

Post Office gains competitiveness • 19th century library is pride of Macao

Macao

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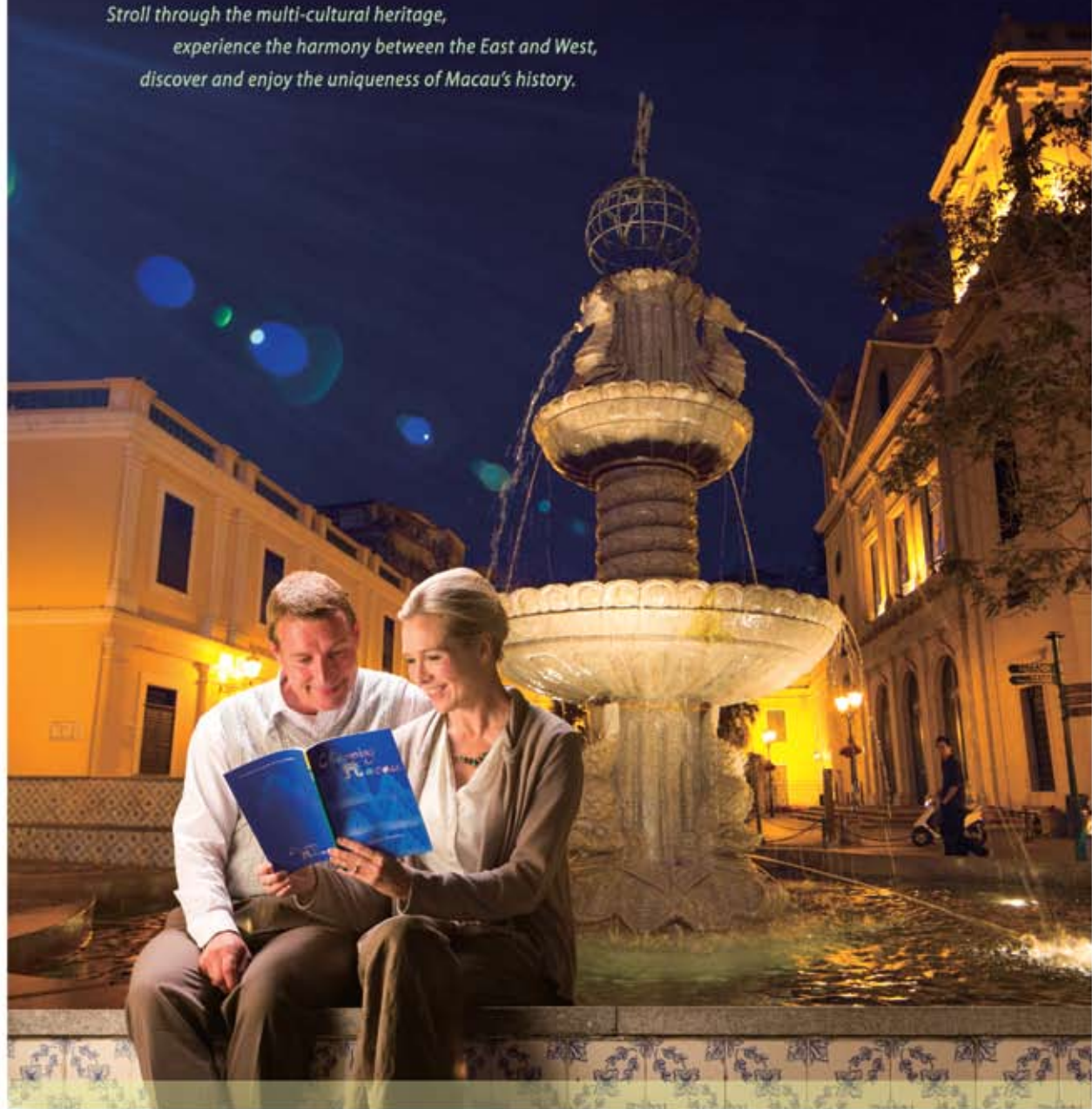
A close-up photograph showing a person applying makeup to a Peking Opera performer's face. The performer is looking into a mirror and holding a brush to their lips. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a red plastic bag.

**Opera celebrates
anniversary of Pak Tai**



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Courage [Ying]

A person with arms spread wide to signify 'adult', standing alone in a wide open space thick with 'grass' — a wilderness — signifies 'courage' and 'heroism', for he does not fear this place where wild animals roam.

In Chinese thought, the hero courageously endures nature's hardships by harmonizing with his environment, as did the sage-kings of China who, in the mythical Golden Age, were tested in forests and on mountaintops, among lions and through storms.

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

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The pride of Macao



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Post Office chief fights to stay competitive
against Internet and courier firms





Pride of Macao

The library of the former Leal Senado

By Filipa Queiroz

Photos by Eric Tam



On Avenida Almeida Ribeiro, right in the tourist heart of the city, is a well-hidden treasure often overlooked by Macao residents and tourists alike. En route to the city's more famous casinos and bakeries, visitors regularly pass right by a fascinating piece of history housed in the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau: the library of the former Leal Senado.



Book odyssey

This unique library contains over 20,000 books of all kinds and in a huge variety of languages, many of which have been in its collection for countless decades. The history of the collection charts a veritable book odyssey that began in 1873.

In that initial year, Januário Correia de Almeida, Viscount of São Januário, the then governor of the Province of Macao and Timor, approved

the acquisition of articles that would form the beginnings of a private library, the Biblioteca Macaense (Macanese Library). It was to include national and foreign books for the use of a handful of members and subscribers. The acquisition of books for the library was given to an administrative commission group, made up of illustrious personages such as interpreters, translators, professors, civil servants, and writer and journalist Pedro Nolasco da Silva.



In 1884 Clube União, which had already gifted books to Biblioteca Macaense, opened its own library with books that it sent for from Portugal. According to articles published at the time in local newspapers *Echo Macaense* and *O Independente*, however, there was a need for a library in Macao that was public and open to everyone.

Ten years later, the Macao Central Library was established, next to Liceu Nacional (National School). It was funded by donations from local readers and regulated by the government of José Horta e Costa. At one point it worked out of a room in the Santo Agostinho Convent and the Hotel Bela Vista building.

In 1922 journalist Henrique Valdez put public pressure on the administration to give the library a permanent home in the former Flora artillery barracks. As he wrote in the newspaper *O Liberal*: "In the Guides to Macao we will no longer, as now, tell tourists to visit the São Paulo ruins, the fantan houses or the opium factory; we will also tell them to visit Grande Parque, the Museum and the Public Library."

In the end, in 1927, the Macao Public Library was set up in two rooms of the then Leal Senado, the former Macao city hall whose building is currently occupied by the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau.

Building up the library

The Macao Public Library was inaugurated in 1929 after many months of work, receiving books and drawing up regulations, which, amongst other things, set out that owners, directors or managers of companies and publishers were required to send two copies of each of their publications to the library.

A year later the Hong Kong newspaper the *South China Morning Post* wrote: "In the Senate House there is a beautiful library (...) which is said to be a replica, on a smaller scale, of the celebrated library of the Convent at Mafra, in Portugal. The most attractive thing you can see in the Macao library are the delicate carvings that make the lower of the two floors pleasant and peaceful."

The Library of the Convent at Mafra was designed by Portuguese architect Manuel Caetano de Sousa in the Louis XV style at the request of the Canons Regular of St Augustine. To this day it is considered to be one of the most important Portuguese libraries, with a valuable collection of around 36,000 books, whose shelves are elaborately carved from Brazilian wood.

Several articles in the Macao press, and elsewhere, would later describe the Macao Public Library as "one of the richest libraries in the East" and "the pride of Macao".

In the 1950s the number of readers registered at the library was around 4,000 and the books supplied were numerous – including 14,000 books from the late Commander Dr Lourenço Marques. In 1962, the now re-named Macao National Library by the Overseas Minister (Ministro do Ultramar), had over 43,000 books.

Luís Gonzaga Gomes, a renowned Macao intellectual, was the interim librarian. From 1962 to 1967 he did notable work including binding a number of works into folios, including old Macao newspapers and magazines, to allow researchers to access them. The lawyer, professor and writer Henrique de Senna Fernandes was the library's director for almost two decades.

Impressive collection

The library is on the first floor of the grand neoclassical building housing the old Leal Senado. In stark contrast to the stone stairs leading up to it, flanked by granite Doric columns, modern glass doors open up into two completely different rooms.

The first is modern, with shelves full of large heavy-looking books, some reading desks and a microfilm viewer. The second is a two-storey library furnished in elaborately carved wood and filled with ancient tomes. Some of the books are on display in glass-topped cabinets.

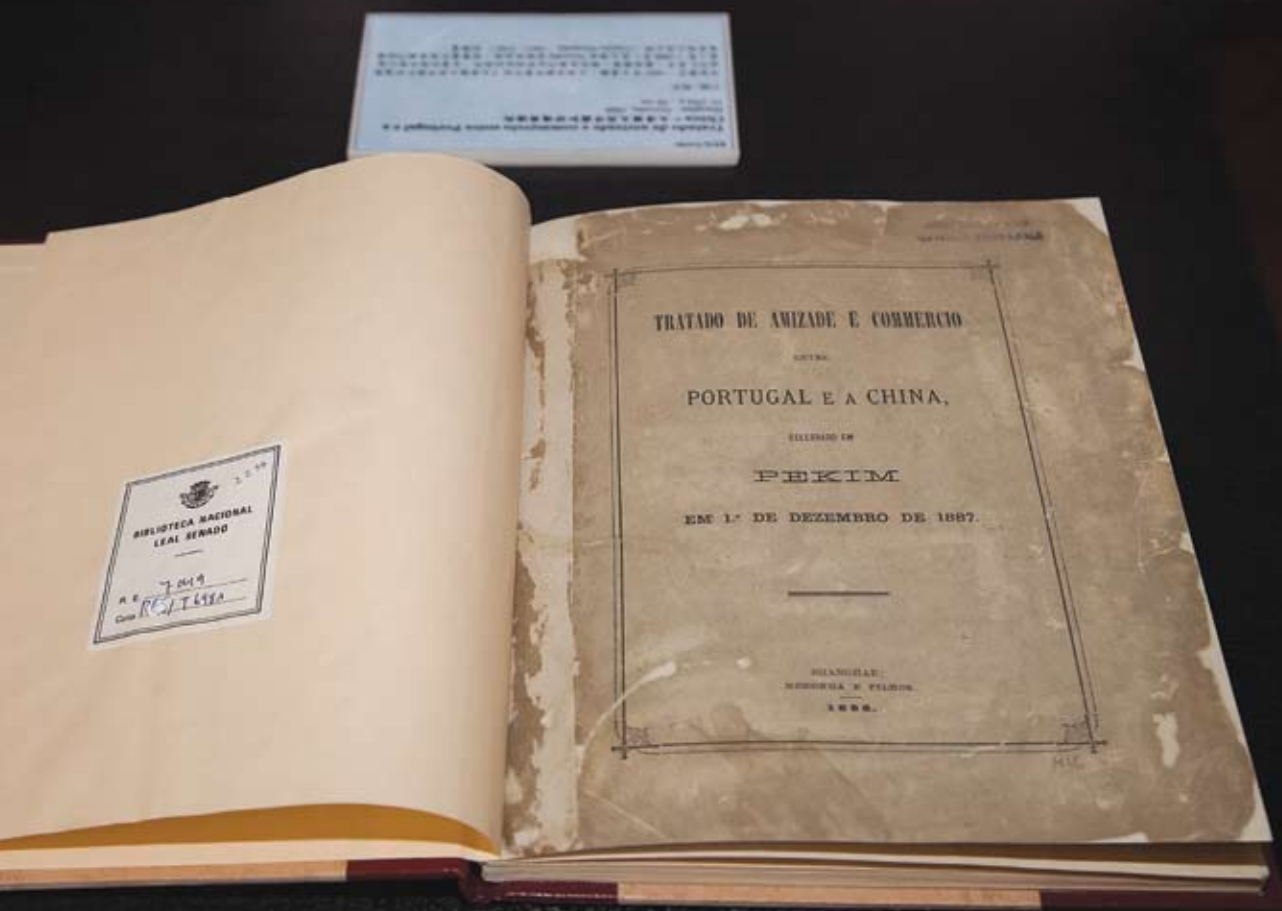
Stella Lee is a translator and researcher at the Cultural Institute. For the last ten years she has focused on the collection at the library, based in a chilly private room piled high with musty-smelling documents and manuscripts.

Last year Lee's publication *Confrontation and Interchange: Review of Rare Books of the Macao Central Library*, included synopses of 114 works that are most representative of local texts not produced in Chinese.

"The collection ... covers all areas. A majority of the books belonged to people from Macao. For example Camilo [Pessanha] owned both works of literature and linguistics, including the study of Chinese. Pedro Nolasco da Silva, who to my mind was the most important donor, worked as an interpreter for the government and as a teacher, which accounts for his large collection," Lee explains.



Stella Lee



Copies of *Tratado de Amizade e Commercio entre Portugal e a China* (Treaty of Friendship and Trade between Portugal and China) (1888), are held in three different versions – Portuguese, Chinese and English, the latter a limited edition by British publisher Dorling Kindersley.

"It was printed with watermarks," says Lee. "When we see rare books and we find this type of paper we immediately understand the importance of the book. If, for example, it was a dictionary, this type of paper wouldn't be necessary."

Also in the collection is the small volume *Regni Chinensis Descriptio* (1639), by Father Nicolaus Trigautis. It is proof that at the time, despite the complex printing process, books the size of modern paperbacks were already being printed.

Moveable type

Some of the dictionaries in the library tell a special story of their own. They are precious examples of the first books in Europe and Macao to be printed

using moveable type – a method of printing using moveable components, such as letters, to produce the text. One such text is *Christiani Pueri Institutio* (1588) by João Bonifácio. The edition held at the library is not the original but a subsequent edition printed by the Cultural Institute, though nonetheless invaluable for the tale it tells.

As Lee explains, "One day a missionary stopped in Macao on his return to Japan from a mission to Europe (which took in the Vatican), accompanied by some young Japanese ambassadors. They stayed in Macao for ten months, waiting for "good winds" to enable them to continue on their journey. In that period they printed a book, which they did with the aid of moveable type equipment."

The missionary was the humanist, theologian and evangeliser of the East, Alexandre Valignano, and the young men were representatives of the daiyos (feudal rulers) of Kyushu (the third largest island of Japan). It is not clear where they acquired their printing equipment, but it is believed to have been from Madrid or Lisbon.

Christiani Pueri Institutio, about the Christian education of young people, was the first book to be printed in Macao by a printing machine using moveable type. Produced in Macao's Jesuit College, it came 135 years after Johannes Gutenberg (1400–1468) used moveable type to print the Bible, and 200 years after the Korean Buddhist Treaty was published – considered to be the oldest publication printed in the Orient using the same method.

Before that a book by Father Miguel Ruggiere, a companion of Matteo Ricci in the evangelisation of Southern China, had been printed in Macao, but using the woodcut printing technique employed for several centuries in China.

Some time later, Englishman Robert Morrison published another book with the support of the East India Company. This was book was printed using moveable type but in two languages.

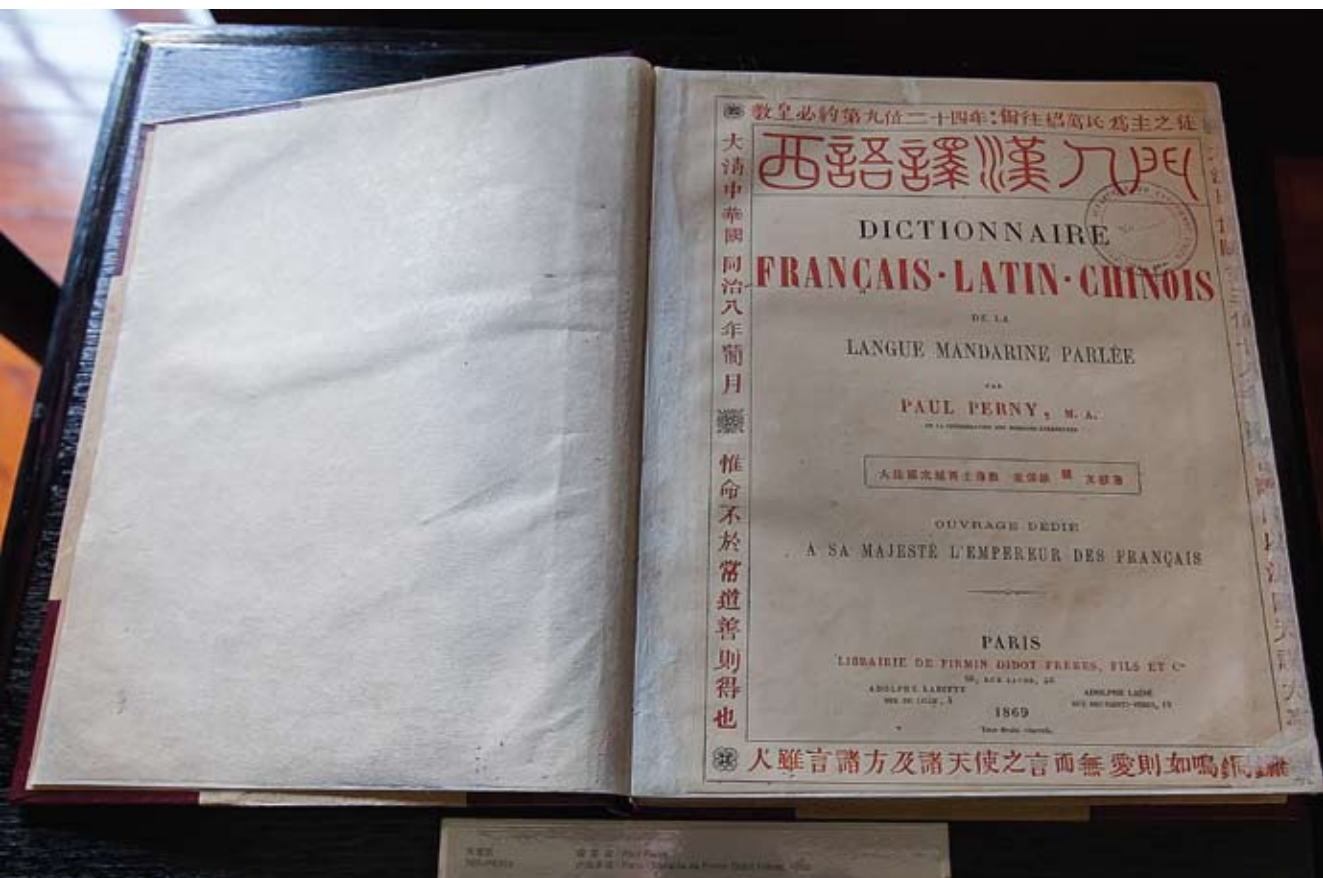
Lee explains how difficult it would have been to produce the huge English-Chinese dictionary, involving so many characters and of such varying sizes. Some of the translations include encyclopaedic-level contextualisations.

