

Macao 澳門



Hato: rising after the storm

Legislative Assembly welcomes new faces

Cricket is back in Macao





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ON THE COVER Local firefighters alongside the People's Liberation Army clean up Macao's streets after the passage of typhoon Hato in late August

PHOTO António Sanmarful

POLITICS

- 04 New faces in Macao's Legislative Assembly**
Changes are seen in the sixth legislative assembly with newcomers
- 10 Macao aims to be a leading regional smart city**
Alibaba Cloud Computing will work with the Macao government to transform the territory into a smart city

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

- 18 Super Typhoon Hato: Winds of change**
After Hato ripped through Macao, the city has irrevocably changed. The wave of solidarity found among its citizens will be unforgettable
- 36 Leading the charge**
Lei Pui Lam, a teacher who devoted his life to improving education in Macao
- 40 A positive evolution**
Exclusive interview with Jorge Rangel, president of the International Institute of Macau, on his plans for the non-governmental organisation

PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

- 46 The future of Portugal-China links**
In the past years, China has become one of Portugal's key partners and its main source of foreign direct investment

CHINA

- 52 Weakening the dominance of king coal**
China's ambitious plans for renewable energy and how it is trying to move away from coal-fired power plants

CULTURE

- 60 Denis Murrell: 28 years of art adventures in Macao**
Abstract artist Denis Murrell has created hundreds of paintings over nearly 30 years living in Macao
- 66 Passion for cinema**
The opening of Cinematheque – Passion in Macao has brought alternative cinema to the city



40 Jorge Rangel, president of the International Institute of Macau looks to the future with optimism and believes that Macao will continue to grow and prosper



10 The government wants to transform Macao into a smart city, applying cloud computing technology and artificial intelligence

- 72 The Palace Museum comes to Hong Kong**
Beijing celebrates the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China by sharing priceless treasures from the Palace Museum

HISTORY

- 78 Tea or cha?**
Macao is where the story of tea began for the Western world. From the 16th century Portuguese priests to Catherine of Braganza, Queen of England in the 17th century

SPORTS

- 84 Getting cricket back in the game**
Formed nearly a decade ago, the Macau Cricket Association is back, with a new plan to put cricket back on the city's sport map

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A WAVE OF SOLIDARITY

A wave of solidarity swept across Macao in the wake of super typhoon Hato, drawing together the people, private sector, government institutions, and demonstrating the territory's capacity to overcome disaster and face the future with determination.

In this issue, we look at the impact of the worst storm to hit Macao in five decades, the measures taken by the government to mitigate the damage caused, and plans to improve response measures in the future.

Macao magazine also covers the Legislative Assembly's recent elections and the new lawmakers that have been appointed for the next four years.

With an eye to the future, the Macao government recently signed an agreement with Chinese technology group Alibaba to transform the territory into a "smart city" in the next four years, details of which can be found in this issue.

An article on neighbouring Guangdong province's efforts to reduce coal dependence explores how adopting renewable energy will play a key role in improving air quality there, and in the region as a whole.

In an exclusive interview, Jorge Rangel, president of the International Institute of Macau, shared his belief that the territory will continue to thrive, becoming an integral part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area initiative.

In addition to its role in Chinese initiatives, Macao continues to serve as a critical platform between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries. The creation of a direct link between Beijing and Lisbon promises to draw China and Portugal even closer, a longstanding relationship we revisit in this issue.

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New faces in Macao's Legislative Assembly

The sixth legislative assembly will see changes with newly elected candidates, and the departure of two previous candidates

TEXT **CHRISTIAN RITTER**

PHOTOS **ERIC TAM**

ILLUSTRATION **FERNANDO CHAN**

A record number of almost 200,000 residents turned out to vote in the direct 2017 legislative elections.

Candidates this year ranged from a 20-year-old college student to a 79-year-old veteran lawmaker, reflecting a broad interest in political engagement.

Sulu Sou Ka Hou, 26, won his second bid, becoming Macao's youngest lawmaker ever. Sou, who heads the New Macau Progressives (ANPM) group, was the second-ranked candidate of veteran legislator Au Kam San's group in his previous bid four years ago.

Agnes Lam Lok Fong, 45, won election this year after two unsuccessful bids for the legislature. Lam, who heads the Civic Watch electoral group, is assistant dean of the University of Macau's (UM) Faculty of Social Sciences.

Leong Sun Iok, 39, joins the legislature as the second-ranked candidate of the electoral vehicle of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions' Union for Development (UPD). Leong is vice-president of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions.

Leong Veng Chai, a retired public servant, and the second-ranked candidate of New Hope (NE) failed in his re-election bid, as did Melinda Chan Mei Yi, wife of businessman and former

lawmaker David Chow Kam Fai, and the first-ranked candidate of the Alliance for Change (MUDAR).

Two dozen groups fielded a total of 186 candidates for the 14 directly elected seats available for grabs. The Macau-Guangdong Union (UMG), headed by businessmen Mak Soi Kun and Zheng Anting, garnered the most votes of any group. According to the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Committee (CAEAL), UMG drew 17,207 votes, accounting for nearly 10 per cent of the vote. The group is the electoral vehicle of the Macau Jiangmen Communal Society, benefitting from the thousands of Macao residents who emigrated from Jiangmen in Guangdong.

Ella Lei Cheng I, who heads the Union for Development (UPD), won in her first direct election run after serving as an indirectly-elected lawmaker for the labour sector in the outgoing legislature.

José Pereira Coutinho, the first-ranked candidate of NE, was re-elected to his fourth term in the legislature. Coutinho heads the Macau Civil Servants Association (ATFPM). Angela Leong On Kei, head of New Macau Development Union (NUDM), also won re-election to her fourth term. Leong is managing director and CEO of SJM Holdings Ltd, and the fourth wife of retired casino tycoon Stanley Ho.

