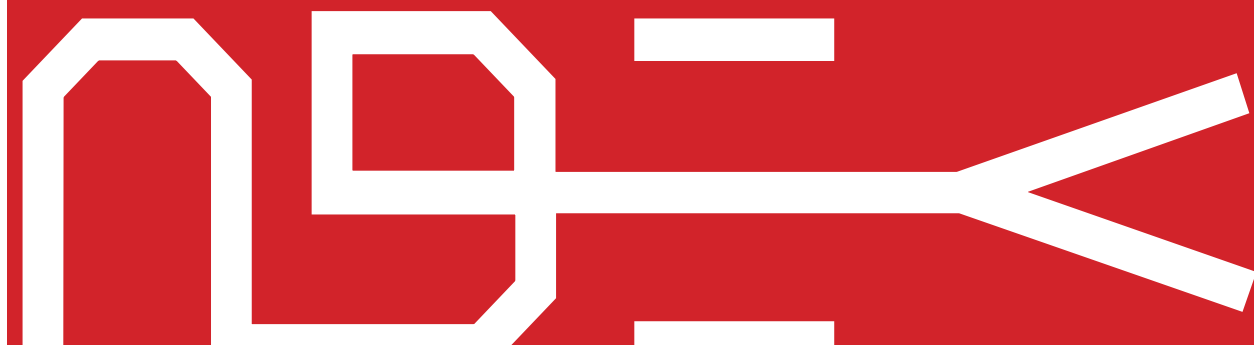






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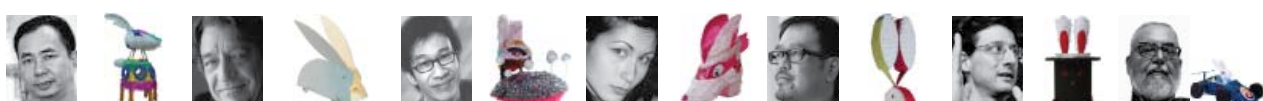
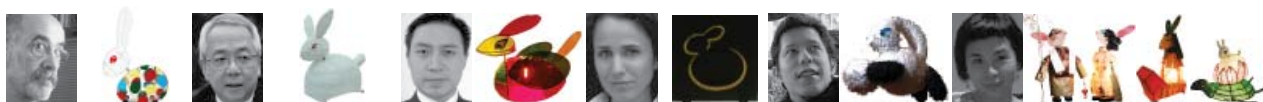
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# Delicious souvenirs

Old bakery chain  
embraces changes

By Louise do Rosario





**Few visitors to Macao can resist sampling the city's traditional Chinese cookies and confectionery.**

They include the ever-popular almond cakes; egg rolls, peanut, walnut and red-date candies, and an impressive selection of beef and pork jerky. Some pastries have charming names, such as 'wife cakes' and 'phoenix egg rolls'.

These delicious snacks, with a distinct Macao flavour in both their taste and packaging, are popular souvenirs for tourists.

Each item has a unique recipe passed down by traditional local bakeries through the generations. Among the oldest and best known is Choi Heong Yuen Bakery, which has been in business since 1935. Alan Wong, 42, managing director of the chain, is the third generation of the family to run the business. His grandfather started making almond cakes in the 1930s in Zhongshan. When the family moved to Macao, it continued the business in a small shop on the quiet street of Travessa do Matadouro. Like many bakeries at the time, the family shop served as both a home and a workplace. Young Wong was fascinated by the sight, smell and sound made when the cakes were baked. "There was the sound 'pi pi bak' when we grilled the cakes over charcoal."

Despite these fond childhood memories of the pastries, Wong did not consider working in the family business until later.

He studied accounting in Los Angeles and was considering settling there when a call from his father in 1993 changed the course of his life. "He wanted me to come home after my eight years of living abroad."

**A family business**

It was tough at first for the young man to find his way in the old-style family business. "I did not know how to make myself useful. The shop was small, with less than twenty staff in total. It was busy only at the weekends."

His parents were determined that he should learn the business from scratch. "Mum wanted me to be the cashier and sit at the front of the shop."

Wong slowly introduced changes to the traditional operation. He noticed that, twice a month, his parents had to work until early in the morning sorting out the salaries of the staff. He suggested using a computer system to handle the payroll. His idea was accepted.

The next big change came in 1996, when his father bought some retail space in Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, a prime site in downtown Macao. With the new shop, Wong had the freedom to introduce a fresh style of management. He started with a more modern window display. "In our old shop, boxes of cakes were piled up against each other.



At the counter, customers would shout out what they wanted and our sales people would fetch the goods from the back of the shop. It worked fine with long-standing customers who knew us well, but was not effective in attracting new ones.”

Wong moved cautiously, spending a modest 50,000 patacas on decorating the shop. Next, he appointed one of the staff as store manager – an obvious arrangement in a modern business, but a major step forward for his tradition-bound family business. Wong said his father was receptive to changes but his mother clung to the old, hands-on work style. She herself was a workaholic, spending hours at the shop and the bakery every day.

### Management reform

Long-serving staff were worried that the changes would lead to lay-offs. Some found themselves in tears when they could not cope with the increased pressure and responsibility. Wong eventually found a balance: the new outlet was to adopt the new style of management, while the ten-year-old shop would stick to the traditional way.

The new changes brought efficiency to the chain, but customer turnover was disappointing in the early years. The economic climate was gloomy. The Asian financial crisis, and Macao’s problems of gang fights in the late 1990s proved very challenging.

### Overseas expansion

Wong used this period of quiet business to expand overseas. He had much to learn, from packaging to marketing. The market abroad was different to that in Macao. Today overseas sales account for 40 percent of the company’s total. With the handover of Macao to China, public order was restored to normal and the economy quickly improved. Since 2003, China has been allowing more mainland Chinese to travel more freely to Macao, a move that greatly boosted the local economy.