"This book is very important because it was pioneering in the history of translation and it was made in Macao," she says.

As the researcher notes, moveable type in Chinese in fact appeared four centuries before Guttenberg's Bible. Woodcut printing was a technique used in China and then in Korea and Japan in the seventh century. Blocks of wood were used to carve out images and texts that could be reproduced by embossing, though the technique was not very practical and therefore not often used.

Unlike the Western alphabet, hundreds of moveable characters were needed to print a book in Chinese. "At least 2,000, but 20,000 was the best option," Lee explains. "There was also the time needed to organise them on paper." It is estimated that Morrison's book, for example, took around ten years to complete.

According to the researcher, it did not take long for the printing technology developed in Macao to be implemented in cities like Hong Kong and Shanghai by Macanese people such as the Noronha family, whose signature can be seen on several books in the Library.



Small collection with a big impact

Although the library is relatively small, it is quite diverse. As well as literature, linguistics and China studies, on the first floor, which is not normally open to the public, are housed books on history, mathematics, philosophy, religion, botany and medicine. Included are books with titles like *Feeding the brain*, *Treaty on Naval Hygiene*, and *Conversations in Eastern China*. “Hardly anyone looks at these books anymore, they are too obsolete,” the researcher says.

Currently the most looked-up items at the library are newspapers, by researchers and journalists. Luciana Ritchie, who worked at the library for several years and is now digitalising works at the Aréia Preta archives, highlights some rarities in the collection, including fragile and brittle copies of Macao newspapers *Abelha da China* (1822), *Gazeta de Macau* (1824) and *Echo do Povo* (1869).

Abelha da China (China Bee) was Macao’s first newspaper and is also considered to be the first newspaper in modern Chinese history. Issue One

was published on 12 September 1822 at a time of great political agitation due to clashes between liberals and absolutists. It was published weekly on four pages of Chinese-made paper and its editor was the Dominican prior in Macao, Friar António de S. Gonçalo de Amarante.

“We have these copies kept in special boxes that stop them being destroyed by damp. Many of them are also available on microfilm,” Ritchie explains. In addition, we have copies of 20 current newspapers, 100 old newspapers, and official bulletins of all the former Portuguese colonies: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea, India, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Príncipe, and Timor. In terms of books, we currently have around 20,000.

The library is no longer the biggest but is still the most beautiful and special library in Macao. Housed as it is in the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) building, it is sometimes known as the IACM library, and shares the pride of the IACM in the building’s place on the List for UNESCO World Heritage. At one time it promoted and hosted cultural activities such as book launches, talks and celebrations of commemorative dates, though these events are now infrequent. “Since the transfer of administration to China there has been a lack of interest in these types of activity. It’s a shame,” Ritchie says. Perhaps it has been overtaken by more modern partnerships and is not part of the usual tourist trail but, as Valdez predicted, the library is included in some of the city’s guides.

Macao now has eight public libraries. These libraries are split into two sectors, each with basic copies of books in Chinese and Portuguese and other foreign languages. The main one, the Central Library, opened in 1983 in Tap Seac Square. It has a collection of around 123,000 books, copies of 310 magazines, 39 different newspapers, and 234 rolls of microfilm. It is part of a public reading network of over 200,000 volumes in total, made up of the libraries of the former Leal Senado, Sir Robert Ho Tung, Itinerant, Mong Há, Ilha Verde, Taipa Island, and Coloane.

Since 1993 all have undergone a digitalisation plan that allows readers access to books and publications via a computer. As well as newspapers, and thanks to the continuous installation of new equipment, some literary works are now also available in digital format.





Fun Reading

Online platforms enable students to achieve better reading competency

By Louise do Rosario in Macao

Photos by Cheong Kam Ka

Reading is the foundation of learning, according to education experts. For this reason, Macao, a small city with an impressive education agenda, has devoted considerable resources to enhancing the reading ability of its students.

In 2004, the government announced that reading would be formally included in the school curriculum. The aim was “to nurture students to have reading as a lifelong interest and learning”, it said in an official statement.



Wenny Lin with teacher Amy Ma from Tong Nam School





The government has done much to achieve this goal.

Since the academic year 2007/2008, under the “School Development Plan” of the Education Development Fund, schools have begun to employ special “Reading Promotion Staff”. This plan helps students to learn from articles of various genres and through group activities. The aim is to increase their reading proficiency, promote their confidence and develop a good reading habit.

The government has also been participating in the

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which was launched by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. It is a worldwide study done regularly to assess the basic learning competency of 15-year-old students and the factors that influence their learning. The study also compares and evaluates the relative effectiveness of the education provided by the participating countries or economies.

Macao took part in the PISA of 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012; it will also participate in the PISA of 2015.

All these efforts are gradually paying off. In the 2012 PISA, Macao’s reading literacy performance was above the OECD average, ranking between 12 and 22 on the study’s reading literacy scale. In the previous PISA of 2009, Macao’s score had been below the OECD average, ranking between 27 and 30.

Although Macao is rated below neighbouring cities like Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, PISA has assessed Macao’s students’ literary performance as above the OECD average.

Schools in Macao have worked hard to achieve this goal. They organize and encourage special sessions where students read in

libraries, in small groups or with their parents at home. Such activities aim to nurture the habit of reading for its own sake, not to earn higher scores in exams.

Online reading in three languages

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ), a prime mover in this field, has also developed an online reading platform for schools to participate in voluntarily. There are three separate systems

- Chinese, English and Portuguese - designed by education software companies.

The content of each language platform is different, but the goal is the same: to engage students in the daily reading of essays covering a wide range of topics.

Kit Wu, director of DSEJ’s Centre of Languages, explains that at the start of a school term, each student is given a user name and password to access the websites. Students then choose a reading level they are comfortable with, and at the click of a button an essay of several hundred words appears on the screen. After reading the essay, they have to work on a multiple-choice task (a short test). This is to evaluate their reading competencies, such as comprehension and analysis.

The reading and completion of the tasks takes ten to twenty minutes, depending on the speed of individual students.

The content and presentation of the sites are skillfully designed to make it fun for students. On the English website, entitled Fun and Friends, the reading materials come under lively titles such as “Talent Show” and “Dinosaurs”. Those who do well on the tasks are given online currency to buy virtual items from the site’s “Aquarium” and “Space Farm”.

Students are provided with a record of their scores, ranking them among their peers at the




end of each month. The best performing ones are given a certificate of achievement, as a token of recognition.

Wu of DSEJ said, “Nearly 85 percent of the schools in Macao have participated in the Chinese and English programmes, while 30 percent of schools have participated in the Portuguese programme. When each school term starts, DSEJ holds a meeting with the schools to explain the online programmes for the academic year. Then, two months later, we have another meeting to discuss any problems that might arise. We aim to enhance and promote the online reading programme through frequent contact with its users.”

Better mastery of languages

Teacher Amy Ma of Escola Tong Nam noted that her students have done better in composition, since their participation in the online reading programme. “With the younger students, we get them to read online in class; the senior ones can read at home, in their own time. If they miss reading the daily pieces during the week, they can catch up over the weekend. There are no exams; it is merely about reading enjoyable stories. This is just another way of learning. The aim is to stimulate their interest to read books outside the main curriculum.”

Macao Academic Year 2012/2013 Secondary and Primary Education

	 Institutions	 Teachers	 Students enrolled
Secondary education	43	2 587	33 921
Primary education	60	1 622	22 231
Total	103	4 209	56 152

Source: Education Survey 2011/2012

One of Ma's students, Wenny Lin, has done especially well in her online reading tasks; she has been the first in her class for many months. The 11-year-old sixth-grade student said she did the reading tasks every day at around 8pm at home, after finishing her regular school work. "I take about twenty minutes to read and then do the test for each of the websites. I enjoy doing it. It has helped me in mastering languages," said the softly spoken girl, who proudly keeps all her award certificates in a plastic folder.

Kitty Lei, 11, from the same school, said the online programme had helped her academically. "The essays are not that difficult and many tell interesting stories. If there are things I do not understand, I can try to find the answers on the websites. I usually do the tests in the evening, at around 7pm to 8pm." The fifth-grade student comes out third in many of the online tasks.

Learning Portuguese online

Carla Sá, a veteran teacher at the Escola Oficial Zheng Guanying, said the online Portuguese website complemented well her school's other reading activities.

"The students have six sessions of online English

reading and four sessions of Portuguese each week via the language websites. In addition, they have another forty minutes of Portuguese learning at the language laboratory. There they do exercises, practise pronunciation and sing songs in Portuguese. We also have a further thirty minute reading session between 8 and 8.30am. Students can either read books they bring from home or from the library."

Tina Lei, one of Sa's students, said she enjoyed reading the Portuguese website. "It usually takes me about 25 minutes to complete it. I like the cartoons there. It is lots of fun," said the 10-year-old primary five student.

Natalie Fu, 16, is another avid reader. In her second senior year at the Colégio De Santa Rosa De Lima-Secção Chinesa, Fu reads English language newspapers at the weekend, and detective books for pleasure in her spare time. As to the online reading platform, it usually takes her less than ten minutes to finish the reading and the tasks.

Ho Wai Pek, Fu's teacher at the school, said that aside from the online reading sessions, the school also has a special reading class once a week. "The class lasts for about 40 minutes. Sometimes we combine two sessions so we can show a movie and ask students questions and hear their responses at the end of it."

Carla Sá with Tina Lei from Zheng Guanying school



Students enjoy the tasks

Ten-year-old Winson Lau, a primary-five student at Pui Ching Primary School, has received an impressive 3,600 points and seven awards for his online reading tasks. Last year, between 13 November and 13 December, the enthusiastic reader completed 36 pieces. With the more difficult ones, he found he needed to do the reading tasks several times before he got a pass. It is obvious from his big smile that he finds the tasks challenging but enjoyable. "I like SpongBo. It is so funny," he said, referring to a character on the English-language website.

Ana Lau, teacher at the Escola Luso-Chinesa Técnico Profissional, also speaks highly of the online programme.

"Our school is a vocational training school offering eight different types of professional training, all of which treat the learning of languages seriously. The online programme has encouraged our students to learn more and has made them realise that learning is a lifelong process.

"Last year, our students did well at learning Portuguese. The online platform has helped them to improve their vocabulary, pronunciation and comprehension. Overall, they have become more confident in speaking and writing Portuguese."

Lau said teachers monitor closely the learning capacity of individual students and assign online essays accordingly. For students in the lower grades, teachers have spent time in class demonstrating and explaining how to make better use of the websites.

Improvements recommended

While the online language platform has helped many students, some admitted that they have little interest in using it, according to a DSEJ-funded survey by academics at Hong Kong University (HKU).

The survey, published in February 2013, said some students interviewed admitted that they were often distracted by other internet content while working on the online essays. They said the level of difficulty of the essays varied greatly: some were too easy; some too difficult. They also admitted to doing the tasks with the help of the internet, rather than relying on their own comprehension of the essays as required.

Looking ahead, the HKU survey recommended that the programme incorporate other multi-media resources into it, such as e-books, a movie library with content to complement the online essays, and educational television programmes. ■



Filipa Lo

Delivering Success

Post Office chief fights to stay competitive against Internet and courier firms

By Mark O'Neill

Photos by Eric Tam





When Derby Lau Wai Ming graduated from secondary school, she wanted to study in the United States and broaden her horizons beyond her native Macao. Fearful that she would not return, however, her mother did not agree.

Neither woman could have imagined that, in 2010, Lau would become Postmaster General of Macao, the first Chinese and the first woman to hold the position.

During her two decades there, the Post Office has faced unprecedented competition from the Internet and private courier firms that have taken away some of its traditional business. Its challenge is to develop new products and services to stay profitable and competitive.

Despite being a department of the government, the Post Office receives no subsidy from the public purse and must operate like a commercial entity.

Modest family

Lau was born the fourth child and third daughter of a family of five children. Her father was a carpenter and interior decorator and her mother a stay-at-home mum.

"My father was an honest and open-hearted man, always willing to learn. In his old age, he learnt how to use a computer. He has passed away now and we all think of him often," she said in an interview at the top of the 130-year-old Post Office building, a

landmark in the city centre.

Probably because of her father's profession, the family moved house every seven-to-eight years. He earned enough to provide a comfortable living for his family. Her only brother had a room to himself and the four sisters shared two.

"There was more pressure on my brother and two elder sisters to help the family. I was the fourth child, so the pressure on me was less."

She was an excellent student, specialising in science. At that time, Macao had one institute of higher learning, the University of East Asia (UEA), which offered only arts and commerce courses.

Eager to see the world outside Macao and continue her studies in science, she asked her parents if they would pay for her to go to the US.

"My mother asked me to stay. She feared that I would not return. They would not pay for the studies. I was very disappointed." So she went to the UEA, where she graduated after a three-year Business Administration course.

At that time, Macao had few companies, especially large ones, which needed MBA graduates. So, after doing short-term jobs, Lau joined the Post Office in 1991.

"My mother is a very traditional Chinese woman. She looked after us very well, providing us with soup, food and clothes, and helping my father when he set up a small shop. She also kept a sharp eye on the property market."





Destiny with the Post Office

Her ties to the Post Office predated her employment there. As a teenager, she had pen pals in several countries and exchanged letters and gifts with them. "I used to go to our local post office two-to-three times a week to send things. It was a short walk, between our home and my school. The ladies there were beautiful, in their uniforms and their appearance. They greatly enjoyed their work. This created a bond between me and the Post Office." One of her pen pals was a lady in Britain, 20 years her senior, a leader of the Girl Guides, of which she was also a member. "She gave me a lot of good advice in how to guide and lead people. These letters allowed me to study the culture and background of the senders."

The Post Office had other attractions. Its self-sufficient, commercial status appealed to Lau, as did its international nature and the close contact with the public that was involved. For a sociable, outgoing person like Lau, it was a very positive choice. After she joined, her first challenge was the Portuguese language. As a student, she had learnt English but did not speak a word of Portuguese. But her superiors were Portuguese, and many important documents were in the language too.

Fortunately, the handover was only eight years away and the government was sending civil servants to Portugal to study and prepare them to take over. She was a member of the seventh group of such people, spending 12 months in 1992-93 to learn the language, study in the National Administration College and have an internship in post offices in Porto, Coimbra and Lisboa.

"That was a very happy year. With my classmates, I travelled to other cities in Portugal and other countries in Europe. The Portuguese were very warm and welcoming. At the start, I was at Level One in Portuguese. By the end, I had surpassed my fellow students who had started at Level Five."

Rising in the Post Office

Her first assignment at the Post Office was in the Express Mail division. She went on to become head of the philately section and then of the commercial service. In 2000, she became deputy chief and in 2010 Postmaster General.

She runs an operation of 420 staff and four divisions - the post, the savings bank, electronic services and the Communications Museum, which opened on 1 March 2006.



Museum of Telecommunications

The museum is a public service, educating the public and especially students about the history and work of the Post Office and telecommunications in Macao. Unlike the rest of the Post Office it is run on a non-commercial basis and receives a subsidy from the government.

In the 20 years since Lau joined, she has seen a revolution in which mobile devices and private courier companies have replaced many of the services that the Post Office provides.

"The number of personal letters has decreased but the overall volume of mail is increasing. Last year it grew three percent over 2012. This includes financial statements, company letters and commercial promotions. The volume of registered mail increased 30 percent. This is not surprising when you consider the growth of Macao's economy. So daily postal delivery remains a very important service."

On 9 October last year, the Post Office launched a secure electronic postal box through which people can receive electricity, water and other bills, bank statements and promotional material. "This is a closed and secure system. We know who sent bills and who received them. We are a neutral carrier that provides legal proof of sending and delivery." Her colleagues are in the process of promoting this new service to government departments.

The Post Office also runs a savings and loans division for civil servants and employees of big firms; borrowers only need to provide proof of their salary – not ownership of a property – and can obtain loans quickly.

"We do not provide money to buy a house but for smaller sums – to travel, buy a car, decorate a house or pay medical bills. We have 30-100 applications a week and decide on approvals twice a week. We set the interest rates according to the market. We also provide money exchange and remittance services," she said.

Stamp collecting

The most profitable division is philately, which earned 45 million patacas a year in 2012 and 2013. "The record sales were close to 200 million in 1997 and 1998, ahead of the handover, where we increased the number of issues and there was speculation. From 2007-2011, the sales were 60-80 million," Lau said.

The city has a long history of selling stamps, starting in 1884. As Lau recounts: "Initially, the stamps were designed and printed in Portugal and sent here. They showed the history and status of Macao – first they depicted the King of Portugal, then they represented the republic status. From 1982, we started to use Macao designers and Macao themes, as well as using international events and Chinese elements, because 80 percent of our clients are Chinese."

Each year, the philately division draws up a list of designs and subjects that are approved by the Chief Executive and the Secretary for the annual issue plan. The printing quantity of the ordinary issue is 200,000 sets, with 250,000 sets for those of the Lunar New Year.

While a majority of clients are Chinese, they have buyers all over the world, including Portugal and Germany.

"We use different technologies, including embossing, varnishing with gold and using fluorescent colours. We help companies develop corporate gifts. We are developing new products to be sold as art work and items that can be collected."

As the Post Office is part of the government, Lau can only employ Macao citizens. "High turnover is a problem, because of the rapid growth of the economy. An employee needs to give only one month's notice. But we need six months to recruit a new postman, then more time on training, which includes knowledge of Macao's street names in Chinese, English and Portuguese."

According to Lau, the trade unions and the wider society in Macao opposed the hiring of non-Macao people. "We hope that the rules can be relaxed to allow us to have more independence in this area."

Landmark

The Post Office building, constructed in 1929, occupies what is probably the best site in the entire city, overlooking Senado Square and on the side of San Ma Lu (a well-known and well-loved part of central Macao). Thousands of people, locals and visitors alike, walk past each day; it is a commercial gem.