Veteran lawmakers Au Kam San, head of the New Democratic Macau Association (ANMD) and Ng Kuok Cheong, heads of the Democratic Prosperous New Macau Association (APMD), both held onto their seats.

Ho Ion Sang, who heads the Progress Promotion Union (UPP), was re-elected. The group is a joint venture between the General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau (Kai Fong) and Women's General Association of Macau (Fu Luen). Four years ago, Ho ran alongside Wong Kit Cheng. The two split into two separate lists this year, with Wong, a nurse by profession, winning re-election as head of the Alliance for a Happy Home.

Si Ka Lon, head of Macau United Citizens' Association (ACUM), and Becky Song Pek Kei, head of the Macau Citizens' Development Association (ACDM), won re-election on different tickets from their previous bids. Si, Song, and businessman-cum-Fujianese community leader Chan Meng Kam ran on the same list four years ago. Despite garnering the highest number of votes in the previous direct election, Chan did not stand for re-election this year.

PROFESSIONAL SECTOR BREAKS TRADITION

In addition to the 14 seats directly elected by residents, association representatives indirectly elect 12 seats in Macao's 33-seat legislature. Those seats are divided up among five sectors: social services and education (1), labour (2), culture and sports (2), professional (3), and commerce and finance (4).

Six electoral groups ran a total of 15 candidates in the five sectors, 3 more candidates than seats, breaking from the long-standing tradition of candidates running unopposed. Despite being the only sector with two competing electoral groups, the professional sector re-elected Chui Sai Cheong, Vong Hin Fai, and Chan Iek Lap.

Chui and Vong ran as the first- and second-ranked candidates, respectively, of the Candidature Committee of the Macau Professional Interests Union (OMCY). Chui is the elder brother of the Chief Executive, while Vong is a lawyer by profession. Chan, a paediatric doctor, was the first-ranked candidate of the Macau Medical Interests Union (UIMM). OMCY and UIMM fielded three candidates each.

A record number of almost 200,000 residents turned out to vote in the direct 2017 legislative elections on the 17th September

Chui and Chan are sitting lawmakers in the indirect election's professional sector. Vong was appointed by the Chief Executive in the previous legislature; he will replace lawyer Leonel Alves, who is retiring from the legislature.

In the social services and education sector, sitting lawmaker Chan Hong, vice-principal of Hou Kong Middle School and vice-chairwoman of Fu Luen, was the sole candidate fielded by the Association for Promotion of Social Services and Education (APSSE).

The labour sector elected two newcomers, Lam Long Wai and Lei Chan U. Lam, vice principal of Workers' Children High School, and Lei, who heads the Macau Federation of Trade Unions' Policy Research and Information Division, were the first- and second-ranked candidates of the Employees Associations Joint Candidature Committee (CCCAE) group. They will replace Lam Heong Sang, who is retiring from the legislature, and Ella Lei Cheng I, who won a seat in the direct election.

The culture and sports sector re-elected businessmen Vitor Cheung Lup Kwan and Andrew Chan Chak Mo under the banner of the Excellent Culture and Sports Union Association Group.

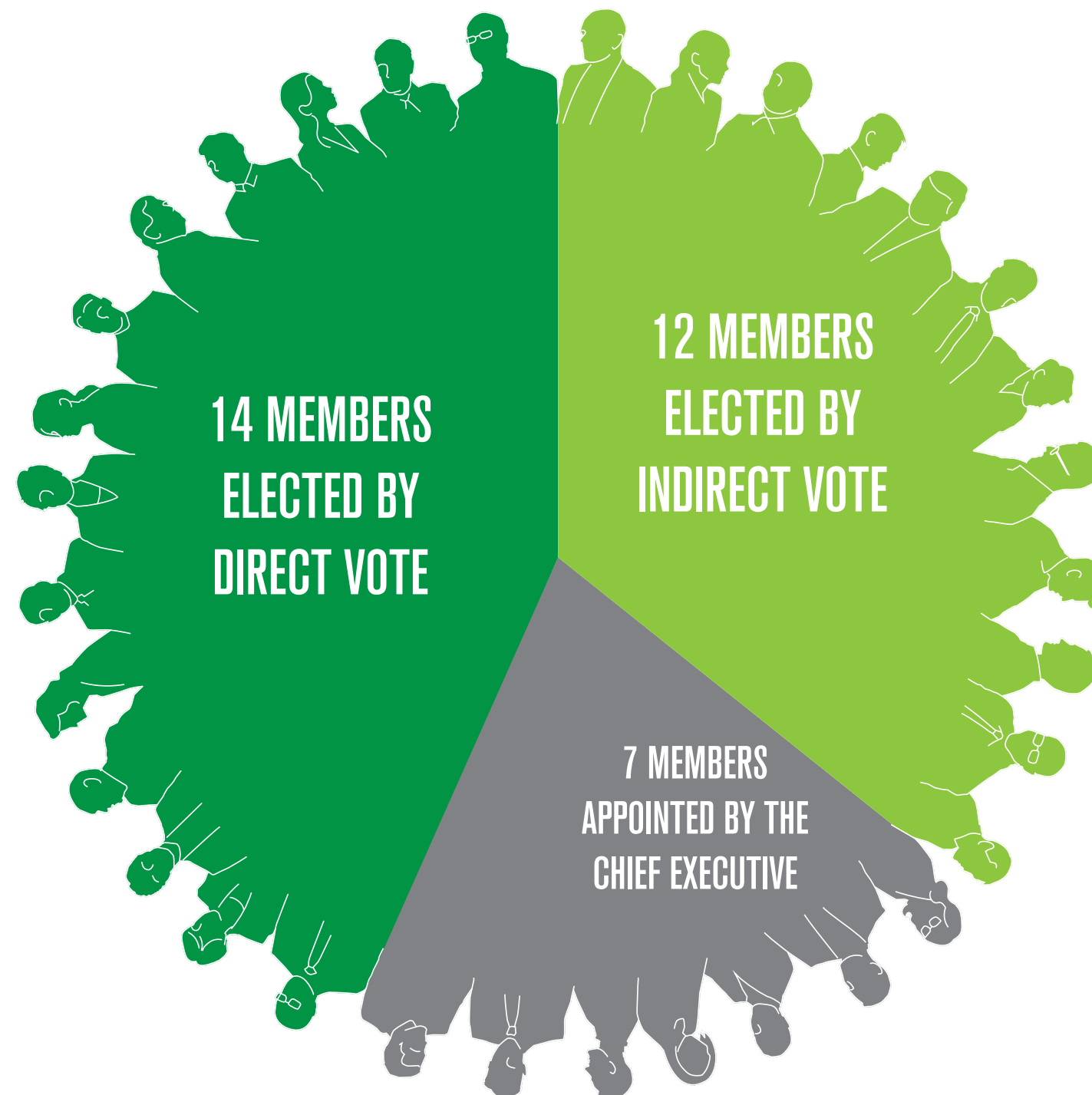
The Macau Business Interest Union (OMKC) fielded four candidates in the commerce and finance sector: newcomer Ip Sio Kai, and sitting lawmakers José Chui Sai Peng, Kou Hoi In, and Ho Iat Seng.