The Choi Heong Yuen Bakery seized the opportunity to expand, with new stores set up close to famous tourist spots such as the Ruins of St Paul and the Venetian. In 2007, the family bought a four-storey building next to the shop on Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, to use as its office.

It was a big step forward for the young management team, now including other siblings of Wong. “We used to squeeze everybody in a small attic of 100 sq ft. Now, we have enough space for 100–200 staff. With a much improved environment, we can work faster and better. In the past, there was no clear chain of command. Now I can assign different people to different work, such as purchasing, personnel and marketing.” Such developments might seem simple for any modern enterprise, but not for a business that is burdened with tradition.



Wong's parents have finally taken a back seat, although Wong's mother still visits the factory occasionally.

Some of the older bakery chains have not been able to adapt, and have remained small and inefficient. Younger members of these family businesses have emigrated overseas, leaving older relatives to plough on. "This is unfortunate, as they have missed the opportunity to expand and be more profitable," said Wong.

Competition is now fiercer, with newcomers like Koi Kei moving in quickly to seize a share of the growing pie. Koi Kei, started by a Chinese immigrant who set up his first bakery in 1997, is now as strong a chain as Choi Heong Yuen.

Wong said competition in the future will focus on quality as well as marketing. "We have insisted on using charcoal to bake our cakes because the end products are much better in taste and smell. In my grandfather's days, people bought the cakes to fill their stomachs, so they preferred big portions. Now, the emphasis is on quality and attention to detail." Advertising is also important in Macao, a city transformed by the millions of mainland Chinese going visiting every year. Choi Heong Yuen needs to promote its brand more aggressively than ever to grab their attention.

In July 2011, rival Koi Kei shrewdly opened a souvenir museum, showing how the local bakery industry has evolved over the last century. The museum, located near the popular A-Ma Temple, helps to promote both the industry, and, of course, the company.



Choi Heong Yuen Bakery

Two months later, Choi Heong Yuen launched an equally eye-catching marketing bid: the Cunha Bazaar. A four-storey, brightly coloured building, it exhibits souvenirs and artwork by local artists as well as the history of the bakery chain.

Wong is embracing the competition with confidence, as he believes the cake market is growing rapidly for everyone. In the United States, where his company has made some inroads, the market has scarcely developed. Cakes and confectionery from Macao account for less than one percent of the US market. "Over there we need to present our products as an international item. An almond cake is not as simple as it sounds. It is about selling a kind of culture and lifestyle," he said. ■

Photos by Luis Almoater







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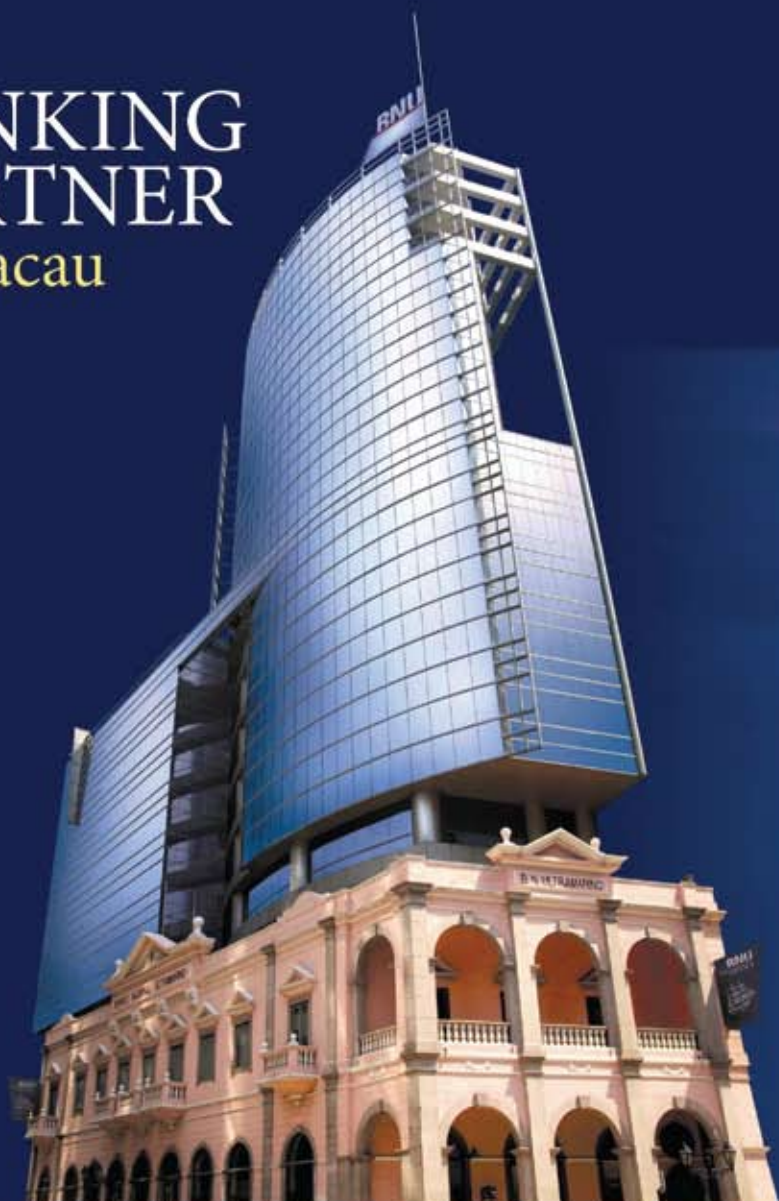
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