They use the building for customer services and administration. The other functions of the Post Office are located elsewhere. Lau said the building was a city landmark and part of the historical memory of Macao residents over the years: while the site is most desirable, no-one has dared to make an offer to buy it and wash away this collective memory.

Lau is married to a civil servant and the mother of two children, aged 12 and three; she also helps to look after her elderly mother.

She aims for a balanced life and to give weekends to her family. "It is hard sometimes. You must allocate your time wisely, not waste energy and also need to know how to delegate and trust people. You must take care of yourself before managing other issues. I have a very trusted team that works with me, who are honest and capable. To achieve success, people must work hard, with a firm goal in mind, and not give up easily".

Lau was not able to fulfil her dream of studying in the United States at a young age. But her 20-year career at the Post Office has opened many other doors. "I am very fortunate to have had this opportunity. I have had many chances to go to Europe and have learnt many things from colleagues around the world, enabling me to see where we are doing well and where we are behind. It has all been very valuable experience. I am full of gratitude." ■

General Post Office building



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1899

A Lifetime Hobby

Collector brings passion for stamps from Cambodia to Macao

By Mark O'Neill

As a young man living in a large house in Phnom Penh in the 1950s, Io Hong Kuong used to receive stamps from an uncle in China. "They were very beautiful and the only way for me to understand the country. I was the first person in my family to collect stamps."

Five decades later, Io, now the proud owner of more than 10,000 stamps, is vice chairman of the Macao Stamp Collectors' Association and chairman of the Macao Society to Collect and Study the Past.

He and another Macao collector, Chan Shu Wing,

provided the material for an exhibition that has just closed at the Zhuhai Museum, entitled A Century of Postal History in Xiangshan. Xiangshan is the historic name for the county of Guangdong next to Macao; it was renamed Zhongshan in honour of its most famous son, Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen), after his death in 1925.

The exhibition traced the dramatic history of the region from the end of the Qing dynasty to the start of the Communist era. It was the first of three exhibitions to be held there featuring historical material from Macao.



Chan Shu Wing

Childhood in Cambodia

Io, one of six children, was born in Phnom Penh. Their father, originally from Panyu, served for two years as a soldier in the anti-Japanese war in Guangzhou. On his return, he went back to Cambodia, where he had been helping his grandfather to run a small business by setting up shops.

The family lived in a big house, complete with a cook. "It was a good life. All the children went

to Mandarin-language schools." The country was in the last years of French colonial rule; it became independent under King Norodom Sihanouk in 1953. The family always looked to China, where Io's father sent five of his children to study; it was an educated family. "As Chinese, we were second-class citizens in Cambodia and looked down on."

In 1966, after graduating from secondary school in Phnom Penh at the age of 18, Io was sent to Guangzhou. "My health was poor and I needed two



years to recover. Then came the Cultural Revolution and the universities were closed.”

He was sent to a collective farm for Overseas Chinese in Huiyang, close to what is now Shenzhen. “It was a new farm that we had to develop. We had no experience in farming so we had to be trained.” It was a hard life, involving ten hours of physical labour a day and no rests at the weekends. “We were idealists and were happy. We had wages and enough to eat. The status of overseas Chinese

was higher than that of ordinary Chinese.” It was there that he met his wife, an intellectual from Shantou who had been sent to the farm.

He and his colleagues set up an artistic troupe that did song and dance performances, including presentations of the latest sayings of Chairman Mao. In 1970, meanwhile, his parents became so apprehensive of the changes around them in Phnom Penh that they moved to Macao. The last remaining child left the country in 1972. The family made the right decision – none of them were killed in the genocide of the Pol Pot era from 1975 to 1979.

In the mid-1970s, Io applied to join his parents in Macao. “The investigation process was very stringent but became easier later. Having parents here, though, was a big help. We knew the leaders of the farm. Giving a red packet accelerated the process.” He, his wife and their five-year-old son finally moved to Macao in 1978, after 12 years on the mainland.

New Life

Arriving in Macao was a shock. His skills as a farmer were no use; he needed to make a new life. “It was hard to adapt. We did not know how to use electrical appliances. But it is easier when you are going from a poor place to one which is wealthier and more comfortable.” Initially, they lived with his parents and, when their income had increased, bought their own apartment.

He had to learn a new career – decorating – with a boss who was also an exile from Cambodia. His wife worked at a textile plant. It was a tough life, with just one day off per month. He went on to set up a decorating company with friends; later, his wife went to work there. As conditions improved, they were able to take off a day a week.

He closed the company in 2007, after running it for nearly 30 years.

Rediscovering philately

Io had to put aside his love of stamps during the years on the farm. “We lived a collective life and such a thing was not allowed. We had no money and, in our rural setting, no place to buy stamps. I put my collection in a leather case where it stayed for ten years; then I brought it with me to Macao.”



Here he was able to resume his hobby. He used to buy five sets of new stamps, keep one and sell the other four to raise money to buy more. In 1982, the Stamp Collectors' Association was set up and he joined the following year. Now it has 50 members, of whom some are retired and a small number are young. "There are too many distractions on the Internet. For stamp collecting, you must sit and do research." He became vice-chairman in 2009. In total, he has 10,000 stamps, 80 percent of them from China. To protect them from Macao's humid weather, he has bought anti-damp boxes and keeps those which he uses very little in bank safety deposit boxes. "My wife says that I spend too much time and energy on the stamps. She says that I should sell some, so we can have some money to go travelling. My son is not interested. He has a son and is very busy with his job, managing the computers at Macao Polytechnic. His wife is a teacher there. But I do not listen to my wife. Collecting stamps is both an interest and a good investment."

Celebrating the past

Io is also active in another association, of which he is chairman – the Macao Society to Collect and Study the Past (MSCSP), established ten years ago. He and the ten other members collect items from the past and organise exhibitions. They are all amateurs and include civil servants, people who run street stalls and owners of grocery shops.

Events have included an exhibition on the history of mooncakes, with items from 1913 to 1945; an exhibition on the anti-Japanese war; an exhibition on 100 years of education; and an exhibition of sea shells.

The exhibition at the Zhuhai Museum in April was the first of three which Io and his colleagues have been helping to organise.

It came about as a result of a discovery of a tombstone during the building of the Zhuhai-Beijing expressway. It belonged to an official of the late Qing dynasty named Cao Zi-ji. Museum

officials could not find any materials related to Cao in Zhuhai; they came to Macao and discovered that he had lived here and received a medal from the Portuguese king.

The museum director met the chairman of the MSCSP who showed him documents about Cao. "He felt that we had many valuable things and asked us to cooperate with him. We provided materials for their experts to evaluate and they asked us to do three exhibitions. We will provide the exhibits and they will display them and do the promotional work."

Zhuhai is a new city, created by the decision of Deng Xiaoping in 1979 to set up a special economic zone there. A majority of its population are not local people but come from outside. The wars, revolutions and political campaigns of the last 100 years mean that many historical documents, paintings, coins

and other items have been lost. During the Cultural Revolution, people destroyed ancestral records to save themselves from persecution.

Macao, on the other hand, has been a haven of peace, not even occupied by the Japanese army during World War II. It has been able to guard the records of its past. The pace of commercial development was until the handover very slow; people kept items at home for many years and their homes were not at risk of being demolished.

"The director of the Zhuhai museum wants its people to see pieces from the city's past," said Io.

Stamps of Xiangshan

The exhibition of stamps from the Xiangshan area at the museum covered the period from the late Qing dynasty until the start of the Communist era.

Chinese Imperial Post



Customs Postmarks 海關郵戳



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宜昌特小型



Second type of Anping
安平乙式



Double-outer-circle-type of Taku
大沽外圈雙線型



Oval type of Taku
大沽橢圓型



Oval type of Chungking
重慶橢圓型

"I very much respect Dr Sun Zhong-shan, so I collected stamps related to him and Xiangshan. I found that collectors in Guangzhou, Dongguan, Foshan and Shanshui had many stamps of these areas, but few of Xiangshan," he said.

The exhibition featured 257 stamps, post cards, seals and other documents, all provided by Io and his colleagues in Macao.

It included stamps of 0.5 and five cents issued by the Chinese Imperial Post that was set up in 1897. Also on display was a stamp from the shortest imperial dynasty, that of Yuan Shi-kai, which lasted 83 days from 1 January until 22 March 1916. In addition, a set of four stamps featuring a coiled dragon was shown, dated 30 August 1897, the only one of its kind in the world.

The exhibition told the story of Xiangshan – the establishment of the Gongbeiguan on 2 April 1887; the school set up in 1934 by Sun Ke in memory of his father, Sun Yat-sen; and the work of Tang Shao-yi, who was county chief of Zhongshan from April 1929 until October 1934.

During World War II, postal services were gravely interrupted; a letter from Hong Kong to Taishan that should have taken three-to-five days took 43.

During the last year of Nationalist rule on the mainland, inflation went out of control. On 2 August 1948, it took a stamp of 10,000 yuan to send a letter from Zhongshan to Macao; on 18 September, it was 15,000 and by 7 May the next year it was 350,000.

The exhibition enabled the people of Zhuhai to learn something of their extraordinary history. ■

1910





Professor Vong Chau Son

King of Geography

Local teacher helps put Macao on the world map

By Louise do Rosário

Photos by Eric Tam

Macao is a small city not well-known for its geographical features. Yet, a local teacher has dedicated himself to studying and teaching Macao's landscapes and topography for over half a century, literally putting it on the world map. Professor Vong Chau Son, 88, has taught the subject for so long that his former students are found in every corner of Macao and they affectionately call him the "King of Geography". He has written numerous geography books, including the authoritative textbooks on Macao's geography still used today in local schools.

Vong was born, educated and taught in Macao, making his life a living history in a population dominated by new immigrants. A meticulous collector, he has kept albums of photos, articles, letters, certificates and other items from the last few decades. In 2012, he donated 300 of his personal items to the Historical Archives of Macao, which described them as "enriching Macao's cultural and historical archives and having a great significance in educating the public".

From his many black-and-white pictures displayed in an exhibition held by the Archives Organisation in 2012, viewers could see how a local boy grew to become a respected public figure through unwavering commitment to his work.

Vong was the youngest of a large family of eight children. They lived in a two-storey house at Rotunda de Carlos De Maia (Three Lamps District), a quiet residential spot now developed into a major shopping area.

He studied at Yuet Wah School, from kindergarten to secondary school. He later studied journalism at a university in Guangzhou - the only child in the family given the chance to do so.

Early interest in geography

Vong said his interest in geography began at secondary school in the 1940s. "I had a big map in my room where I would place a flag on the locations then invaded by the Japanese in Asia." Macao then was flooded with refugees from China, Southeast Asia and elsewhere. This mosaic of people provided the young boy with a first-hand look at different nationalities from different backgrounds and stimulated his interest in learning about affairs beyond the shores of Macao.

Vong's first job was at Saint Joseph School, starting in September 1949. He still has the receipt of his first monthly salary of Pataca 104. "I occasionally bring this receipt out of the drawer and think about those good old days. It brings back sweet memories and evokes deep feelings inside me."

Later, he joined Pui Ching Secondary School, where he stayed until his retirement in 1998. Geography was his passion, which he shared fervently with his students, using lively teaching methods. He created what was regarded as the first “electronic” geography classroom, with a gigantic screen with sliding charts and maps that could be mixed and matched for easy viewing with a simple push. In the 52-seat classroom which he designed personally, there were also many exhibits which he had collected from his travels. Among them were stones from Portugal, sand from Xinjiang, Syria and Vietnam and of course soil from Macao.

Multi-media classroom

In the days of chalk-and-blackboard teaching, Vong’s multi-media classroom was ground breaking. Visitors were impressed. Li Leilei, an assistant professor at Shenzhen University, recalled how fascinated she was when she went there in the 1980s. “In our geography class in China, teachers did not have any such exhibits; it was up to us to use our imagination to understand what was taught. But, in Vong’s classroom, I could touch and feel what was written in the books.”

Vong himself is full of satisfaction with his creation. “Here is an earthquake detection equipment tool made by a student who later became the head of the fire department,” he said, while pointing at a device, in a television documentary made by Central China Television years ago about him. “And here are the charts of the galaxy, showing the nine major stellar systems. We have a set of maps, showing wind and air currents. Also, our computer is connected to the observatory, so that we can get all real-time climate information.”

All these are standard teaching tools in today’s internet age, but in the 1980s, Vong’s ways were highly innovative. They earned the title of ‘Best National Secondary School’ for his school, Pui Ching, an award from the China Geographical Studies Society.

Leong Lai, now Director of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, was one of his many students. “I remember how he taught geography in my secondary school, with the use of exhibits, photos and other tools. These helped us to understand better,” she said in a television interview.

Prolific writer

The prolific Vong has penned over 50 books; his most popular work is probably the *Geography of Macau*, first published in the 1980s and with the third edition out soon. A set of three books, it consists of the main text, a teacher’s manual and an exercise book for students.

Another important work is *A General View of China’s Geography* published in 1986 and now in its eighth edition. The book is so popular that even the Imperial College of Japan has published a Japanese-language version.

In these works, Vong wrote in great detail and with passion about how his home town has developed from a tiny speck on the map of China into a major metropolis.

From island to peninsula

“In the long history of geological development, there have been successive waves of ‘reconstruction’, natural and artificial, that shaped Macao. The peninsula was once an island. When we pass through the border to go to the mainland via Gongbei today, you would never know that that area was a sea of water years ago,” he wrote.

Macao was merely one of the hundreds of little islands scattered in the South China Sea, Vong wrote. Over centuries, Macao was gradually linked to the continent, thanks to sedimentation that commonly occurred at the mouth of the Pearl River. Sand, soil and rocks that had accumulated at the foot of Jiangjun Hill in Zhuhai’s Gongbei moved south. Macao underwent the same process, with sedimentation heading north. When the two flows met, they formed a narrow ridge, on which the road *Istmo de Ferreira do Amaral* was later built. The Macao peninsula was thus formed, initially linked to the mainland by an isthmus of about 100 metres in width and 2,250 metres in length (two-thirds of which were in Zhuhai).

In the mid-19th century, Macao began to fill in its shallow shores to make new land, using the naturally abundant supply of sand and soil, according to Vong. In 1863, it filled the banks of the Nam Van beach to build the Nam Van Road. It made similar expansions later in Sai Van, the west shores of the peninsula and the inner harbour. In 1892, it made a dyke to link the small island of Ilha Verde to the peninsula.



Ex-Chief Executive Edmund Ho Hau Wah (L.) with Vong Chau Son in 2002

GCS photo

Large-scale land reclamations

Between 1923 and 1936, Macao had its first large-scale reclamation, creating a total of 1.8 square kilometres from the districts of Toi San and Fai Chi Kei, a wider boulevard in Ilha Verde, and new space close to today's Lin Fong Sports Centre.

Between 1987 and 1996, Macao had another major reclamation, with the peninsula gaining 1.9 square kilometres of new land. Reclamations were made in the Ariea Preta Zone, parts of the Outer Harbour and the Nam Van Lake.

Between 1997 and 2006, a total of 1.6 square kilometres of land was reclaimed in the areas of Ilha Verde's industrial zone, Fai Chi Kei, Golden Lotus Square, the Macao Cultural Centre, Fisherman's Wharf, the A-Ma Temple, Ponte de Sai Van, the Science Museum and the Avenue of Dr Sun Yat-sen.

The peninsula, once a mere 2.8 square kilometres in 1863 grew to 9.3 square kilometres by 2006. In Vong's books, there are detailed maps and charts documenting this great geographical transformation of Macao. More reclamation is planned.

One result of the massive reclamation is Macao's ever-changing coastline. Little of the original is

left, but names of some streets bearing the words "seaside" and "riverside" provide a glimpse of the past, Vong explains.

Hills and rocks

Amid the glittering hotels and casinos that dot Macao's skyline today, it is difficult to see the city's natural landscape. Vong reminds us in his books that Macao has many little hills, with the highest, Coloane High, at 172.2 metres, in the middle of Coloane. On the peninsula, the highest is Guia Hill, a mere 90 metres above sea level and also known as Piano Hill for its piano-like slanting shape. At the top of the hill is a lighthouse, which Vong can see clearly from the window of his apartment. "It used to give directions to ships – and to me too throughout the years," he said.

Vong has also studied Macao's rocks closely. He noted that they are all granites, formed 170 million to 100 million years ago. Some of the larger rocks have developed into hills, but the smaller ones can be found among the mounds, beaches and valleys. In places like the A-Ma Temple, Ilha Verde and Coloane, there are many of these egg-like rocks, an interesting landscape feature popular with tourists.



Books published by Vong Chau Son

Vong is respected not only for his encyclopedic knowledge in his field but also his passion for his work. Gary Ngai, President of the Executive Board of the Macau Association to Promote Exchange between Asia Pacific and Latin America, recalls his days working with Vong at school. "I first met Vong thirty years ago at Pui Ching. He was very active at school and in the local community.

"He was an outstanding teacher. His multi-media teaching theatre has been copied and used in many schools in the neighbouring Pearl River Delta."