Ho, a businessman and president of the outgoing legislature, is the only local member of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. Kou, a local deputy of the NPC, is the president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce (ACM). José Chui, cousin of Chief Executive Chui, is a civil engineer by profession. Ip serves as the deputy general manager of the local branch of Bank of China. ■



DIRECT ELECTION

Mak Soi Kun, 61 Re-elected Macau-Guangdong Union (UMG) 17,214 votes	Becky Song Pek Kei, 32 Re-elected Macau Citizens Development Association (ACDM) 10,103 votes
Ella Lei Cheng I, 35 Newcomer Union for Development (UPD) 16,696 votes	Ng Kuok Cheong, 59 Re-elected Democratic Prosperous New Macau Association (APMD) 10,080 votes
Si Ka Lon, 40 Re-elected Macau United Citizens' Association (ACUM) 14,879 votes	Agnes Lam Iok Fong, 45 Newcomer Macau Civic Power (ECM) 9,590 votes
José Maria Pereira Coutinho, 60 Re-elected New Hope (NE) 14,386 votes	Wong Kit Cheng, 35 Re-elected Alliance for a Happy Home 9,496 votes
Ho Ion Sang, 56 Re-elected Progress Promotion Union (UPP) 12,340 votes	Sulu Sou Ka Hou, 26 Newcomer New Macau Progressives (ANPM) 9,213 votes
Au Kam San, 60 Re-elected New Democratic Macau Association (ANMD) 11,381 votes	Zheng Anting, 43 Re-elected Macau-Guangdong Union (UMG) 8,607 votes
Angela Leong On Kei, 56 Re-elected New Macau Development Union (NUDM) 10,452 votes	Leong Sun Iok, 39 Newcomer Union for Development (UPD) 8,348 votes



INDIRECT ELECTION

Ho Iat Seng (Re-elected)

Kou Hoi In (Re-elected)

Jose Chui Sai Peng (Re-elected)

Ip Sio Kai (Newcomer)

Lam Lon Wai (Newcomer)

Lei Chan U (Newcomer)

Chui Sai Cheong (Re-elected)

Chan Iek Lap (Re-elected)

Vong Hin Fai (Re-elected)

Chan Hong (Re-elected)

Vitor Cheung Hup Kwan (Re-elected)

Chan Chak Mo (Re-elected)

2017 ELECTIONS IN NUMBERS

- A total of **174,872** voters – the highest number on record – cast their ballots in the direct legislative election with the valid number of votes standing at **172,628**.
- There were **1,300** invalid and **944** blank votes. The voter turnout was **57** per cent, up from **55** per cent in 2013. This is the third highest voter turnout since the establishment of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) in 1999.
- A total of **5,397** indirect-election voters cast their ballots, amounting to **88.5** per cent of the total number of registered indirect-election voters this time.
- The Macao Legislative Assembly is composed of **33** members: **14** directly elected, **12** indirectly elected, and **7** appointed by the Chief Executive.
- The new legislature, Macao's sixth since 1999, will begin work on **16 October**.



Macao aims to be a leading regional smart city

Alibaba Cloud and the government of Macao team up to transform the territory into a leading regional smart city

TEXT CHRISTIAN RITTER WITH ANNA O'CONNOR
PHOTOS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BUREAU AND XINHUA NEWS AGENCY
ILLUSTRATION FERNANDO CHAN



Macao's Chief Executive, Chui Sai On and Alibaba Group Executive Chairman, Jack Ma Yun (right and left)

The Macao government signed a deal with Alibaba Cloud, China's leading cloud computing service provider, to transform the Macao Special Administrative Region into a "smart city," applying cloud computing technology and artificial intelligence (AI) to improve infrastructure management and increase the efficiency of services, while also reducing costs and resource consumption.

E-commerce giant Alibaba Group, the parent company of Alibaba Cloud, launched its smart city programme in 2016. As the first city outside mainland China to partner with the

group, Macao aims to improve the day-to-day lives of citizens and create a more enjoyable vacation experience for the 30 million tourists who visit the city each year.

The annual budget set aside for the project to make Macao a "smart city" has been set at MOP200 million (US\$25 million) in 2017, MOP 200 million in 2018. MOP500 million (US\$62 million) will be spent this year on information technology (IT) to support the city's smart development.

O Lam, Director of the Chief Executive's Office, and Simon Hu Xiaoming, the senior vice-

-president of Alibaba Group and president of Alibaba Cloud, signed the Strategic Cooperation Framework Agreement to Build Smart City in August, kicking off a four-year partnership between the government of Macao and Alibaba Cloud. Macao Chief Executive Chui Sai On and Alibaba Group Executive Chairman Jack Ma Yun presided over the ceremony.

The four-year programme is divided into two phases, with the first phase focusing on initiating AI applications in the areas of transportation, medical services, tourism, and e-government, while also developing cloud computing and e-commerce professionals through training programmes and support for entrepreneurs. The government expects to produce results by mid-2018, as the relevant parties roll out projects using a range of big data services; a cloud computing centre in the city is scheduled for completion in 2019.

The second phase, from 2019 to 2021, will expand to cover the areas of environmental protection, customs clearance procedures, and economic forecasting models.

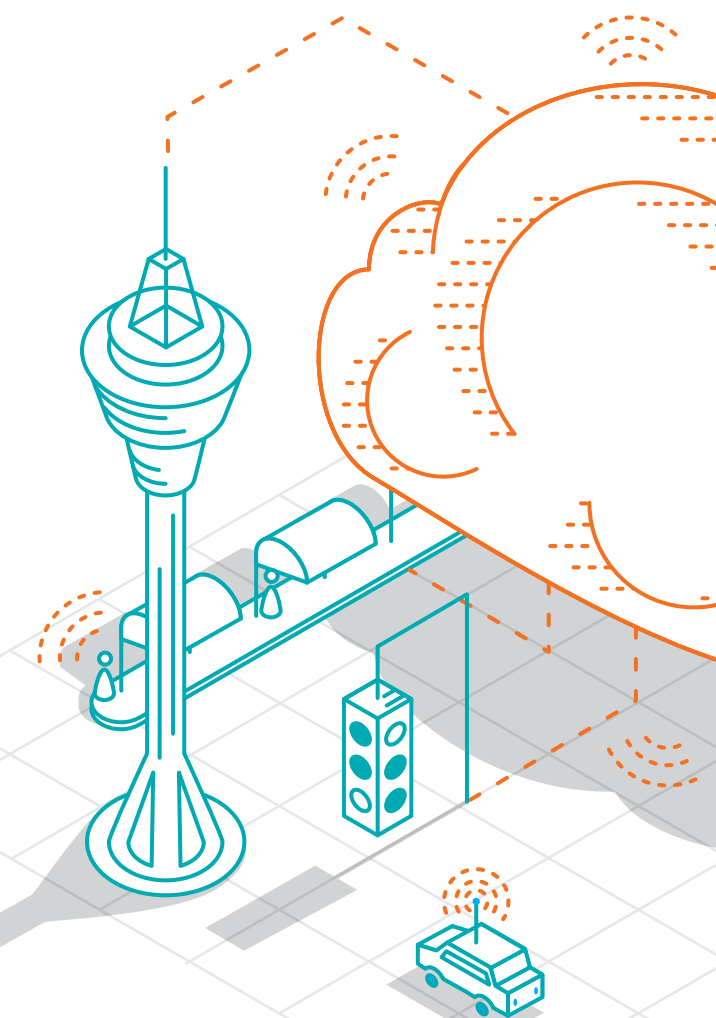
According to O Lam, the government's decision to pursue its goal of becoming a smart city with Alibaba Cloud was the result of "thorough study and research" into the experience of other cities. "By leveraging the power of [cloud computing and big data technologies] and connecting resources of different government departments, the project is expected to enhance the model of socio-economic operation in Macao," she explained in a press release, "expediting the city's transformation into a smart city."

Alibaba Cloud is a leader in the field of cloud computing with a strong record of information security, and O Lam noted, offers a platform that is highly compatible with different systems, avoiding the need for changes to existing local government systems.

EXPANDING INTO NEW TERRITORY

The partnership with Macao marks Alibaba's first smart city project outside mainland China. Ma, the founder and executive chairman of Alibaba Group, publicly floated the idea of turning Macao into a smart city during a June 2016 visit to the territory. Ma met with several high-ranking

The four-year programme is divided into two phases, with the first phase focusing on initiating AI applications in the areas of transport, medical services, tourism and e-government. It will also develop cloud computing and train e-commerce professionals



Alibaba Cloud's big data and deep learning technologies have been helping to build 'city brains' in China to help local governments effectively make management decisions,
said Hu Xiaoming

government officials and accepted the invitation to consult for the Economic Development Council and Science and Technology Council, both government-appointed advisory bodies.

Ma also spoke at a public lecture at the University of Macau, hosted by the Zhejiang Chamber of Commerce. A native of Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, Ma rose to prominence on the success of Alibaba.com, a China-based e-commerce platform enabling businesses of all sizes to connect with customers at home and

abroad. Under the holding company Alibaba Group, Ma expanded his global retail empire with additional e-commerce websites as well as investments in online payment platforms, video streaming, cloud computing, and a money-market fund.

Developing domestic e-commerce remains a central focus for Ma, who told the lecture audience that Macao's big opportunities "lie with its small and medium-sized enterprises" and leveraging its links to Portuguese-speaking countries. He commended the city's "openness and willingness to accept things coming from elsewhere," a valuable trait in an increasingly globalised economy. Ma encouraged the city to establish a new type of internet-based financial system rather than building a conventional system "on top of its existing foundation." He also expressed optimism about the city's financial development and its "future development as a smart city."

Four months later, in October 2016, Alibaba launched its smart city programme with Hangzhou City Brain, an artificial intelligence-enabled transportation management system

that has already increased traffic speed by as much as 11 per cent in Hangzhou's Xiaoshan district. The group has since implemented similar smart-transportation programmes in several other Chinese cities. The partnership with Macao expands on the optimisation of traffic management to include services as diverse as enhancing electronic medical records and healthcare decision-making resources for citizens, to customising tourism promotions and offering insight-driven guided tours to visitors. The city's governance itself will become more efficient, better able to manage its assets and serve the public.