In 1985 Ngai and Vong founded the Macau Society of Social Science, to raise public awareness of social issues; they took part in many related seminars locally and abroad. "He initiated many extra-curricular activities at Pui Ching and motivated students to pursue social research in Macao and neighbouring places. He helped them write articles about their findings and published them in a periodical printed by the student union of Pui Ching. He was known as a hard-working, creative and honest intellectual, with a positive vision for Macao and China," said Ngai. ■



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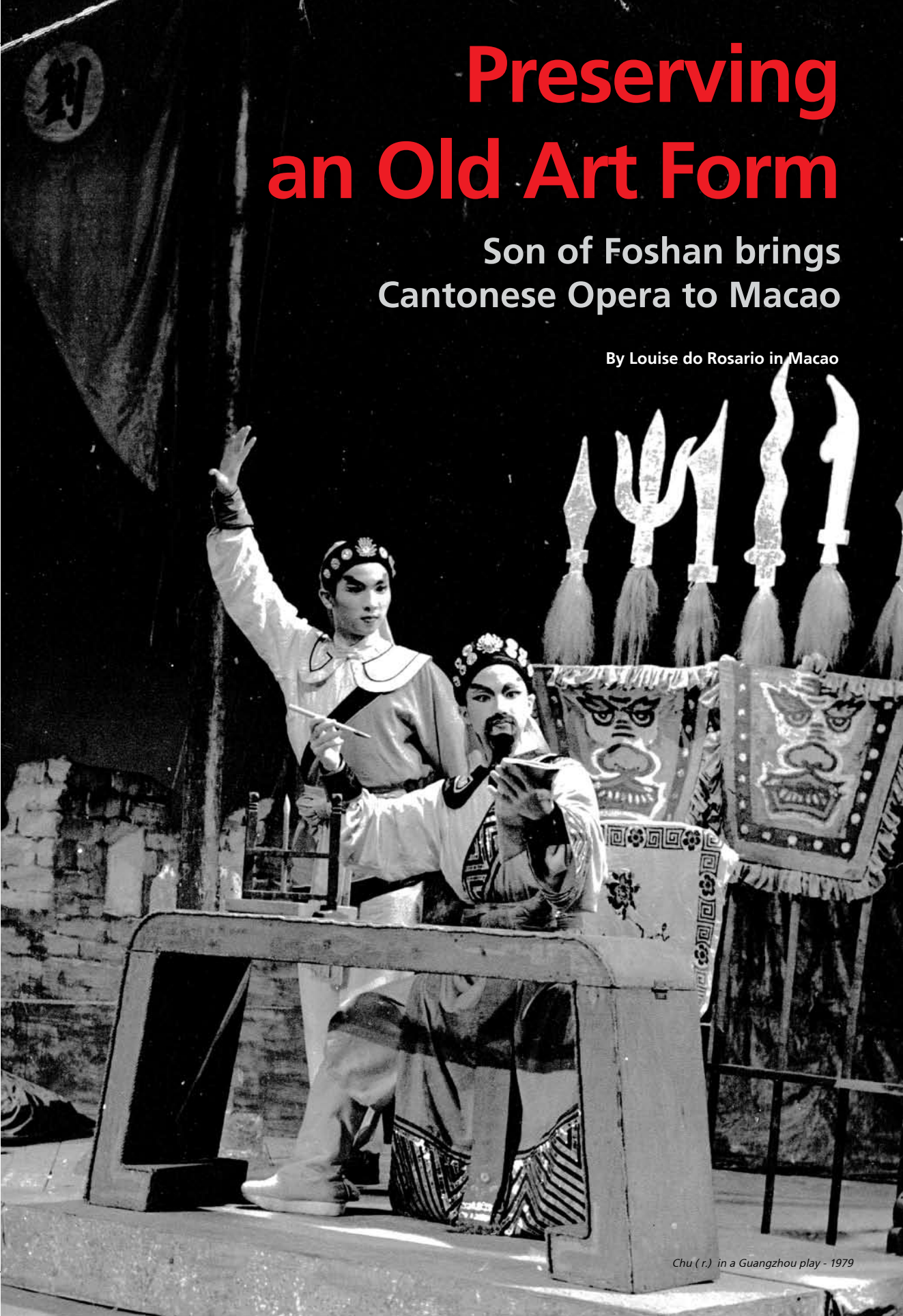
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Preserving an Old Art Form

Son of Foshan brings
Cantonese Opera to Macao

By Louise do Rosario in Macao



On 23 and 24 May, spectators at the Alegria cinema enjoyed a Cantonese opera written by one of the most popular authors of this traditional art form.

"Beauty Fades from the Twelve Ladies' Bower" was performed by artists from a leading local amateur company, the Collective of Macao Cantonese Opera Artists. Its executive producer was Chu Chan-wa, a native of Foshan in Guangdong, who joined a professional school at the age of 12 and has been singing and performing ever since. It was one of the more than 200 events of the 25th Macao Arts Festival.

In 2008, Chu set up the Chan Wa Cantonese Opera Arts Association, which has performed in Macao,

Hong Kong, Singapore and mainland cities and will travel to the United States at the end of this year, where it will perform in New York.

He is optimistic for the future of Cantonese Opera. "In the past, the audience was made up of mainly old people. Now we are starting to see people in their 30s. Living standards have improved and people have more time to appreciate different art forms. Cantonese opera can be addictive. Once you start to sing the tunes, you want to learn more. There are over 100 opera societies in Macao registered with the government, compared to a few years ago."

The full house and warm reception at the Alegria augers well for the future for Cantonese Opera.

Chu Chan-wa



Photo by Eric Tam

Opera passed down from parents

Chu was born in November 1962 in Foshan, a city in southern Guangdong; he was the son of parents who were fans of Cantonese Opera. "My father loved it and my mother was always humming the tunes," he recalled in an interview. "The tunes were always in my head. Of the three brothers, I am the only one who has continued the tradition."

When he was seven and a student at primary school, his teachers put him in a story-telling group; he excelled. At nine, he was chosen for the Foshan Youth Cultural Palace, where he trained as a singer and did promotion work in the evenings and at the weekends.

In 1974, the Cantonese Opera School of Foshan was recruiting students. The city then had a large catchment area, including Panyu, Shunde, Kaiping, Taishan and Enping. Competition was fierce.

His school recommended him. "There was an interview and many tests. The teachers measured the height of the children and even the shape of their ears. They checked their five senses and looked at their tongue, to see if they had a stutter. They looked at our hands and feet to see if we could do a somersault and walk close to the ground, like a frog."

With attractive facial features, Chu was chosen, and began three years of formal training. It was a strict, disciplined life – the students got up at 6.30am and had 15 minutes to dress and clean themselves. Then, without having had breakfast, they were taken in a truck to a lake where they faced the rising sun and shouted; it was a test of voice quality.

"There were 40 of us, aged from 11 to 15. We wore waistbands for the exercise, which was aimed at developing our vocal powers. Because our stomachs were empty, the teachers could measure our diaphragms."

Then they returned to the school for a breakfast of congee and flour buns. The morning was devoted to mastering the techniques needed to perform Cantonese Opera – kicking, jumping, martial arts and somersaults; singing and playing parts; exercises on carpets and with swords and knives. These were designed to develop the agility and flexibility they would need.

After lunch, they attended the classes of a normal school – including literature, mathematics, history and calligraphy. In the evenings, the students did rehearsals and practiced make-up on each other; they watched operas on black and white television. Since it was the Cultural Revolution, the repertoire was restricted to eight approved versions. "Everyone was very excited to see the operas."



Rehearsal of Beauty Fades from the Twelve Ladies' Bower

At 10pm, the lights went out and the students went to sleep. "Our life was very disciplined. I remember it as a really happy time. We did not chase material things, and lived in a group."

In the late 1970s, after the end of Cultural Revolution, things liberalised and the students could watch operas other than the eight. Chu was an excellent pupil, with sharp eyes and the ability to do excellent somersaults.

He remembers in particular two teachers, Liang Yintong and SiaoYuelou, who were both Kung Fu masters, one from the Southern and one from the Northern School. "We learnt a great deal from them. Their training was excellent. We all passed the exam."

Performing

Chu's next step was to join the Young Cantonese Opera Group of Guangdong. It was the official start of his performing career; the group gave many performances free of charge.

"It involved a lot of travel. In those days, from Foshan we had to take five ferries to reach Zhuhai, which took an entire day. The reception we had was very good. It was just after the end of the Cultural Revolution and people were delighted to

see different forms of entertainment.

"I was very fortunate to be able to be the first performer in the 1980s to take the principal role in a full-length opera in Foshan."

Move to Macao

In 1990, at the age of 28, he moved to Macao, where his wife had relatives. He spent the first two years working in a factory and in his spare time observing the style of opera used in Macao and in Hong Kong. "I had a lot to learn. Some people knew that I was a performer and started to encourage me to perform."

In 1992, he started practising again.

At this point he was working full-time in a casino. His first casino employer was Stanley Ho, then he worked for Wynn. He now runs his own business on the mainland.

He gradually returned to performances, singing parts of full-length operas. "The full ones run for three hours. We sign songs from them, with each session lasting 25-30 minutes."

In 2008, he established his own troupe, the Chan Wa Cantonese Opera Arts Association, with 30 members, all of them amateur. They have performed in Macao, Hong Kong, Singapore and, at the end of this year, will go for the first time to the United States, including New York.

"I am so happy I can do what I like now," he said.

Arts Festival

On 23 and 24 May, the troupe performed "Beauty Fades from the Twelve Ladies' Bower", a tragic love story. It was written by Tong Dik-saang, one of the most famous authors of Cantonese opera of the 20th century. He was born in 1917 in Tangjiawan, in what is now Zhuhai, and produced most of his work after moving to Hong Kong.

Tong was both familiar with classical Chinese literature and able to write new and moving screenplays that appealed to a modern audience.

Chu said that the work was being performed for the first time in Macao. "We chose it because it has several major protagonists, and involves nearly ten different actors. It suits Macao and Hong Kong as it is about ethics and people. It has a fast and strong storyline."



Chu Chan-wa



Chu Chan-wa

The Opera formed part of the 25th Macao Arts Festival, running from 2 May to 8 June, with more than 200 events, Chinese and foreign, traditional and modern. More than half were locally produced, as they were in 2013.

Cantonese Opera performances were among the items included in Macao's Intangible Cultural Heritage, together with Macanese Theatre (Patua) and Cantonese Naamyam.

The goals of the festival are the 'promotion of local artistic development, the dissemination of the world's outstanding creations and the promotion of Chinese culture'. Of these three objectives, the first – promotion of local artistic development – is the primary orientation of the festival, according to its organiser, the Cultural Affairs Bureau.

In the past, the opera took four-to-five hours to perform. Chu's troupe shortened it to three hours, to meet the demands of modern audiences, by setting up new scenes during the previous ones, so that there is no break between scenes.

Future

In the past, Guangzhou used to have over 100,000 fans for Cantonese Opera but the number is now down to about 1,000 hard-core enthusiasts.

"It is hard to recruit students to study it," said Chu. "Parents fear for the work prospects of their children. You will only make money if you are very popular. So only children of people in remote areas, like Zhanjiang, will come and study. Coming from poor families, they see it as a possible path to success."

Nonetheless, he is optimistic for the future of Cantonese Opera.

"The stories of the operas are very good. They talk of history, loyalty, piety and other good virtues of Chinese. They encourage people to do good things. Performing on stage is good for your health and singing expands your lungs."

As for himself, Chu wants to perform better plays and make CDs and sing songs which people like. "When I teach, I have to be sensitive to what students want. Some want more action and some prefer singing. They want to be involved." ■



Chu Chan-wa



Pak Tai statue in Taipa temple dedicated to him

Pak Tai, the Emperor of the North

Text by M. João Janeiro and Photos by Manuel Cardoso

The anniversary of Pak Tai, known as the Emperor of the North, is celebrated on the third day of the third moon and in the plaza in front of the temple dedicated to this divinity a bamboo structure is being prepared for Opera performances.

The legend goes that Pak Tai, also known as the sovereign of the north or of the northern gods, was a prince immortalised for his immense knowledge and courage, and was given the title of Emperor of the North.

In order to fight a demon king that was preparing to destroy the earth, Pak Tai was named commander of the 12 celestial legions, first fighting off a green turtle and giant serpent and went on to defeat the demon king.

Images of the Emperor of the North show him barefoot, with hair down to his shoulders and floating above the ground as this was the way he fought.

The temple dedicated to him is located on Largo Camões, in Taipa, and is the oldest temple on the island.

The temple was built in 1844 and rebuilt in 1882, and was originally made up of three pavilions but the only one now left is the one known as "Pak Tai Palace". Its entrance is protected by the "doorway gods" whose images are painted on the enormous wooden doors.

At the central altar is Pak Tai, the temple's namesake, the god protector of everyone and everything and to whom many miraculous deeds are attributed such as curing the sick, help in fighting fires as well as fighting the pirates that ransacked the town in years gone by.

As do other Chinese temples this one also reveres a number of other gods, including Kam Fá, the goddess of golden flowers, protector of women and children, Choi Pak, the god of luck and wealth and Pak Fu, the guardian of heavenly treasures.

















2014/03/10**Chief Executive promises 24-hour border crossing in 2014**

The Chief Executive Chui Sai On vowed to enhance Macao's competitiveness, to facilitate the cultivation of talent and to develop a diversified economy.

The promises were made after he concluded a visit to Beijing to attend the opening of the First Plenary Session of the 12th National People's Congress.

Chui said that in the meeting the Secretary of the Guangdong CPC Provincial Committee Hu Chunhua, and the Governor of Guangdong Province Zhu Xiaodan, both discussed the new cross boundary passage, and the application of the free trade zone.

"Guangdong and Macao are working together to prolong the operating hours of the borders to eventually achieve a 24-hour border crossing. Both sides are working to provide a more efficient passage for people that cross the border and hope to achieve a single-use e-channel check to cross both sides within the year," he added.

According to a press release by the Government Information Bureau, during the press conference the Chief Executive said that the government had been making a great effort to diversify the economy and create new growth despite the many problems that have been encountered.

"In the future, Macao wants to make good use of its advantageous position as a world tourism leisure centre and as a business and trading platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries," he said.

**2014/03/17****Macao's GDP grew 11.9 percent in 2013**

Macao's GDP grew 11.9 percent in real terms to 413.47 billion patacas last year, the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC) announced.

A DSEC statement said Macao's two-digit economic growth last year "was fuelled by the notable increase of 12 percent in exports of services on account of the impetus from the flourishing tourism and gaming sector."

In particular, exports of gaming services grew 12.4 percent, while exports of other tourism services rose 10 percent, the statement said. On account of the booming tourism and gaming sectors, relative importance of net exports of goods and services to GDP rose from 58.2 percent in 2012 to 60.9 percent last year, the statement said. The statement also underlined last year's increase of 13.7 percent in visitors, an 11.8 percent growth in hotel guests, an upsurge of 27.3 percent in private investment, and an increase of 23 percent in retail sales.

Last year's real growth rate was slightly higher than the one in 2012 (9.1 percent) but much lower than in 2011 and 2010 (21.3 percent and 27.5 percent respectively).

Macao's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita rose 7.4 percent year-on-year to 697,502 patacas (US\$ 87,306) in real terms last year.



2014/03/19

Macao tourism industry to grow by 7.2 percent in 2014

The travel and tourism industry in Macao is set to grow 7.2 percent this year, according to a report issued by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

According to the report, in Macao the direct contribution of travel and tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 represented 43.1 percent, mainly reflecting the economic activity generated through hotels, travels agents, airliners and other passenger transportation services.

"This is forecast to rise by 6.8 percent in 2014," the report said. The research shows that the direct contribution of the travel and tourism sector to GDP is expected to grow by 4.6 percent by 2024.

In a wider analysis, the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP, including wider effects from investment, the supply chain and induced income impacts, represented 86.2 percent of GDP, and is expected to grow by 7.2 percent in 2014.

The report also indicated that the sector represented 41 percent of the total employment rate in 2013. This figure is not due to change much over 2014.

The WTTC carries out its economic analyses on the impact of the travel and tourism sector in 184 countries.



2014/03/19

Rua da Felicidade houses to get facelift

Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Guilherme Ung Vai Meng said the bureau was planning to renovate the more than 80 houses in the famed Rua da Felicidade ("Street of Bliss") and Beco da Felicidade ("Lane of Bliss").

Ung said the bureau is consulting landlords and tenants about the best date and their thoughts and ideas regarding the revamp of each house.

Ung made the remarks at the bureau after the Cultural Heritage Council held its first meeting. The council was established under the Cultural Heritage Law, which came into effect on 1 March.

Ung said that while respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of the bureau's plan to give the houses a badly needed facelift, they were divided about the colour that should be used for painting the window shutters.

Ung said that the shutters were originally green until 1996, when the city's then Portuguese administration changed the colour to red when it renovated the houses.

Ung said that after much deliberation, members of the council unanimously decided to revert to the original green. The "Street of Bliss" once housed the city's ladies of easy virtue. It is now an important part of Macao's cultural heritage.



2014/03/20

Government to return income tax to 100,000 residents

About 100,000 residents are eligible to receive a rebate of 60 percent on the income tax they paid for 2012 from next month, totalling 390 million patacas (US\$ 48.7 million), Financial Services Bureau (DSF) Deputy Director Stephen long Kong Leong said.

According to long, about 300,000 taxpayers in 2012 paid income tax that amounted in total to about 1.2 billion patacas. The amount of the tax refund is about 31 percent of the total amount of income tax the government received for 2012.

long said that the maximum rebate was 12,000 patacas.

"First, the taxpayer must have already paid their tax," long said, adding, "If a taxpayer has paid 20,000 patacas in tax, then this taxpayer is eligible to get a rebate of 12,000 patacas."

long pointed out that for a taxpayer to receive a tax rebate of 12,000 patacas, the taxpayer had to have an annual salary of 570,000 patacas.



2014/04/14

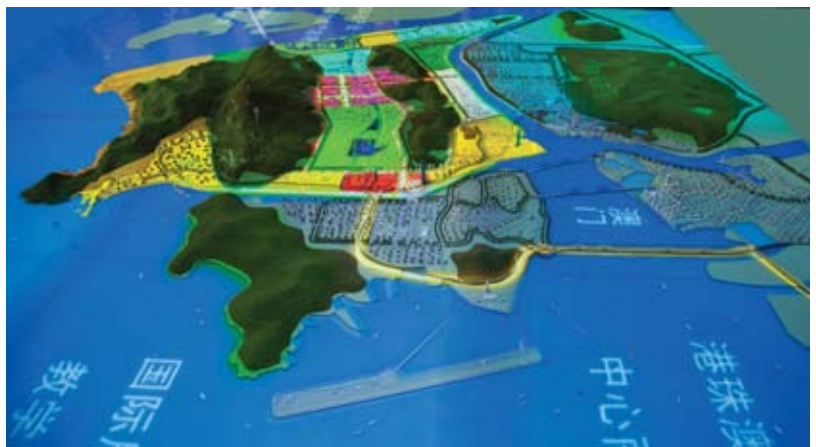
Macao selects 33 projects for potential investment on Hengqin Island, China

The Commission for Evaluation of Investment Projects in Macao for the Development of Hengqin, set up in 2013 to consider plans put forward by Macao investors for the 4.5 square kilometres of the Guangdong-Macao Industrial Cooperation Park, on the island next to Macao, announced it had selected 33 projects that may be established in the area.

Jackson Chang, the president of the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) and a member of the evaluation commission said that 87 project proposals had been received for the areas of tourism and leisure, logistics and trade, scientific and educational research, the creative and cultural sector, new technologies, medication and healthcare.

According to a statement from IPIM the Macao government has decided to recommend that 33 projects be set up in the Hengqin area, which belongs to the neighbouring municipality of Zhuhai. Thirty percent of the projects are linked to the culture and tourism sector, 24.2 percent to the logistics sector, 9 percent to scientific and education research, and 3 percent to health and new technologies.

In its statement IPIM said that the projects were assessed based on diversification of the Macao economy, promoting Macao as a world centre for tourism and leisure, its role as a services platform, the benefits to Macao's residents in finding a job on Hengqin island, encouraging participation of local SMEs and the potential and size of the projects themselves.



2014/04/15

Grand Prix aims to reduce noise in 2014 to 115 decibels

The Macau Grand Prix Committee (CGPM) said it aims to reduce the noise levels produced by the vehicles to no more than 115 decibels.

CGPM Sporting Subcommittee Chong Coc Veng made the announcement during a press conference about the 61st Macau Grand Prix in November.

The 61st Macau Grand Prix will be held on 13–16 November and will comprise the F3, FIA World Touring Car Championship, Motorcycle Grand Prix, Macau GT Cup, Macau Touring Car Cup and Macau Road Sport Challenge. Chong said the committee will take special measures to reduce the noise produced by the vehicles – cars and motorcycles – so as to give residents a less noisy weekend. Chong said the noise level will be limited on average to no more than 115 decibels. “We will set regulations which specify the noise limit. Before the Grand Prix takes place, the vehicle checks will also include checks on the level of noise produced by the vehicles. During the checks, we will run the engines to particular RPM (revolutions per minute) to see if the noise level is over (the limit). If the level is over (the limit), we will not allow the vehicles to race,” Chong said.



2014/04/22

Chui Sai On says government to ask Beijing for more land in Hengqin and jurisdiction over city's coastal waters

Chief Executive Chui Sai On said his government would apply to the central government to lease more land on Hengqin Island, which, if approved, would be used for local enterprises to develop their businesses there.

He said more local enterprises on the island would be beneficial for the diversification of Macao's economy.

Chui made the remarks during a Q&A session in the legislature's hemicycle.

In the plenary session attended by all 33 members Chui said that the local and Zhuhai governments have continuously worked together on the joint development of Hengqin Island. The Guangdong-Macao Cooperation Industrial Park is a 4.5 square-kilometre joint venture site on Hengqin which includes a 0.5-square-kilometre Traditional Chinese Medicine Industrial Park.

“As the government acknowledges that many local enterprises hope to set up business on Hengqin ... the size of the industrial area is not big enough thus we will formally submit an application to the central government for more land (on Hengqin to allow) local enterprises to develop their businesses on the island,” Chui said, adding the government would ask the central government for its permission to lease more land on Hengqin.

Currently, the local government leases 1.09 square kilometres on Hengqin for the new University of Macao campus. The Macao government will pay 1.2 billion patacas for the leasehold which will last until 19 December 2049. The contract can be renewed.

“I hope both Guangdong and the central government will agree (to the idea)... meanwhile we will further discuss with the Guangdong government the possible joint development of Cuiheng (in Zhongshan) and Jiangmen,” Chui added.

Chui also said that the government has applied to the central government for jurisdiction over Macao's coastal waters.

Unlike Hong Kong, for historical reasons Macao does not have jurisdiction over its coastal waters. This is due to the fact that Portugal was never able to sign a Macao border agreement with China.



2014/04/25**Macao's year-on-year inflation posts rise of 6.36 percent in March**

Year on year inflation in Macao rose by 6.36 percent in March due to rises in the price of meals outside the home, home rentals and horticultural products, the region's Statistics and Census Bureau said.

Compared to March 2013 there were significant rises in the price indices in the categories of housing and fuel (12.37 percent), household equipment and materials for daily use (7.18 percent) as well as food products and non-alcoholic beverages (6.51 percent).

In March the Consumer Price Index rose by 0.38 percent in monthly terms due to a rise in the price of meals outside the home and home rentals.

The rate of inflation, measured by the average of the price indices of the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months, reached 5.96 percent, due to substantial rises in the price indices of housing and fuel (10.66 percent) and food and non-alcoholic beverages (6.62 percent).

**2014/04/25****Almost 8 million visitors to Macao in the first quarter of 2014**

In the first quarter of 2014, visitor arrivals to Macao reached 7,690,166, up by 9 percent year-on-year, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Visitors from mainland China and the Republic of Korea increased by 17 percent and 18 percent respectively, while those from Hong Kong and Taiwan decreased by 9 percent and 4 percent.

According to DSEC, visitors from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom posted year-on-year increases, but those from Australia registered a decline.

In March Macao received 2,625,997 visitors, an increase of 10 percent compared with the same month in 2013.

In March visitors from mainland China surged by 24 percent year-on-year to 1,769,408, coming primarily from Guangdong Province (40 percent), Fujian Province (4 percent) and Hunan Province (3 percent). Mainland visitors travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme totalled 738,287, sharing 42 percent of the total from mainland China.

Visitors from the Republic of Korea (40,625) and Japan (30,281) increased by 10 percent and 5 percent respectively year-on-year, while those from Hong Kong (522,390) and Taiwan (77,297) decreased by 15 percent and 4 percent.

In 2013 Macao received 29.3 million visitors.



2014/05/02**Macao casinos' revenue up 10.6 percent in April**

Macao casinos took in 31.3 billion patacas (US\$ 3.9 billion) in April, up 10.6 percent from a year earlier, according to official data.

Gross gaming revenue from January to April rose 17.5 percent from a year earlier to 133.5 billion patacas (US\$ 16.68 billion).

"The VIP segment appears to remain healthy while the mass market remains exceptionally strong," a research report by Macao-based Union Gaming Research said. According to casino sources, growth in the mass market was robust and this market segment was four times as profitable as the VIP segment.

For every dollar in revenue, profit in the VIP market is 10 percent. But the corresponding figure for mass market gaming was 40 percent, the report said.

Macao has 35 casinos.

**2014/5/17****Chui says Portuguese ties part of Macao's identity**

Chief Executive Chui Sai On said that Macao's centuries-old ties with Portugal are now an integral part of the city's identity.

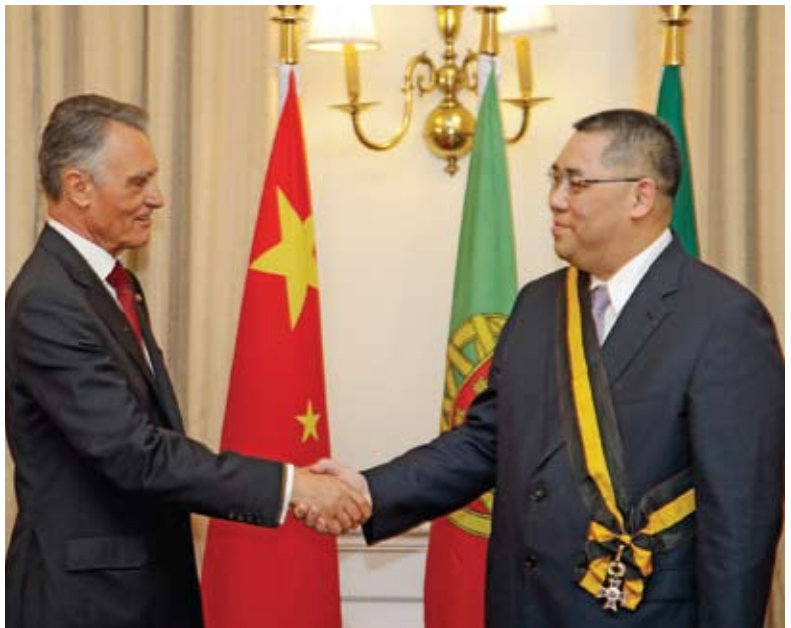
Chui made the remarks in a speech during a banquet to welcome Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva.

At a joint press conference with Cavaco Silva after the two sides signed an amendment to the Framework Co-operation Agreement between Macao and Portugal, Chui said that the local Portuguese community was a member of Macao's "great family". Cavaco Silva arrived in Macao at the end of a week-long state visit to China at the invitation of President Xi Jinping.

During a banquet, Cavaco Silva praised Macao's role as an "important" platform for economic and trade relations between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

During the visit Cavaco Silva bestowed the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit on Chui.

The Portuguese president laid a wreath at the Luis de Camões Garden grotto and visited the Ruins of St Paul's.





Three Gorges dam



Merger or Acquisition? Chinese and Portuguese Corporate Culture

Miguel de Brito in Lisbon

Chinese investment in Portugal leads to
gradual change in corporate culture



China State Grid and REN

With successive 'gambei', the Chinese clients set the pace of the night's party at a select seafood restaurant in Porto. Pedro Cláudio is not one for drinking much, but on that night he had to make an exception.

"It was like a college party, but our Chinese partners have an incredible capacity for drink, when for those of us who went to university in Minho, where drinking is a serious business," said the real estate agent talking about an after-work event with Chinese estate agents in the Porto region.

"We had spent the day at tiring meetings and visiting real estate projects and then we went to dinner. The dinner was going well, but they wouldn't stop raising their glasses and continually toasting," Pedro said happily.

"I was trying to keep up with them, but the alcohol started getting to my head... that's when I realised that not even my 'internship' at college would help me, and that the next would be tough," he added. This is just one example of how cultural differences can trip up even those who thought they could do business with all kinds of clients.

For Pedro and other estate agents, bankers and Portuguese real estate workers, the need to learn to communicate with Chinese investors has become even more important since the introduction of Portugal's "Golden Visa" programme became such a success in China.

At the end of its first year the residence-permit-for-investment scheme launched by the Portuguese government has granted 547 permits (known as golden visas), 80 percent of which to Chinese citizens. These permits have attracted 334.26 million euros to Portugal, or almost 1 million euros a day. Around 90 percent of this amount is made up of property acquisitions, starting at 500,000 euros, and the remainder is capital transfers, starting at 1 million euros.

At the same time, China State Grid (CSG) and China Three Gorges (CGT) respectively acquired, stakes from the Portuguese State in power grid company REN and power company EDP-Energias de Portugal.

In February 2012, China State Grid bought 25 percent of REN from the Portuguese State for 592

million euros. REN is Portugal's power grid manager and also has stakes in promising African markets, such as Mozambique.

For CSG, buying a stake of this size is of a strategic importance that goes beyond any short-term gain. It means being part of a technologically sophisticated player in a sector of geo-strategic importance.

The same can be said of the acquisition of 21.35 percent of EDP by CTG, for 2.7 billion euros. EDP is Portugal's largest electricity production and distribution company, with a string presence in Portugal, Spain and Brazil, as well as owning the world's fourth-largest wind power company EDP Renováveis, which is involved in promising markets on three continents and is a world leader in the 'green' energy sector.

The two privatisations, which had been awaited for a long time but successively delayed, ended up being part of the deal struck by the Portuguese State for its international financial bailout of 78 billion euros provided by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund.

Also as part of the bailout, Portugal sold off 80 percent of the insurance companies of Caixa Seguros – a state financial group that has 30 percent of the Portuguese market – to China's Fosun International,

for 1 billion euros.

Armed with both audacity and liquidity the Chinese companies have grabbed this opportunity and won the 'race' against large European and American groups that were also vying for EDP, REN and Caixa Seguros.

The brands are Portuguese, well known in Portugal and for decades were owned by the Portuguese state. The Portuguese State's stake in these companies has now been handed on to Chinese state companies, but will the companies' DNA remain Portuguese or will it take on some Chinese characteristics?

Will the culture of these companies change? And, if so, will that happen in a top-down way moving from the boards of directors into the offices on the lower floors, or will it begin at the desks down below and move up to the higher floors??

EDP sets up Mandarin courses for employees

According to António Mexia, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of EDP, both the Portuguese and Chinese are aware that mutual understanding is crucial to drive the value creation that has been made possible by the strategic partnership between the two companies.



"In a short space of time both companies have managed to adapt to this new reality, seeking to make the most of the results of the partnership," said the CEO (see interview).

António Mexia does not expect the acquisition of a stake in EDP by CTG to lead to a change in the corporate culture of the Portuguese power company, but does say that the group's employees have shown growing interest in the new Chinese shareholder.

"EDP is a multinational company. We have over 12,000 employees, in 143 countries and of 27 different nationalities. In this respect, CTG's entry is an important step in the development of our company, for the new growth opportunities it brings, I don't see changes in our corporate culture, the CEO explained.

"However, I see that our employees have huge interest in knowing more about our new shareholder and to understand how we can design a joint strategy," António Mexia said. "Companies need to feel that wish to find out more, to grow and above all to triumph."

With that aim in mind, EDP will focus on exchanging employees with the Chinese shareholder, he said.

As part of the agreed strategic partnership with CTG, EDP has already launched an employee exchange scheme, which is, however, being implemented slowly. The Portuguese power company receives

four CTG employees and send two EDP employees to Beijing.

"This exchange of experience and sharing good practices allows us to deepen our knowledge of each other and get important synergies," Mexia noted.

Rita Campos e Cunha, a lecturer at the Economic Faculty of Lisbon's Nova University, in the areas of Human resources Management and Organizational Behaviour, also considers that Chinese investors buying significant stakes in EDP and REN will not likely lead to significant changes in the respective corporate identities. But she does expect some changes in the strategies of the two companies.

"Both in EDP and REN's cases the Chinese investors are the largest shareholders, but are not majority shareholders. So, officially these are not actual acquisitions," she said.

"It is natural, therefore, that cultural changes will not become very significant, at least not in the next few years," she explained.

However, Rita Campos e Cunha adds a proviso that "any potential strategic changes, namely entering new markets and new businesses, could change the *modus operandi* of these companies and in the long term their culture. It is natural that investments will be made in developing trans-cultural skills, starting with language, especially if there Chinese expatriates coming in and Portuguese expatriates going to China."

Rita Campos Cunha



Photo by José Goulão



"It is equally possible that there will be greater emphasis on new projects on a long-term basis. As China is a country in which power differences within companies are clearly accepted, with a more collectivist and long term focus, some of these cultural characteristics may slowly be absorbed," she noted.

EDP is one of those examples of "development of transcultural skills," as it decided to adapt its internal training programmes to its new circumstances, by covering aspects related to Chinese culture and implementing Mandarin courses for its employees.

"Since EDP's privatisation was finalised we have launched some training programmes intended to show our employees some aspects of Chinese culture. It was clearly a success as the courses were attended by over 1,100 employees, which is a very significant number," said António Mexia.

"In addition, we offered our employees the opportunity to learn Mandarin. It's a great challenge," he said.

Chinese investors "think long term"

But what distinguishes Chinese investors from other investors that have bought into Portuguese companies? Rita Campos e Cunha identified four

characteristics that differentiate investment from China.

Firstly, she noted the fact that Chinese investments are mainly carried out by large state groups, such as CTG and CSG, and are conducted "with a high level of coordination between government agencies and the companies."

"As a result these investments should meet the needs of economic development in China and its political objectives," she explained.

Secondly, she noted that a significant percentage of this investment is in the energy sector, "and particularly in clean energy due to the international pressure is subject to as it is the world's largest CO2 producer."

"Thirdly, normally investment is made by buying stakes, rather than taking control of the target companies. The current economic and financial crisis, especially in Europe, makes these investments particularly attractive for China," noted the university lecturer.

Fourthly, these Chinese companies are facing some challenges, such as a certain amount of inexperience and lack of management capacity, which means that the executive teams of the target companies are maintained and this favours learning by the Chinese management teams, she added.



"To summarise, the big distinction is to do with Western multinationals making decisions based on criteria that are exclusively business related, whilst large Chinese investors respond to other factors, beyond these, and with a long-term outlook," Rita Campos e Cunha.

Cookies and water

The differences between Chinese corporate culture and other European cultures leads to Portuguese companies that work with Chinese partners not only to adopt a corporate culture that is closer to that of China as well as to "translate" European corporate culture for their Chinese partners. And, very often, they find the "possible compromise" as Carla Gonçalves, a public relations company manager, said.

"A few years ago we had a contract with a large Chinese investor in Europe for a public relations campaign. The event to launch a new Chinese brand in a market was attended by the entire country's elite – bankers, political leaders, famous names in fashion, sport and the arts – but things almost went wrong right at the first coffee break," said Cristina Gonçalves, who preferred not to name the client or the market.

The Chinese client did not really want a coffee break, said Gonçalves. "A break was fine, but no coffee. To save some cash the manager of the

customer company just wanted to give guests jugs of tap water and dry cakes."

The work became more like "managing the client" than a public relations exercise. "We had to show them similar events, by the competition, to show that water and cakes was unthinkable in this market." After this "translation" the client ended up accepting the coffee break, she said.

The client would not be swayed, however, on security at the event. Everyone, from all the political leaders to chairmen of the board of banking groups had to get accreditation and pass through metal detectors. In that case, Cristina said, the European company's job was to tell guests – and future partners – that this is what the Chinese company did in its home market.

"It was well-accepted by the guests and our company gained a skill that we didn't have. After that our team continued to work with this client and with other Chinese company accounts, and we were able to prevent these problems from the start, particularly by getting our upper management to talk with the clients' upper management," said Gonçalves. The change came from "the top down" came to stay and help satisfy the needs of the new Chinese clients.

One company that adopted "top down" change was Cobertura, a Portuguese real estate company that has worked in the luxury home market in Portugal for over 40 years. It has around 40 employees, but

following implementation of the “Golden Visas” scheme the company’s management decided to focus on this new opportunity and allocate more human resources to it in the Chinese market. To do this it had to adapt.

“The first thing is that we have our site translated into Chinese, which would have been unthinkable a few years ago,” said Martim Louro, the company’s marketing director. He himself worked in Shanghai for several years and now says that Cobertura is hiring professionals fluent in Mandarin to work in the Chinese market which, he admitted, “has an increasing weight in the business.”

“The Chinese factor has changed everything,

and will continue to cause change, whilst China continues to grow. And our employees, on their own accord, have absorbed that change. We have a growing number of employees who are informing themselves and who are motivated to deal better with Chinese customers. They do this with their own clients, with agents and offices that we work with in China, through personal relationships and via the Internet,” said Martim Louro.

The new cultural codes they are trying to learn, he said, include standards of etiquette and good manners, how to greet people, learning jokes, learning how to swap business cards. “A simple *ni hao* is always good to break the ice,” he said. ■



Beijing



Rio de Janeiro

Endless possibilities: China and Brazil

By Loro Horta in Beijing





President Xi Jinping with Dilma Rousseff

Relations between China and Brazil have come a long way since the early 19th century. The then Portuguese colonial government requested permission from the Manchu court to bring thousands of Chinese to work on the large farms of Brazil. While the isolationist Manchu emperor refused, several thousand Chinese nonetheless settled in Brazil in the following decades. Today there are an estimated 200,000 Brazilians who have Chinese ancestry.

Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, ties were severed with the successive military regimes that ruled Brazil. Relations were reestablished in 1974. However it took another two decades for the two countries to begin to fully realise the immense potential of their relationship.

Sino-Brazilian ties began to strengthen in the late 1990s as the economies of the two countries began to expand rapidly. As China rose to become

the world's second largest economy, Brazil rose to become its 8th. China's thirst for raw materials and other goods such as agricultural products has led to a burgeoning trade between the two countries. In 2007 bilateral trade stood at US\$ 20 billion, but by 2012 it had reached an impressive US\$ 75.46 billion. In 2009 China supplanted the US as Brazil's largest trading partner, putting an end to more than 80 years of American economic dominance.

Perfect match

The spectacular growth in trade has been facilitated by a growing complementarity between the economies of the two rising powers. China's growing demand for agricultural products has greatly benefited the Brazilian economy. Brazil is the world's second largest exporter of agricultural products, a true agricultural powerhouse whose potential is yet to be fully exploited. In 2013 China

overtook the EU as the largest importer of Brazilian agricultural and livestock products, importing an impressive US\$ 97 billion.

The Brazilian agricultural sector and the country's economy at large is benefiting from China's growing market, just as Brazilian agricultural exports to China are of vital importance to China's food security following several hikes in food prices and shortages of certain products.

China is currently the second largest consumer of oil in the world and is likely to surpass the United States in the coming years as the largest. China imports over 40 percent of its oil from abroad, primarily from Africa and the Middle East. The opening of the Tupi oil fields in southern Brazil, believed to be among the 10 largest in the world, is likely to create another area of growing cooperation and mutual benefit. China needs new sources of oil and is eager to diversify these sources, while Brazil desperately needs massive investment to develop the deep water fields in its southern shores. This convergence of interests has led to growing cooperation in the energy sector, with Beijing granting Brazil a US\$ 10 billion loan to develop the Tupi oil fields.

Another area that offers great potential for a win-

win situation is infrastructure. Brazil greatly needs massive investment to modernise and expand its outdated infrastructure. The rapid expansion of the Brazilian economy means that its infrastructure is no longer capable of sustaining the demands of a more complex and stronger economy. Brazil's energy grid, for example, faces significant problems, with blackouts common even in large urban centres such as Sao Paulo. The country's road and rail network are in real need of expansion and upgrading, while the country's ports remain plagued by poor infrastructure and excessive bureaucracy. Several Chinese shipping companies have suspended their imports of Brazilian products as a result of constant delays at Brazilian ports.

Lending expertise and capital

In order to sustain its rapid economic growth, Brazil has no choice but to invest significantly in its infrastructure. China could assist Brazil in two ways. Firstly, China's development of its own infrastructure in the past two decades has been nothing short of a miracle. Never in the history of any nation has such a transformation taken place.



São Paulo



Brasília

The Chinese have literally laid hundreds of thousands of kilometres of roads, bridges, railways, transition lines, telecommunication towers, fiber optic cables, pipelines and other infrastructure throughout their vast land. It is worth keeping in mind that China is much larger and more populous than Brazil. Brazil can learn many valuable lessons from China as it embarks on its own infrastructure development.

Secondly, China possesses significant financial reserves that it is keen on investing abroad. In a time of global economic crisis and massive losses on its investments in US treasury bonds Beijing wants to invest its substantial foreign exchange reserves in new emerging markets like Brazil, South Africa, Mexico and Africa. The ongoing crisis in the West is likely to curtail any major injection of funds into Brazil, making China a possible alternative. Chinese investment in Brazilian infrastructure would bring tremendous benefits for both sides and further energise the already strong economic relationship. Perhaps in a sign of things to come in 2010 Brazil received the highest amount of Chinese FDI sent abroad with the Chinese pledging up to US\$ 17 billion in investment with a significant amount going to rail roads, ports, telecommunications and other infrastructure projects. In 2001 Chinese FDI into Brazil was a modest US\$ 24 million. It was a

remarkable increase.

The two countries have also forged a close financial partnership in order to weather the global economic crisis and the growing weakness of the US dollar. In 2013 the two countries signed a US\$ 30 billion currency swap agreement and pledged further cooperation on the field.

Joining hands in sensitive areas

The two countries have also developed mutually beneficial cooperation in some very sensitive fields. Both countries have jointly developed and launched several satellites with China assisting Brazil with rocket technology while the Brazilian side provided valuable inputs in areas such as remote censoring. Before its cooperation with China, Brazil's space programme faced serious difficulties, with several launch failures.

Brazil provides China valuable assistance in training Chinese aircraft carrier pilots on its aircraft carrier the Sao Paulo. No other nation was willing to assist China in this sensitive matter making Brazil's gesture highly appreciated in Beijing.

Brazilian companies have also begun to venture into the Chinese market, investing substantially in mining and the automobile sector. Brazilian aviation

company EMBRAER and its Chinese partner have developed a very successful mid-range commercial jet liner. As of 2013 the Brazilian-Chinese joint venture had sold 138 aircraft in China. Meanwhile Brazilian car manufacturers such as GM do Brasil and Marco Polo are among the leaders in the massive Chinese car and bus market. Several Brazilian companies have won major contracts, such as providing advance equipment for the turbines at the massive three gorges dam project.

While Sino-Brazilian economic cooperation is impressive, there is ample room for expansion, and the full potential for the relationship is far from having been achieved. As mentioned above, Brazil's poor infrastructure and its excessive bureaucracy have severely hindered Chinese investment. China could likewise do more to liberalise its market for Brazilian products. Indeed the main complaint from the Brazilian side is about China's alleged protectionism and dumping practices. Brazil has lodged over 120 complaints against China at the WTO and adopted trade laws to protect its market against what it perceives as unfair competition from China.

However, these irritants are unlikely to have a significant impact on Sino-Brazilian ties with both Beijing and Brasilia devoting substantial diplomatic energy to preserve a generally friendly relationship.

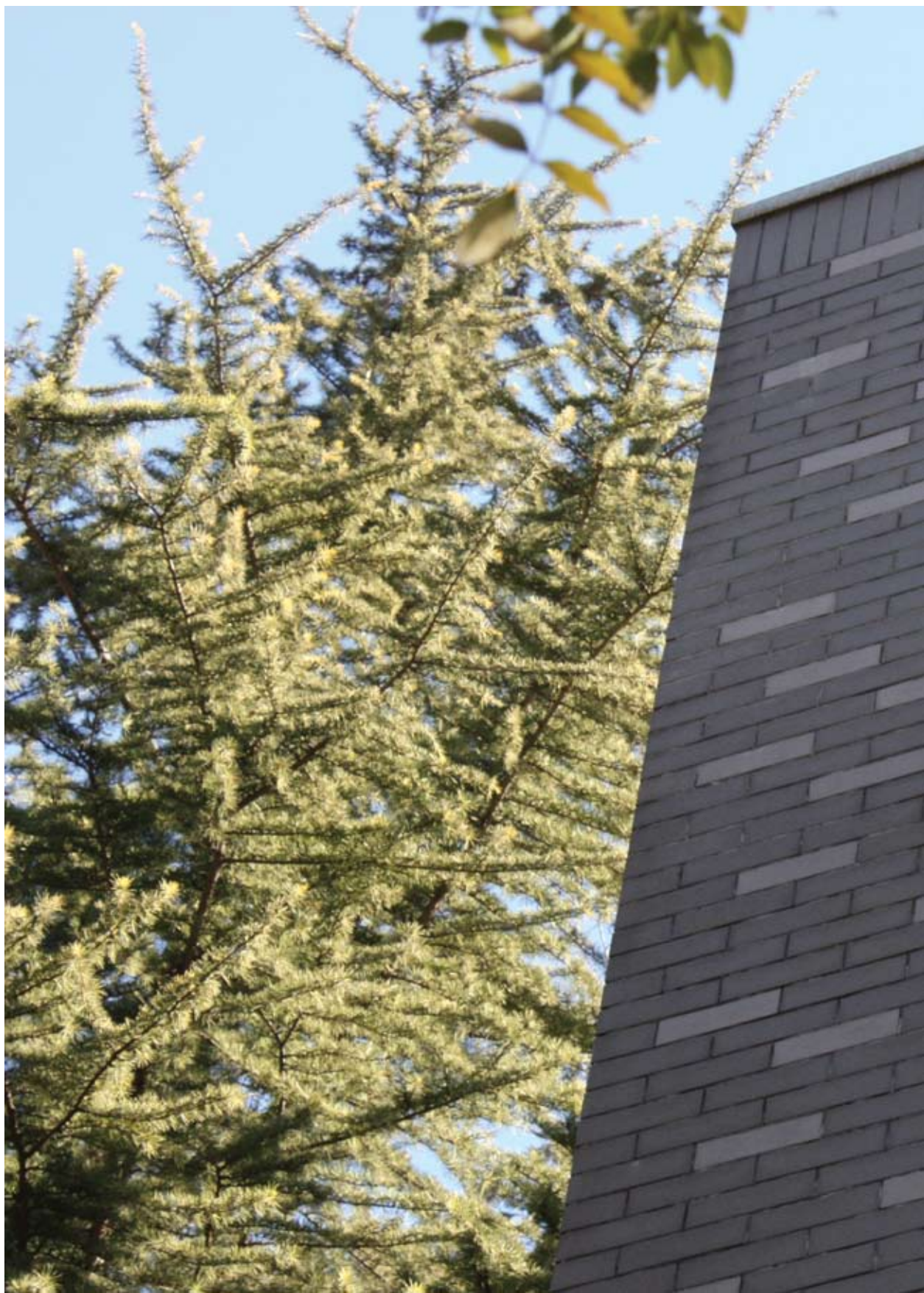
Perhaps most importantly, Sino-Brazilian ties are likely to continue to flourish because the relationship is highly profitable and mutually beneficial.

An area that the two countries should consider fostering is people-to-people links that take place every day outside government circles. The number of tourists and student exchanges, while growing, remains small and there is enormous potential in these fields. People-to-people ties will help both sets of people to understand one another and put an end to ignorance and stereotyping. Many in Brazil still think of China as a backward nation that produces cheap low quality goods. Many Chinese see Brazil at best as the land of football and at worse the land of slums, poverty and crime. Both China and Brazil are rising powers that are destined to have greater influence on the world stage. The potential of Sino-Brazilian ties seems to be endless. It remains to be seen whether people on both sides will have the imagination to embrace the almost endless possibilities that lie ahead.

Loro Horta is a diplomat currently based in Central Asia. He is a graduate of the People's Liberation Army National Defence University senior officers course and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce Central School. He has won several awards for his research on Asian security issues. ■



Embraer in Harbin in China

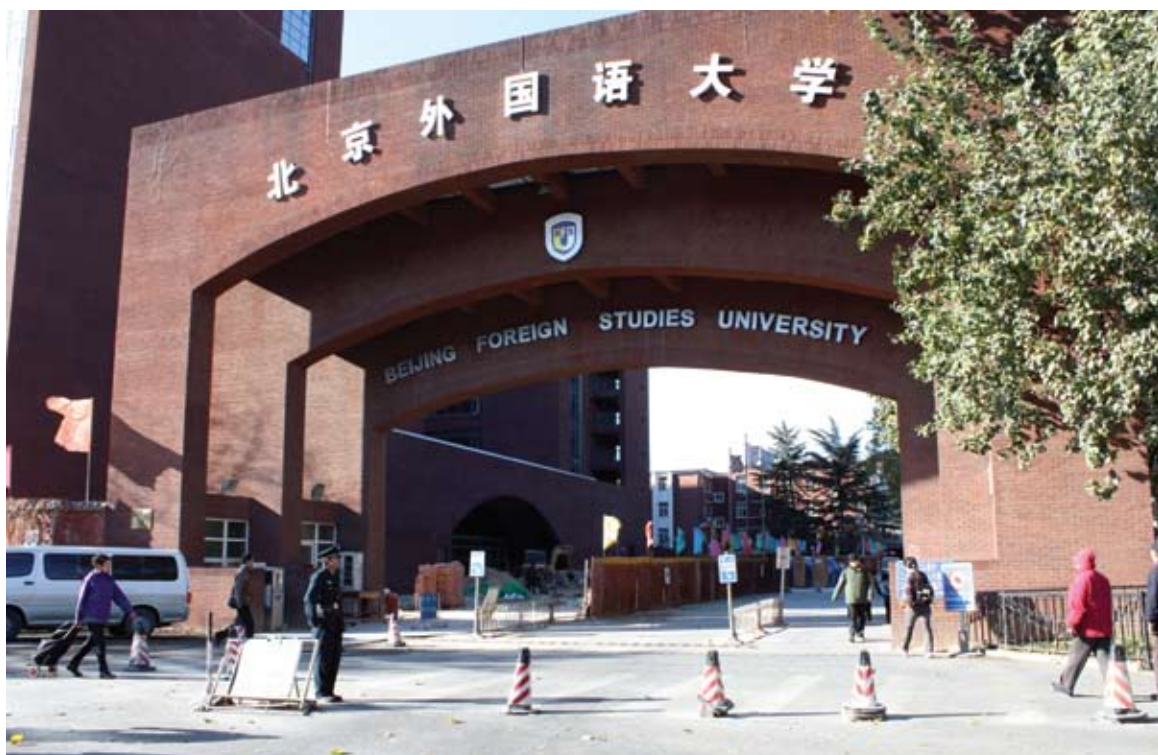


PORTUGUESE, A NEW GLOBAL LANGUAGE

By António Caeiro, from Lusa News Agency, in Beijing

Photos by Rita Tudela





In the first few lessons of their Portuguese course, the students at the Beijing Foreign Studies University (Beiwai) learn the names of the eight Portuguese-speaking countries and discover that the language is not only spoken in Portugal and Brazil. "When I started (in 1998) I didn't even know that they spoke Portuguese in Brazil," said a former Beiwai student. "I didn't have access to the Internet or a mobile phone then."

Around 600 million Chinese now have an Internet connection, but even so, many students come to the course not knowing which countries speak Portuguese, according to the director of the Beiwai Portuguese department, Ye Zhiliang.

The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) has a population of around 260 million people. In Brazil alone – the world's fifth largest country by population after China, India, the United States and Indonesia – there are 200 million people. According to Portugal's Camões Institute of Cooperation and Language, which promotes Portuguese language and culture around the world, Portuguese "is the fifth most-used language on the Internet and the third on social media such as Facebook and Twitter". About ten years ago, not counting Macao and Hong Kong, just three Chinese universities offered degree courses in Portuguese:

Beiwai, founded in 1941, Shanghai Foreign Studies University and the Communication University of China, in Beijing. Today there are 18, spread across ten cities, stretching from Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province, next to Siberia, to Haikou, on the tropical island of Hainan. The newest of these was launched this year in Hangzhou, the capital of the prosperous province of Zhejiang, in eastern China.

Most of the degrees were set up over the last five years, coinciding with the rapid development of economic relations between China and the CPLP, particularly Angola and Brazil. The number of students studying Portuguese was over 1,100 in 2012. Next year, in Beijing alone, two more courses are due to open.

The Portuguese-speaking world is a cultural block that is on the rise. "The demographic growth of the populations that speak Portuguese is exponential, particularly in Latin America and Africa," noted Portugal's deputy Prime Minister, Paulo Portas, at the 4th Ministerial meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries, held last November in Macao. It is a phenomenon that also values Macao's status as a Special Administrative Region of China where Portuguese continues to

be an official language and whose uniqueness is supported by Beijing. China will support the creation in Macao of a centre of “qualified bilingual staff” to boost the role of the territory as a “platform for cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking world”, in the words of China’s Deputy Minister for Trade, Gao Yan, at a business seminar organised by the Forum.

From Beijing to Coimbra to complete a Portuguese degree

In September, You Dahui, a student of Portuguese at the University of International Business and Economics of Beijing (UIBE), travelled to Coimbra, in Portugal, for the third and final year of her degree. It was her first journey outside China.

“Yes, I’m very excited (...) Portugal is not as wealthy or famous as France or Germany, but it is calmer. And the climate is good, people are friendly,” she said before leaving.

When You finished her secondary education in 2011 she wanted to study Economics, but did not

have the grades she needed to get onto the course. Foreign Languages was her second option and at the Portuguese Department, established two years earlier, there were places available.

“I didn’t choose it, Portuguese chose me,” said You (or Amélia, the name she chose in her Portuguese classes). “I didn’t know anything, but I liked the language.” Amélia would like to have “a professional experience abroad”, but she doesn’t see herself as working as a translator all the time: “I hope that after a while I can work in management or marketing.”

Leonor (Liu Wei), another second year student of Portuguese, but from Beiwai, also went to Coimbra University: “In terms of a job, Portuguese is more promising than Spanish. After finishing my course I’d like to work for a company that does business with Portuguese-speaking countries.”

The reasons her colleague Fernando (Tie Rigen) chose Portuguese are the same: “Before starting this course I heard that relations with the CPLP were increasingly improving. Knowing Portuguese gives you good opportunities.”



Professor Clara Oliveira

Chinese graduates look at Brazil and Portuguese-speaking countries

Six to seven million new graduates leave China's universities every year, which is more than the number of jobs available on the market. Liu Jiantong, 21, a student in the final year of the Portuguese degree at Beiwei, does not seem worried: "China does a lot of business with Brazil and other Portuguese-speaking countries... The Chinese that speak Portuguese are very sought-after."

Like many students of Portuguese, in her first class, in September 2010, Liu adopted a Portuguese name – Julieta. She was 18 years old. "I like the story of Romeo and Juliet a lot. I also want to find my Romeo," she said.

Julieta, who is from Henan – a province in central China with a population of around 95 million people – along with nine of her fellow students from Beiwei, spent the third and penultimate year of her degree at Coimbra University. Like many

others, it was the first time that she had left China: "I liked it a lot, especially the Portuguese, who are very friendly. The climate and food are excellent." She described Portugal as having a small population, yet with many Chinese people everywhere. She didn't find Portuguese an easy language. "At the beginning it was difficult, particularly because of the pronunciation and grammar. The mentality is also very different," she said.

Three years on, however, and Julieta knows how to cook "bacalhau à Brás" (a salted cod dish) and how to play football, and is even hopeful she might find her Romeo in Portugal: "It's possible," she says.

As for finding a job, Julieta says she will only start thinking about that in the second semester of this academic year (2013/14). Her dream is simple: "I'd like to live outside China for a few years, to work in Portugal, Brazil or Africa, and then go back."