"Alibaba Cloud's big data and deep learning technologies have been helping to build 'city brains' in China to help local governments effectively make management decisions," said Hu, in a press release. "Leveraging our advanced technology and experience in this customised project, we are confident that the success of Macao's digital transformation will serve as an example of a truly smart city in the region." ■



JACK MA YUN



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SUPER TYPHOON HATO: WINDS OF CHANGE

Super Typhoon Hato ripped through Macao, marring the face of the city but giving rise to a wave of solidarity among its citizens. It has left behind a city irrevocably changed

TEXT CATARINA MESQUITA
PHOTOS ANTÓNIO SANMARFUL, GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION BUREAU AND XINHUA NEWS AGENCY



In a recent interview, Jorge Rangel, president of the International Institute of Macao and a member of one of the oldest families in the territory, confessed that being born in Macao has instilled in him the capacity to survive anything. “This is a land of typhoons, and despite the storms that pass, the capacity to get up the next day and start again is always present,” he explained.

It is a challenge the city has recently had to face anew. Macao rose in a wave of solidarity after 23rd August 2017, the day that Typhoon Hato – the most violent storm to hit the territory in 53 years – left 10 dead, dozens injured, and a trail of destruction unimaginable in the sunny days leading up to it. The interview with Rangel took place in a garden that barely exists today, another victim of the strong winds Hato unleashed on the territory.

Severe gusts of up to 217.4 km/h on the morning of 23rd August saw Macao’s Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau hoist typhoon signal 10 for the first time in 18 years. During what many described as two hours of terror, Macao was isolated: maritime, air, and land borders were closed.



The typhoon left the city unrecognisable: felled trees, damaged scaffolding, broken fences, advertisements for commercial establishments torn off their hinges, shattered windows, and several locations left completely flooded, particularly the Inner Harbour and Barra areas.

Damage to infrastructure left some buildings without water for more than three days. The northwestern part of the city was hardest hit, as the Ilha Verde Water Treatment Plant took more than 48 hours to repair damage to its water service pumps. Forty thousand people also found themselves without electricity.

People queued at various locations around the city, filling buckets with water from fire hydrants or one of the 20 tanker trucks sent from Guangdong province to assist citizens. Shower facilities and changing rooms at four public swimming pools were opened to accommodate residents without running water.



? Before 1979, typhoons were given women's names; now they are named after both men and women

The scene was one of total devastation, from the peninsula to the islands of Taipa and Coloane, in the wake of what many reports called one of the strongest storms on record to hit the territory. The experiences of long-time residents supported the claim as many suffered losses well beyond those sustained in typhoons going back decades. Lee, an employee at a grocery store in Coloane village, saw the business where she has worked for more than 20 years destroyed by the force of the wind and rain.

"We keep a lot of stock at the door of the grocery store and on Tuesday [22nd August] we kept to our routine of leaving things on the street, despite knowing that the typhoon was on its way," she explained. "In recent times signals have been hoisted, but the winds don't really affect us. We didn't think this was going to be serious." Past experiences had never resulted

in vegetables, fruit, boxes, sacks, and bottles being dragged down the street. This time almost everything disappeared, and she confessed, she didn't even know where they ended up.

However unprepared, the population wasted no time in banding together with various communities from Chinese to Portuguese, Filipino to Indonesian, coming together to help each other salvage what they could.

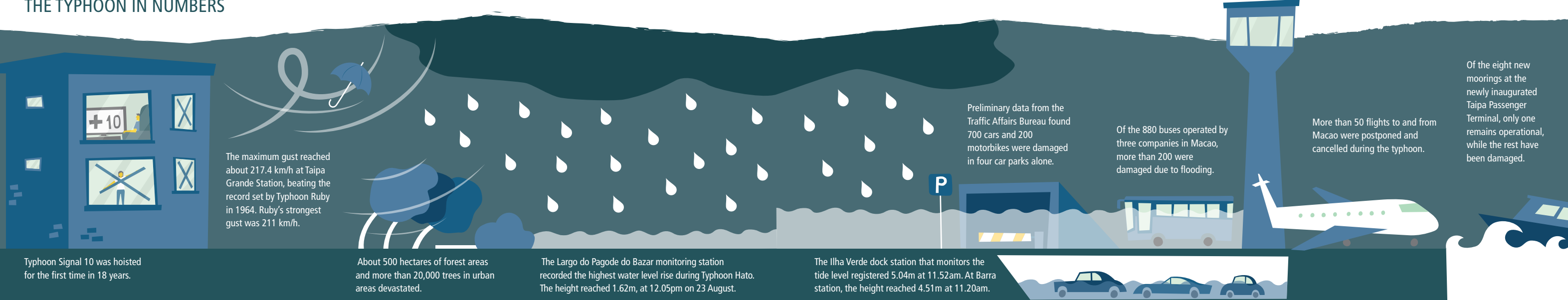
ALL HANDS ON DECK

The typhoon made international news and the published images of the response showed hundreds of citizens in the streets, sleeves rolled up and hard at work cleaning up the destruction surrounding them. But their efforts paled in comparison to the task at hand. For the first time since the handover in 1999, the People's Liberation Army Macao Garrison was deployed, 1,000 garrison soldiers ready to assist in the clean up. The deployment followed Chinese central government authorisation of a request made by the Macao government, in accordance with the Basic Law.