As Portugal's Ambassador to China, Jorge Torres-Pereira notes, "Portuguese offers a return in terms of employment, which is not the same as for other languages."



Liu Jiantong (Julieta)



First Chinese soap opera to be dubbed into Portuguese

If you switch on the Chinese soap opera "A Beautiful Daughter-in-Law Era", you might be forgiven for thinking that actress Hai Qing speaks remarkably good Portuguese with an unmistakably Angolan accent. It is not Hai's actual voice, however, in her role as leading lady in the programme, but that of a voice dubbing actress. The series – 36 episodes of 45 minutes each – is set in Beijing and is about a modern urban family.

"The idea is to broadcast the soap opera in all the Portuguese-speaking countries, but the debut will be in Angola," said Wang Gangjian, director of the China Radio International Cinema and TV Dubbing Centre, in Beijing. "What took the most time was the preparation, particularly translating the dialogue."

The TV Dubbing Centre, which was set up a year ago, has already dubbed 31 films and soap operas into eight different languages, including Burmese, Arabic and Swahili. "A Beautiful Daughter-in-Law Era", whose leading lady is a popular actress of the genre, is intended to "show modern life in China and the life of the common Chinese family".

To translate the dialogue, the Dubbing Centre used the services of China Radio International (CRI), which broadcasts in 64 languages, including Portuguese. "It is the world's largest radio station," said Wang.

The dubbing voices they used were those of Angolan men and women, "to adapt to the local accent as much as possible", Wang explained. Portuguese is wordier than Chinese and a 10 minute speech when translated into Chinese can be cut down to just five or six minutes. Despite this, the CRI technical staff managed to eliminate discrepancies between the lines and the movement of the characters' lips, as if the actors were actually speaking Portuguese.







Shaping Modern China

Beautiful park is memorial
to Zhuhai's most famous
diplomat and politician

By Mark O'Neill

Photos by Eric Tam



Travellers driving on the expressway from Zhuhai to Guangzhou pass through the district of Tangjiawan on the northern outskirts of the city. If they turn off the main road for five minutes, they come to a spacious estate with hundreds of trees, a lake, small hills and a cluster of houses.

This is Gongleyuan (the Garden of Shared Joy), the home of Tang Shao-yi, one of the leading diplomats and public figures of the end of the Qing dynasty and the first Prime Minister of the Republic of China.

He served as China's consul-general in Korea, negotiated a treaty with Britain after its invasion of Tibet and twice helped to prevent a civil war by negotiating ceasefires between the revolutionaries and government forces.

He served as the first Premier of the new republic from March 13, 1912 but resigned just three and a half months later in protest at the lack of respect of President Yuan Shikai for law and constitutional government.

For the rest of his life, he was disappointed by the new rulers of China in the republican period and

in 1929 returned to become the chief official of his native place. He was assassinated on September 30, 1938 at his home in Shanghai.

A museum in the Garden of Shared Joy traces an extraordinary life, including his friendship with American president Herbert Hoover. It has a poignant photograph of Tang standing next to Dr Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the RoC: both were men of culture and learning, unable to prosper in an era of guns and warlords.

The images of his later life capture a feeling of sadness and bitterness as he sees his country invaded by Japan and his countrymen unable to unite to resist it. His own death was a result of these divisions.

"The life of Tang Shaoyi was, in the end, a tragedy," said Liang Chen, a school teacher of history in Hong Kong. "Like Dr Sun, he was an intellectual, a man of letters and full of ideals for his country. He was unfortunate to live in an era dominated by foreign armies and Chinese warlords who prevented him achieving his ideals."



Tang Shao-yi

Early life

Tang was born on January 2, 1862 to a well-off family in Tangjiawan: his father was a wealthy tea merchant in Shanghai. The family home is still standing, a solid two-storey structure in the heart of the township surrounded by a garden and trees. It was built by his grandfather.

Five years ago, it was open to the public as a tourist attraction but the issue has been complicated by a demand from his descendants that the government give the property to them. A great-grandson has moved into a small building on the property. While the matter remains unresolved, the family home is mostly closed to the public.

Tang received his initial education at home and in Shanghai and, in 1874, became a member of the third batch of Chinese children sent by the Qing government to the United States.

Tangjiawan means 'the bay of the Tang family'; it is in Xiangshan county, renamed Zhongshan after the death of Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan). It has more migrants overseas than any other county in China. Most families have relatives abroad, mostly in the U.S. and Southeast Asia.

In Springfield, Massachusetts, Tang lived with other

Chinese students in the house of a prominent architect named Eugene Gardner. He completed his elementary education in Springfield and moved to Hartford, Connecticut for high school. After graduating with honours, he enrolled in the arts faculty of Columbia University in New York and completed one year before the government recalled the mission, totalling 40 students. It feared that they were becoming too westernised, would convert to Christianity and lose their Chinese-ness.

Diplomatic career

In 1881, Tang returned to China and continued his studies at a college of western education in Tianjin. Four years later, he took a post in the city's tax department and was later sent to Korea, where he became assistant to Yuan Shikai, the Imperial Resident and garrison commander sent by the Qing government. It was there that he began to learn his diplomatic skills.

In October 1896, he himself became consul-general in Seoul. He returned to China in September 1898, after the sudden death of his father, ending nearly a decade of diplomatic life in Korea.

His star rose with that of his patron Yuan Shikai, who appointed him head of the Tianjin customs in 1900, where he saw the occupation of the city by the forces of the Allied powers sent to crush the Boxer Rebellion.

In Tianjin, Tang lived across the street from future U.S. President Herbert Hoover, who was working there as a mining engineer. An artillery shell launched by the Boxer exploded at the front door of Hoover's house; he and his wife were fortunate to survive.

A few days later, shells hit Tang's home, killing his wife and their infant child. Tang rescued the other children and ran across the street, taking refuge in Hoover's home. He handled the chaotic aftermath of the rebellion and the foreign claims for reparation in the northern province of Hebei.

In 1904, he was sent to Calcutta to negotiate a treaty with Britain after its army had invaded Tibet in 1903-1904. The two sides signed the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, under which Britain agreed not to annex Tibetan territory or interfere in its administration. For the Qing, most important was that London recognised Chinese sovereignty over Tibet.



His success in these negotiations earned him a promotion in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; he was given the difficult task of negotiating land and economic disputes with Japan and Tsarist Russia. He went on to hold important posts in the government dealing with customs and railways and suppressing opium.

In 1908 and 1909, he headed a delegation to convey thanks to the United States for reimbursing part of the Boxer Indemnity. He also visited Japan and seven capitals in Europe, including London, Paris and Berlin. But he failed to obtain the help of Germany and the U.S. to counter Russian and Japanese encroachments in Manchuria.

Revolution

After the Wuhan uprising in October 1911, he was sent to Shanghai, where he successfully negotiated a ceasefire with rebel forces from the south, which helped to avert widespread fighting. He would play a similar peace-keeping role between north and south in 1919.

After his education in the United States, he easily accepted the principles of republican government and on March 13 became the first Prime Minister

of the Republic of China. He implemented a cabinet system, giving ministers power over their respective portfolios.

This brought him into conflict with his former patron, Yuan Shi-kai, who demanded more personal power. The two men fell out over issues of policy and personnel appointments and, deeply disappointed, Tang resigned on June 15, after just three months in office.

After a brief period as chairman of an insurance company in Shanghai, he returned to politics, siding with Dr Sun Yat-sen in his attempts to establish a constitutional government.

In 1919, he sent a telegram to his son-in-law, Wellington Koo, a member of the Chinese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, telling him not to sign the peace treaty, because it gave the eastern province of Shandong to Japan and not to China and maintained other colonial privileges.

China was the only country that did not sign. In 1912, Koo had married Pao-yu, Tang's daughter.

During the 1920s, Tang refused several offers to return to government office. In 1929, President Chiang Kai-shek named him as a 'senior adviser' to the National government in Nanjing but he ignored the appointment.

Return home

In 1929, he was appointed chairman of a government committee for Zhongshan county. In his acceptance speech, he said that he would use 25 years to turn Zhongshan into a model county for the whole of China; he became county chief in March 1931. He sought investment from domestic and foreign companies to improve the farming, fishing and infrastructure of the county, including a major port.

But his attempts to modernise met the opposition of the Guangdong warlord, Chen Ji-tang. In October 1934, Chen sent troops to surround Tang's house, forcing him to flee and give up the post. He retired to his home in Rue Ferguson in the French concession of Shanghai and stayed out of politics.

After the Japanese occupation of the city in 1937, he sent his wife and children to Hong Kong but remained there himself.

As the Japanese worked hard to set up a puppet government to work with it, the city was a hotbed of

rumours and conspiracies. Fearful that Tang would be drawn into such a government, the Nationalists sent emissaries to the city, pleading with him to leave.

On September 30, 1938, he was stabbed to death at his home in Rue Ferguson. The assassins were either the special police of the Japanese or of the Nationalist government, because they believed that Tang would or would not join such a puppet government. One version is that President Chiang Kai-shek ordered the killing to conceal a peace initiative Tang had made to the Japanese on his behalf.

President Chiang decreed a payment of 5,000 yuan to Tang's family, saying that he had spent his life in service of his country

In his memoirs, published in 1953, Herbert Hoover mentioned Tang several times and called him a good friend. "He was upright, hard-working and talented and had great aspirations for the future of China," he wrote.

Garden

Tang's greatest legacy to his home town is the 'Garden of Shared Joy', a large estate which he built in 1910 and donated to the town in 1932, as a public park; it covers 23 hectares.

During Tang's lifetime, Tangjiaway was a town with a small population. All that changed after Zhuhai became a special economic zone in 1980. Thousands of people from all over China poured into Zhuhai. A large majority of the residents of Tangjiawan today are not Cantonese and Mandarin is the predominant language. This increase in population has caused a building boom which has consumed most of the available land.

The Garden of Shared Joy remains the town's largest open space. It contains hundreds of trees, including species which Tang brought back from his tours to Japan and Southeast Asia. Dr Sun Yat-sen planted a black pine there. The spacious foliage means that, even in summer, the garden is cool.

It has small hills and pavilions, sheltered walkways and a lake.

The garden contains a museum with photographs and accounts of Tang's extraordinary life and the dramatic period of history in which he played an important part. It has also the two-storey house where he stayed when he lived on the site.

Tang received there many famous people, including Herbert Hoover, American journalist Edgar Snow and Mei Lanfang, one of China's most famous Beijing Opera performers, who planted a eucalyptus tree.



Tang Shao-yi, his wife Wu Weiqiao with Sir Robert Ho Tung and his wife Clara Cheung Lin Kok

Tang married four times and had 13 children, six sons and seven daughters. His first wife was killed by a Boxer shell in 1900 and his third wife died in 1911. His descendants live in China and overseas, mainly in the United States.

The town has also preserved the two-storey house where Tang was born and grew up, at 99 Shanfang Road in the old town. The rear portion was built by Tang's grandfather during the Qing dynasty. He added the front portion in 1929.

In 1999, the University Press of America published 'Tong Shao-yi and His Family – A Saga of Two Countries and Three Generations' by David Hinners, about Tang and his links with the American families he stayed with.

Today Tang is probably most famous in Taiwan, where students learn about him in their textbooks. He is not included in the main history curriculum in the mainland.





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Beans versus Leaves

Coffee culture challenges
the Kingdom of Tea

By Luo Xunzhi in Beijing



Liang Hong sips his latte in a Starbucks branch in the centre of Zhuhai. "I come here less for the coffee than the ambience – pretty girls, the opportunity to surf the Internet, study English, work on an article or chat with a date. Here I can imagine I am a property speculator or a member of the middle class." Customers like Liang are the reason that China has

become the third largest market for Starbucks in the world. In early 2014, it will overtake Canada and move into second place after the US, after the company opens its 1,000th store in China. It has just opened two flagship branches in Beijing – one covers 4,000 square feet over two floors and the other is open 24 hours a day, with live music at the weekends.



Starbucks in Shanghai

Together with Costa and Pacific Coffee, Starbucks has brought coffee culture into the heart of the Kingdom of Tea. According to Euromonitor, retail sales of coffee in China grew over 90 percent from 2007 to 2012 to seven billion yuan. During that time, the number of cafés nationwide doubled from 15,898 to 31,783, faster than the growth of

tea houses. Per capita consumption of coffee rose from 9.6 grams in 1998 to 47.6 grams in 2012, said Euromonitor.

By European and North American standards, these figures are low. The average American consumes 441 cups a year, the average Norwegian 1,000 and the average Chinese person only four.

Over the next five years, consumption is expected to rise at least 15 percent a year, compared to a global average of two percent. By 2015, Starbucks plans to have 1,500 outlets in China.

The upstart, coffee, has come to challenge the emperor, tea, which has ruled China for many centuries.

Catering to Chinese tastes

Swiss food giant Nestlé was the pioneer of China's coffee market. It arrived in 1990, when consumption was negligible. It recognised at once that Chinese people did not like the bitter taste of black coffee or espresso and designed its products accordingly, with sugar and powdered milk.

One of its most popular products has been a packet of "three-in-one", containing coffee, milk powder and sugar, costing less than two yuan. Nestlé went for the mass market.

Instant coffee accounts for more than 80 percent of all coffee consumed in China; Nestlé controls 75 percent of this market. Such coffee is cheap, convenient and available to all.

Starbucks arrived in 1999 and took an opposite strategy – it aimed for a market of middle class and wealthy white collar people, with prices up to 50 percent higher than those in the US. On taste, it followed Nestlé's example and introduced milk-based drinks like lattes, mochas and Frappuccinos – not the bitter black taste you find in a café in Lisbon or Athens.

It also found that, while most Americans take their coffee out, Chinese like to drink on site. So it designed large seating areas and offered tea, soya bean products, Chinese delicacies and snacks as an alternative for those who did not like coffee.

By 2010, Starbucks had won 66 percent of the coffee retail sector. In 2011, a Starbucks outlet in China averaged US\$ 600,000 in annual revenue, with a profit margin substantially higher than in the US.

Taste has been only one factor in the company's success. It has marketed itself as an American and international brand, appealing to a middle class who wants to study abroad, wear smart clothes, speak English and be modern. It invested in well-designed and comfortable furniture where people like to invite their sweethearts, friends and colleagues to sit and talk.

Chinese cities are stressful and overcrowded; space is expensive and at a premium. Many retail outlets have no seats because the owners do not want you to stay after you make your purchase; restaurants want you to leave after you finish your meal. A coffee shop is one of the few places you can linger and chat, surf the Internet and read a magazine.

Starbucks came to a virgin market and sold itself as chic, smart and fashionable – the opposite of its experience in France, which has thousands of well-established cafés and whose people regarded it as gauche and tasteless.

The British chain Costa entered China in 2006 and now has over 250 stores, which it aims to double by 2016. It has a share of 8.9 percent of the retail market. McDonald's has introduced McCafé coffee shops and aims to have 750 by the end of 2013.

Another competitor is Hong Kong-based Pacific Coffee. In 2010, China Resources, a large state company with 4,000 stores nationwide, acquired 80 percent of the company. It has ambitious plans to

spread the brand all over the country and take a significant market share.

Depending on imports

This boom has largely been brewed with imported coffee. Last year China produced only 0.75 percent of global output.

Its most important grower is Yunnan, which produced 53,000 tonnes of arabica coffee in 2012, accounting for over 95 percent of national production. Hainan and Fujian grew a limited amount of robusta coffee.

Imports were negligible until the late 1980s. Between 1998 and 2012, annual imports averaged 533,000 bags, according to the International Coffee Organisation (ICO). The annual growth rate was 13.7 percent; imports rose from 232,000 bags in 1998 to 1.4 million in 2012.

During that period, Vietnam accounted for 47.8 percent of total imports, followed by Indonesia with 12.4 percent, the US with 7.7 percent, Brazil with 6.3 percent and Malaysia with 4.1 percent. The biggest suppliers from Africa were Uganda with 0.9 percent and Ethiopia with 0.8 percent.

Of its output last year, Yunnan exported 42,000 tonnes, worth US\$ 150 million; that was a rise of 38.2 percent over 2011. Export markets included Germany, Japan, South Korea and the US. It is exported because it is too expensive for domestic consumption.



Luode Rainforest Coffee Garden in Pu'er City, Yunnan province

After extensive research across China, Nestlé selected Yunnan in 1988 as the best place in the country to grow coffee because of its soil and climate. In 2013, it bought 11,500 tonnes of Yunnan coffee beans from several locations, including Puer, which grows the province's most famous tea that is prized among Chinese people around the world. The price offered by Nestlé is based on that of coffee futures traded in New York.

It plans to increase purchases in Yunnan to 15,000 tonnes by 2015. Starbucks started to buy coffee beans in the province in 2007 and expanded its presence in 2013 through a joint venture with local supplier Aini Coffee.

Seeds from a French missionary

The history of coffee in China began in 1892 in Zhukula, a remote village in the mountains of Yunnan inhabited by the Yi nationality. A French priest arrived with a Bible, clothes, medicine and coffee seeds.

In this beautiful and isolated place, the priest built a church with white walls and green tiles and planted the seeds in the fields outside. He had chosen correctly – the soil and climate were very suitable for the crop and leaves sprouted from the trees.

He passed on to the Yi villagers not only his religion but also the skill of growing and brewing arabica coffee. More than 120 years later, the village has 1,134 coffee trees, of which 24 are more than a century old. The residents drink four to five cups a day.

But the habit of growing and drinking coffee did not spread outside the limited area of Yunnan. It was only in Shanghai, a city controlled by Westerners until 1941, that a coffee culture took root. It was home to dozens of coffee shops and restaurants, serving both a foreign and Chinese clientele.

One legacy of this history is a flourishing coffee culture in the city today, with more than 2,000 cafés and coffee freshly brewed on the premises. It has over 100 Starbucks outlets and the highest average per capita consumption in China.

It was not until the end of 1980s and the start of the open door and reform policy that Yunnan increased its coffee production.

The question now being asked by the industry is whether China will follow the example of Japan, another tea-drinking nation. In the 1950s, it imported 667 bags of green coffee a year; now the figure is 7.1 million bags, the world's fourth coffee consumer after the US, Brazil and Germany.

Could the upstart even overthrow the Emperor? ■



Coffee during the Beijing-Guangzhou trip on the high-speed train



Deep Pockets

Mainland visitors are big spenders in Taiwan

By Ou Nian-le in Taipei



It is seven in the morning in a basement room of a hotel in downtown Taipei. The room is crowded with people speaking in the distinctive accent of northeast China; they are rushing to finish breakfast before boarding a bus for an eight-day tour of Taiwan.