Streets littered with rubbish and debris, flooded parking lots strewn with cars, and commercial outlets destroyed, left without



THE TYPHOON IN NUMBERS



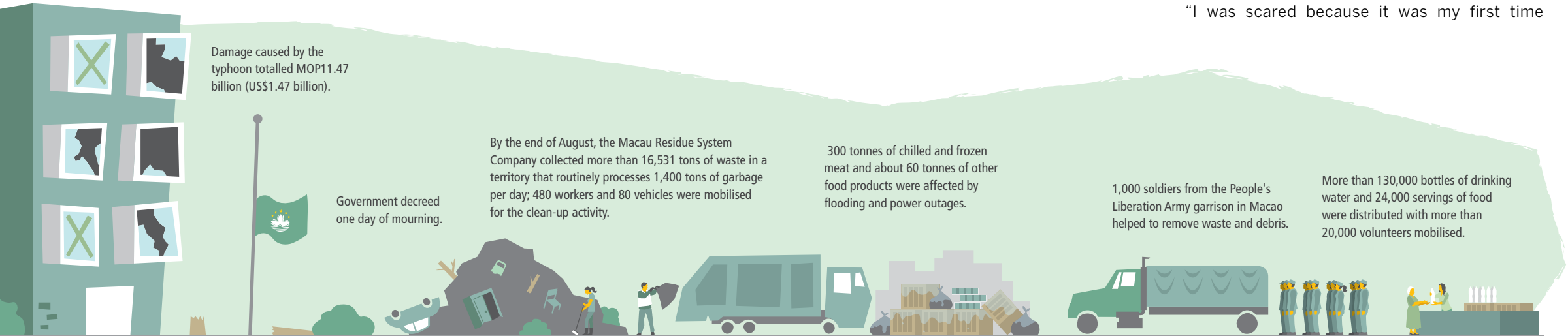


? The construction of a lower deck on Sai Van Bridge since 2004 allows for traffic between Macao and Taipa Island to continue up to typhoon signal 8, despite strong winds

electricity or water, were just some of the tasks at hand. With Tropical Storm Pakhar set to hit the city just four days after Hato, the clean up became a race against time.

According to official data, 20,000 volunteers were mobilised for support and clean-up action. By the time typhoon signal 8 was hoisted for Pakhar, their incredible efforts saw electricity, drinking water, and bottled water supplies nearly restored. Many volunteers, together with the Social Welfare Bureau, provided support to the elderly who found themselves isolated, without access to water or electricity, on the upper floors of some buildings.

For all of the loss suffered, numerous success stories emerged amid the devastation. Loreto Mijares Jr, a Filipino non-resident worker, saved an elderly couple being swept away by the rapid flooding and high winds in Barra. Speaking to the media, Loreto recounted the experience: "I was scared because it was my first time





facing a typhoon and I had no experience in saving drowning people in a mass flood.” Mijares immediately waded into the rushing water despite being a poor swimmer. “I couldn’t resist, I knew I had to save them anyhow.” Residents in nearby apartments threw down lifelines, which Mijares and a local man used to pull the couple to relative safety.

Eddy Ko, 28, was also caught in the rushing water with his wife, who cannot swim. The couple found safety when strangers opened their door to them despite the risks. “Lots of water came in, but they saved us,” Ko told the South China Morning Post (SCMP).

Alice Wu, a columnist for SCMP who was in Macao during and after Hato, summed it up best: “Seeing the devastation for myself

was important, but witnessing the droves of volunteers, many of them young people, out on the streets doing whatever they could to help is what will stay with me. These acts of kindness signal hope in unthinkable loss, and demonstrate the human capacity for goodness in heartbreak.”

BILLIONS IN FINANCIAL LOSSES

The Macao government estimates financial losses caused by the typhoon total MOP11.47 billion (US\$1.47 billion), with direct losses of MOP8.31 billion (US\$1.03 billion) and MOP3.16 (US\$393 million) billion in indirect losses, according to official data released by the Secretary for Economy and Finance on 6th September. Although estimating the losses took



two weeks, vast amounts of financial aid were immediately forthcoming from both the public and private sectors.

Macao Economic Services (DSE), through the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund, began paying out financial aid just days after Hato hit. As of 6th September, financial aid to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises provided through the scheme had reached MOP175 million (US\$21.7 million). Of the 10,869 requests submitted, 3,499 had been approved. The Macao government increased the size of the subsidy from MOP30,000 to MOP50,000 (US\$6,214) as the full extent of the difficulties faced by recipients became evident. The DSE is also offering an interest-free loan of up to MOP600,000 (US\$74,655); more than half

MANY VOLUNTEERS, TOGETHER WITH THE SOCIAL WELFARE BUREAU, PROVIDED SUPPORT TO THE ELDERLY WHO FOUND THEMSELVES ISOLATED, WITHOUT ACCESS TO WATER OR ELECTRICITY, ON THE UPPER FLOORS OF SOME BUILDINGS

of the applications received applied for both support schemes.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and individuals can apply for a new loan program launched by Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU), one of the two note issuing banks in the territory, with subsidised interest rates and a 30-month grace period. Companies that have already applied for the government loan programme are still eligible for BNU loans.

The Macao Foundation launched the "Project of Special Assistance to Damages Caused by the Passage of Typhoon Hato" to provide assistance to those carrying out "consolidation work" on damaged windows and doors. The foundation also provided families with MOP300,000 (US\$37,282) in condolences for each of the people killed in the storm, and offered to cover expenses for citizens who received treatment on 23–24 August in one of the city's three hospitals.

Water supply company Macao Water confirmed that customers affected by the lack of water and electricity will receive MOP1,000 (US\$124) compensation in invoices corresponding to the month of August. This follows a similar move by electricity company, CEM.

Many of the gaming concession companies, major institutions in the gaming hub, stepped up to offer immediate aid to those impacted by the typhoon. Sands China Ltd deployed subsidiary

Cotai Water Jet to transport bottled water from Hong Kong to Macao and sent thousands of staff out to clear debris in streets and schools. Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd halted work on its Morpheus hotel project, sending out all 2,000 construction workers and 500 Melco staff volunteers to distribute bottled water and clear debris. SJM Holdings Ltd opened washroom facilities at the dog racetrack for residents in Fai Chi Kei without water or electricity. The company also set up a staff volunteer team to assist the community, and offered a month of free medical care to those in need at a local healthcare centre.

Many citizens also pledged financial aid for long-term relief, recovery, and rebuilding efforts. Sands China announced a MOP65 million (US\$8.1 million) donation, with MOP30 million from the company and MOP35 million from the Adelson Family Foundation. Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) made a similar announcement, pledging a total of MOP60 million (US\$7.46 million), split evenly between the GEG Foundation and the Lui family who founded the company. Melco, MGM China and Wynn pledged MOP30 million (US\$3.75 million) to the typhoon relief effort.

SURVIVING HERITAGE

An assessment requested by Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Alexis Tam Chon Weng revealed most of the UNESCO heritage buildings, such as the Ruins of St. Paul, were in good condition after the typhoon. Those that sustained damages due to felled trees or utility outages received assistance from Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) staff.

The Macao Cultural Centre is among the sites overseen by the IC that are closed until further notice, its roof badly damaged by high winds. Collapsed trees damaged some of the boundary walls of Guia Fortress and the typhoon



**THE MACAO GOVERNMENT
ESTIMATES FINANCIAL
LOSSES CAUSED BY THE
TYPHOON AT MOP11.47
BILLION (US\$1.47 BILLION)**

? Over the past 50 years, Macao averaged 5.6 typhoons per year

signal post there fell over nearby houses. Four libraries in the territory – Mobile, Patane, Red Market, and Wong Ieng Kuan – are temporarily closed due to damage; Coloane Library re-opened 1st September, along with Mount Fortress Garden, the Ox Warehouse, and the Treasure of Sacred Art of St. Joseph’s Seminary. Other sites will re-open as the necessary inspections and maintenance take place.

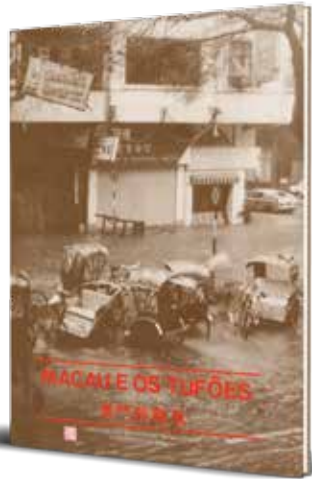
The Macao Government Tourist Office (MGTO) called for tours to Macao to be postponed until 2nd September. According to data provided by the tourism industry, more than 2,000 tourist groups from mainland China were scheduled to visit Macao during the suspension period, 25th August–1st September. Preliminary statistics found a 28 per cent decrease in the number of

visitors during the suspension compared to the same period last year.

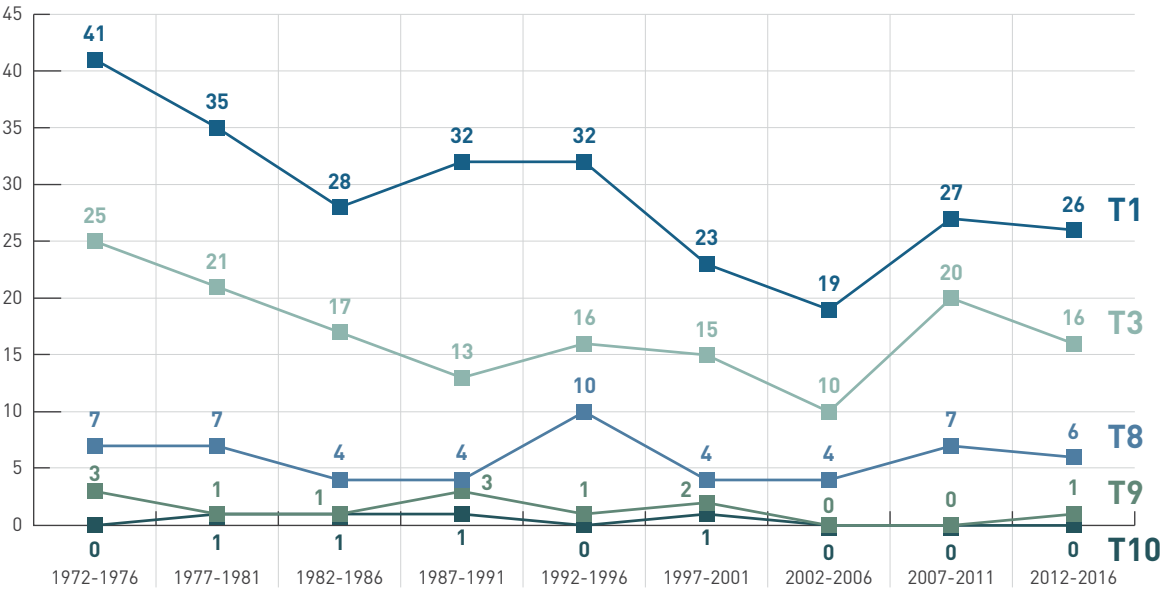
Damaged infrastructure and facilities, as well as the diversion of resources to the rebuilding effort, led MGTO to cancel the 29th Macao International Fireworks Display Contest. Previously scheduled for September and October, the annual event is one of the largest on Macao’s calendar.

WINDS OF CHANGE

In *Macao e os Tufões* (1985) by Joaquim Baião Simões, geographical engineer and former director of Macao’s Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, the conclusions read: “Let us not forget that ‘Typhoon’ is synonymous with violence and existence of destructive forces of great proportions.



THE NUMBER OF TYPHOON SIGNALS HOISTED BETWEEN 1972-2016



Source: Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau

The message is: “Prudence, Vigilance, and Awareness of the Situation.”