The scene is repeated in hotels all over the capital. Last year, a record 2.83 million mainlanders visited Taiwan, an increase of 11.2 percent over 2012, and accounted for 36 percent of all visitors, according to the official Tourism Bureau. The mainland has overtaken Japan as the top source of tourists; last year 1.43 million Japanese visited, down 0.6 percent from 2012.

The nearly six years of administration of Ma Ying-jeou have seen a dramatic opening of Taiwan to the mainland. After he took office in May 2008, he opened the 'three directs' – air, shipping and postal links – with the mainland, thereby reversing a policy that had lasted for 40 years.

Since then, exchanges of goods, people and money between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have grown to record levels.

Trade last year reached a record US\$ 197.3 billion, an increase of 16.7 percent, with Taiwan recording a surplus of US\$ 116 billion. The mainland is the island's largest trading partner.

The number of passenger flights across the Strait rose last year to 670 a week from 616 and will soon increase to 828.

Mainland companies have started to invest in Taiwan. Last year this investment reached US\$ 117 million in 50 projects, according to the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council.

Tourists rise four-fold

The most visible sign of this change is the flood of mainland tourists.

The figure for 2013 is more than double the 1.22 million of 2010 and over four times the 600,000 of 2009. Last year, an average 4,566 arrived each day. From July 2008 to the end of 2013, mainland tourists spent NT\$ 329.4 billion (US\$ 108.7 billion) on the island.

A majority come on group tours. Individual tourism began in June 2011, with citizens of only three cities – Beijing, Shanghai and Xiamen – allowed to apply. Now the number of cities has increased to 26. Last year 522,000 individual tourists came, compared to 191,000 in 2012.

Henry Tsang, general manager of Hua Meng Travel Service, said that it was hard for mainlanders to obtain a visa. "They do not know when they will come again, so they want to go everywhere. That is why the eight-day tour is the most popular, covering every part of the island."

The group tours concentrate on major sites – Tower 101, the Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen memorial halls and the National Palace Museum in Taipei, Alishan and Sun Moon Lake in the centre, Kenting Park in the south and the Taroko Gorge in the east. The visitors are big spenders. Last year, the Taipei city government said that the average mainland tourist spent US\$ 356.32 per day, US\$ 102 more



than the average Japanese, and, of this, 70 percent went on shopping.

Tower 101 is very popular for luxury brand goods, which are cheaper than on the mainland. Other popular items are coral, pineapple cakes and other food delicacies, cosmetics, jade, jewellery, Chinese and foreign pharmaceuticals and face packs. Night markets, with their wide variety of delicious food, are very popular too.

Individual travellers

Individual visitors travel more widely, going to remoter parts of south and east Taiwan not

touched by the groups. They also help to spread the wealth of the visitors. They tend to be better educated, better mannered and more sensitive than those who travel in groups; they also expect to come again and do not need to go everywhere during a single visit.

“The behaviour of some visitors is bad and upsets Taiwan people,” said Tsang. “They smoke, throw litter everywhere, do not queue up and so on. This is to be expected because the visitors come from so many different classes. We deal with this tactfully. They are our clients, after all.”

Politics is a subject to avoid; it can lead to disputes and anger.





Some of the visitors stay in small family-owned bed and breakfasts, which offer a human touch, tourist advice and interaction not available in large hotels. Sun Hou and his new wife, from Nanjing, spent the 11 days of their honeymoon in Taiwan in such a bed and breakfast. "It was extremely enjoyable," he said. "We interacted with the owners and they explained to us what to do and where to go."

A growing sector is medical tourism. In 2012, 100,000 people visited the island for this purpose, of which at least 40 percent came from the mainland. The medical procedures they seek are mainly gel injections and other medical cosmetic treatments. Prices range from NT\$ 45,000 (US\$ 1,500) to NT\$ 180,000 (US\$ 6,000) for tours that include staying at five-star hotels and sightseeing. The official target for this sector in 2014 is NT\$ 15 billion (US\$ 5 billion), rising to NT\$ 20 billion (US\$ 6.6 billion) by 2017, including clients from the Middle East and Southeast Asia as well as the mainland.

Tourists from Hong Kong and Macao rank third,

after the mainland and Japan. In 2013, a record 1.18 million came. Wu Hsong-lin, director of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau's Hong Kong office, said the target for 2014 was 1.3 million. He said that the bureau would offer new tours to attract more people, including those to offshore islands, as well as train excursions and environmental tours.

Other available tours cover 'green architecture' – visiting environmentally friendly buildings; staying in the homes of farmers and working with them; and tours of organic farms.

"Some say that we are already saturated with tourists," said Henry Tsang. "I do not agree. The average occupancy rate of hotels in Taiwan is about 70 percent, so we have room to grow. We must develop more sites and ensure that not everyone is concentrated in a few places."

"The National Palace Museum has opened a second branch, in Chiayi, on a site several times larger than the one in Taipei. But few people go there. We must display better items there and attract more people."



Trade booms

Economic links between the two sides have boomed since 2008. They have signed 19 trade and economic agreements, including the Economic Co-operation Framework Agreement (ECFA) in 2010, to reduce tariffs and commercial barriers.

ECFA was the most important cross-strait document since 1949. It offered tariff concessions covering 539 Taiwanese products and 267 mainland goods, giving more benefits to the Taiwan side. The mainland opened its markets in 11 sectors, including banking, securities, insurance, hospitals and accounting; Taiwan offered wider access in seven areas, including banking and films. ECFA has helped pave a way for the rapid increase in trade.

In June 2013, the two sides signed a Services Trade Agreement but this has not been ratified by the Legislative Yuan. The mainland has committed to deregulation in 80 service sectors, Taiwan in 64.

Invest in Taiwan, save renminbi

As part of the liberalisation, Taiwan has opened the door to investment by mainland companies. In manufacturing, 97 percent of sectors are open to such investment; in services and public infrastructure, it is 51 percent.

As of the end of 2012, 143 firms had invested US\$ 910 million; they are allowed to bring a limited number of staff from the mainland. They include state trading conglomerates and banks.

The central and local governments in Taiwan are short of capital; they need private capital for infrastructure projects to boost the economy. Mainland firms have an abundance of it.

Before 2008, the renminbi could not be used in Taiwan. But now its residents are eager to put their savings in it. Things have moved rapidly in this sector too.

At the end of 2013, they held 182.6 billion yuan in RMB deposits, a figure that could reach 300 billion by the end of this year. What attracts them is an appreciating currency and interest rates substantially higher than those for US and New Taiwan dollars.

As of the end of 2013, these deposits accounted for 17 percent of total foreign currency deposits, up from six percent in February that year.

The two sides are negotiating the approval of investment quotas of 100 billion yuan for Taiwan financial institutions and the introduction of yuan-denominated insurance policies in Taiwan.

Taiwan firms which have invested in the mainland greatly welcome this widening use of renminbi; they need to use the currency in their operations on the mainland. With increased deposits, Taiwan banks will have more funds available to lend to them. ■



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Beitou Hot Spring museum

Walk out of a station at the end of one of Taipei's subway lines and you find in front of you a town nestling in a narrow valley below towering hills wrapped in mist.

Welcome to the town of Beitou, the most famous of Taiwan's 120 hot spring resorts, popular with both local people and visitors from Macao, Hong Kong and around the world.

It has had a rich, varied history since Hirata Gengo, a businessman from Osaka, opened the first hot spring hotel in 1896, a year after Japan had taken over the island from China under the Treaty of Shimonoseki at the end of the war between the two countries. The town was first a rest and recuperation centre for injured Japanese soldiers: then a recreation place for the rich and powerful, complete with geisha, banquets and melancholy singing. During the last months of World War II, kamikaze pilots came here to spend their last night before they flew out to attack American warships.

After 1949, the town became a red-light district for Japanese businessmen and American sailors on leave from Vietnam, until the government closed the business in 1979. Since then, it has become a place for local people and tourists to enjoy a hot bath, a nap, a good meal and cold beer.

Valley of witches

The first residents of the area were Aborigines, the original inhabitants of Taiwan before the arrival of Han Chinese. They gave the town its name – Kipatauw, which means 'witch' in the language of the Ketagalan, one of the Aboriginal tribes. This became Peitou, now Beitou.

The first sulphur deposits were extracted in 1697. Local people enjoyed the hot springs; but they were not commercialised until the Japanese takeover Taiwan in 1895. They brought from their home country the habit of using hot springs to invigorate the body and for relaxation and entertainment. The first hotel built around a hot spring, the Tianguan, was opened by Hirata Gengo, from Osaka, in 1896.

"When the Japanese arrived, conditions of hygiene in Taiwan were very poor," said Henry Tsang, general manager of Hua Meng Travel Service. "This led to the spread of infectious diseases. The Japanese wanted to promote cleanliness and used hot springs to encourage this."

The early bath-houses built around the hot springs were private and expensive, including clubs for wealthy Japanese and a recuperation centre for

soldiers injured in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.

From 1912, the government began to subsidise public baths as a way to improve the health and hygiene of ordinary citizens. It spent 56,000 yen on a two-storey building, the Beitou Hot Spring Public Bath, which opened in 1913, charging a modest fee. It was built in brick and wood, in the middle of a park, and was a copy of a bathhouse in Izuyama, Shizuoka prefecture.

Sun Yat-sen, the father of the Chinese Republic, visited it that year. Prince Hirohito, who would become the Emperor during World War II, visited the bath in 1923.

It was the biggest public bath in East Asia at the time and the first of dozens which the government built around the island. In 1998, it was turned into a museum that is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the town.

The bathing area was on the first floor; the big bath is nine metres long, six metres wide and between 40 and 130 centimetres deep. The arcades and columns around it are in the style of an ancient Roman bath. The second floor, with a tatami floor and sliding paper doors, was for resting after the bath, drinking tea, playing chess and conversing.

Geisha and Nakashi

In the pre-1945 period, most of the facilities in Beitou were private and for the rich. The Japanese brought their hot spring culture, including banquets, drinking and geishas who sang in a style known as Nakashi.

Hotels were built in Western and Japanese styles. Some are still in operation, including the Yinsong pavilion finished in 1934; it is of classic Japanese wooden design, with two storeys and covered with black roof tiles. It has a fish pond, stone stairs and a stone lantern.

The most prestigious was the Kazan Hotel, built in 1921, covering an area of 2,500 square metres and surrounded by an expanse of lush green. Now the Beitou Museum, it is one of the largest free-standing all-wood buildings of the Japanese era.

In the last years of World War II, it housed a kamikaze air squadron. During their final night on earth, pilots were provided with the best sake and the most beautiful women. Early the next morning, they flew in single-seater Zero fighters to attack US cruisers and aircraft carriers in the South China Sea. Those who wish to recreate the scene can have a meal in the restaurant on the second floor. Sitting



on the tatami, they enjoy Japanese cuisine and Taiwan tea and imagine what went through the hearts and minds of the pilots.

The Japanese military also built in Beitou a hospital for soldiers wounded during the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905). After 1945, it became a psychiatric hospital for the Chinese army.

The wooden villa that is now the Taiwan Folk Arts Museum was a club for Japanese officers.

The villa is well preserved, with a Japanese-style garden boasting a stream, an artificial hill and a waterfall.

Another popular site is the Puji Temple, which was built in 1905 by members of a Japanese Buddhism sect, in honour of Avalokiteshava, Goddess of Mercy and guardian spirit of hot springs. The money was donated by Japanese railway employees and the building made of high-quality juniper.



Taipei Public Library Beitou Branch

Special delivery on a scooter

During the Japanese era, prostitution was an important attraction of Beitou. This continued after 1945, especially after the establishment of two US military bases after 1954 and the start of the Vietnam War; thousands of American servicemen went to Taiwan for rest and recreation.

Between 1965 and 1970, about 200,000 GI's

arrived on leave from Vietnam. The money they spent in the coffee shops, bars and houses of pleasure was a vital fillip for an economy that was still poor. After the end of the Vietnam War, they were replaced by Japanese sex tourists.

The ladies of the night were known by a euphemism - 'xianshi zhuansong' (special delivery); after a hotel placed an order, they were brought on a scooter.

Beitou was also a discreet venue for young Taiwan couples who had to hide their liaisons from their parents; they could rent rooms by the hour.

In 1979, the government ordered the end of prostitution in Beitou. One trigger was a cover story in Time magazine that showed a G.I. in a bath with a Taiwan lady on each side giving him a massage. Government leaders were embarrassed by this image which told the American public something that was better left unsaid.

"The sex business moved to hotels in Zhongshan Bei and Changchun Roads in downtown Taipei," said Lin Hsiu-liang, a taxi driver. "It is less visible there. This made Beitou a cleaner place. Many families go there now."

40 years a prisoner

One of the most famous residents of Beitou was Zhang Xue-liang, the "Young Marshall" who kidnapped President Chiang Kai-shek in December 1936 to force him to unite with the Communists against the Japanese invasion. Chiang later arrested him and held him in detention, first in the mainland and from 1949 in Taiwan.

He and his wife were held under house arrest for more than 40 years, many of them in a large house and garden in Beitou. "It had to be large, to accommodate the security detail of 32 assigned to guard him," said Henry Tsang. "President Chiang was afraid that he would be assassinated or escape and that he would be held responsible."

In 1993, Zhang and his wife emigrated to Honolulu and died there in October 2011. His period of captivity was the longest of any political prisoner in the world.



Range of styles

Today the town offers a range of styles. There is the Yitsun Hotel built in 1901, named in honour of Dr Sun Yat-sen, who once visited and praised the quality of its hot springs. Most of the guestrooms are decorated with tatami mats; outside is a garden of bonsai trees and an ornate goldfish pond.

There are two sunken pools, one for men and one for women, with views through large windows to the garden foliage. The water is very hot, up to 60 degrees Celsius.

You can relax quietly in the boiling water. Or, if you wish, you can converse with the other bathers. There is a saying in Japanese: 'In nudity, there is honesty.' This means that, rich man or pauper, baron or beggar, we look the same when we're naked and can talk more easily without the pin-striped suit or uniform

that separate us in the world outside the bath.

The town offers spa hotels old-fashioned and modern, with massage, karaoke, televisions and many kinds of cuisine.

"Since Beitou is in the city of Taipei, it is very convenient for those of us who live in the capital," said Lai Ming-hsiung, a civil servant. "Often my wife and I rent a room for three hours on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon and enjoy a bath and a meal. It is not expensive."

The town is built in a valley and along the roads that lead up to the mountains above. The roads are narrow and twisting, with rich tropical foliage and a sulphurous mist that hangs over the trees.

It is a good place to forget the troublesome squabbles of the office and angry calls of the bank manager who wants his loan repaid. You can imagine that you are floating in a Chinese water colour painting. ■



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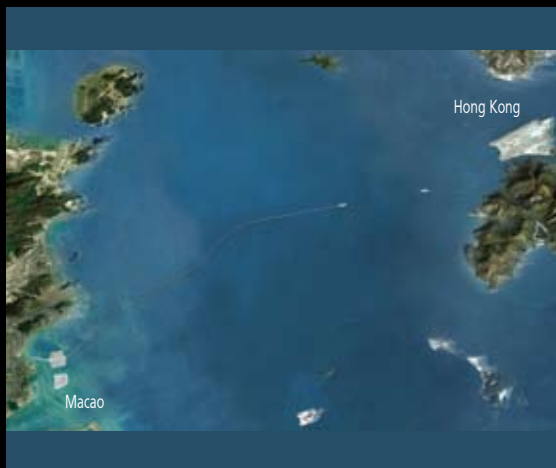
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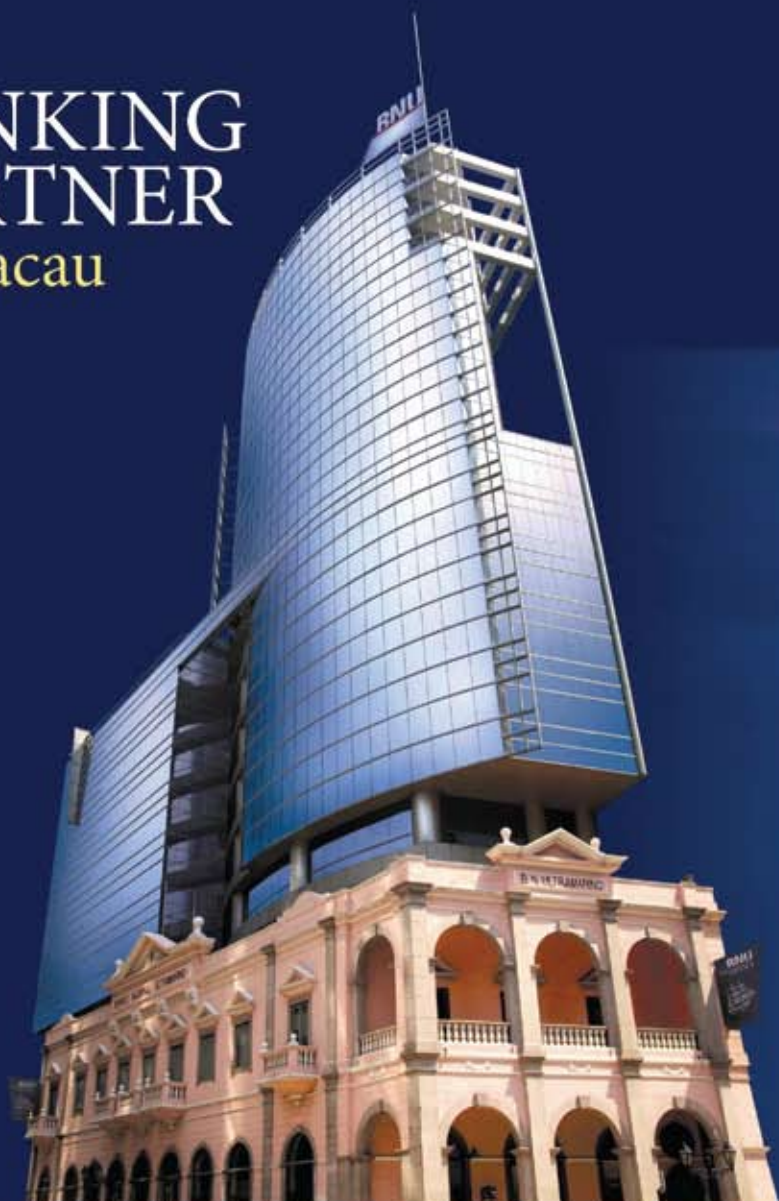
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