The devastating winds of Super Typhoon Hato brought this message to the forefront. Now people shudder every time there is news of a tropical storm forming in the Philippine Sea, moving in the direction of Macao.

The government has set up a commission to review existing mechanisms and improve them in the face of similar catastrophic situations. The Committee for the Review of the Mechanism for Responding to Major Disasters and its Follow-up and Improvement consists of Chief Executive Chui Sai On, the five policy secretaries, the commissioner-general of the Unitary Police Service, and the director-general of the Macao Customs Service.

In a press conference, Chui announced that the mechanism review committee had come up with a raft of measures aimed at enhancing the city’s ability to respond to major disasters, including strong typhoons.

Macao Water will upgrade the flood protection for its Ilha Verde Water Treatment Plant while the government plans to build more water storage tanks on high ground, increasing the city’s tap water reserves. The power supply will also be upgraded, with new natural gas-powered electricity generators decreasing reliance on outside sources and raised substations, with those in flood-prone areas given priority.

Public emergency shelter facilities will be provided on higher ground and residents in the Inner Harbour area, among the hardest hit by flooding, will be evacuated if storm surge is high

MEANING OF TROPICAL CYCLONE SIGNALS

Number of signals	Shape of symbols displayed		Meaning of signal
	During the day	At night	
1	T		Alert signal: the centre of a tropical cyclone is less than 800 kilometers from the MSAR and may later affect the MSAR.
3	L		The centre of a tropical cyclone follows a pattern of movement that winds to be experienced in MSAR may possibly range from 41 to 62 km/h and gusts about 110 km/h.
8NW			The center of a tropical cyclone is nearing and winds recorded in MSAR, from the quarter indicated, may possibly range from 63 to 117 km/h with gusts reaching about 180 km/h.
8SW			
8NE			
8SE			The center of the on-coming tropical cyclone shall strike at the immediate approaches of MSAR. The mean wind speed should exceed 118 km/h with gusts of great intensity.
9			
10			The center of a tropical cyclone is approaching MSAR and it is expected that MSAR might be severely affected.

Source: Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau



ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE For the victims of the typhoon

THE GOVERNMENT SET UP A COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE MECHANISM OF HOW TO RESPOND TO MAJOR DISASTERS AND A COMMISSION TO REVIEW EXISTING RESPONSE MECHANISMS AND HOW TO IMPROVE THEM IN THE FACE OF FUTURE CATASTROPHES



CHUI SAI ON Chief Executive of Macao SAR



LEONG VAI TAC Secretary for Economic and Finance

enough to overcome the floodgates along the waterfront.

The planned formation of a new entity, the Civil Protection and Contingency Coordination Bureau, was announced by Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak during the press conference. If approved by the legislature, the new bureau would enable increased efficiency in disaster response and oversee the Civil Protection Operations Centre, currently run by the Unitary Police Service. Wong also announced plans for a second civil protection operations centre building.

The winds that swept across Macao tore apart trees and buildings, but not its people, drawn together in greater solidarity as they pick up the pieces. Each day since that fateful August morning, Macao rises and moves through its routines, cautious but determined.

The typhoon has become a conversation starter among the community, one that knows there is still much to do. Each person, in one way or another, has a story to share about how the typhoon affected their life. A resident of Ocean Gardens residential area in Taipa commented: “My morning jog by the river is no longer practiced. The trees, and even the wall, are gone, and the most pleasant part of the city has disappeared.” The nodding heads of other residents confirmed this statement: the promenade is unrecognisable, and is just one example of many.

Typhoon season is not over yet. A look around at buildings show the windows still intact marked with tape in the shape of an X, an effort to avoid possible shattering should another powerful typhoon strike.

Speaking before the storm, Jorge Rangel described Macao as a city “fortunate to be blessed by Catholic saints and Chinese gods.” But not relying in divine forces, Macao became a more cautious city. ●



THE UNFORGETTABLE TYPHOON

In the early hours of 22nd September to 23rd September 1874, a strong typhoon ravaged the port of Macao.

In his work *Tufões que Assolaram Macau* (1957) geographical engineer Agostinho Pereira Natário described it as “the most violent typhoon in memory, causing thousands of deaths and losses worth one million patacas. The settlements of Taipa and Coloane had almost disappeared.”

Contemporary accounts from local sources described it as “the most devastating [typhoon] of all time,” resulting in at least 4,000 deaths, 2,000 vessels lost, several fires, and widespread destruction. A great number of maritime villages never recovered and many public buildings suffered significant damage. The Guia Lighthouse, only a decade old at the time, was so badly damaged it remained out of service until 1910.





中國-葡語國家經貿
 合作及人才信息網
 ECONOMIC & TRADE CO-OPERATION
 AND HUMAN RESOURCES PORTAL
 BETWEEN CHINA AND
 PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

葡語國家食品資料庫
 PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES
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 澳門特別行政區政府經濟財政司
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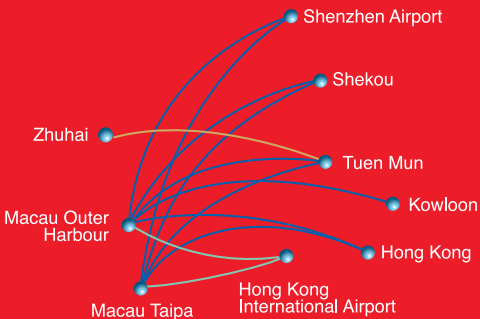


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Leading the charge

Teacher devotes life to improving education in Macao

TEXT MARK O'NEILL
PHOTOS ERIC TAM

When Lei Pui Lam went to school, his parents had to scrimp and save to pay fees for him and his three brothers and sisters. When he graduated from secondary school, Macao had no universities, and with the Cultural Revolution shuttering schools in the mainland and no money to go overseas, Lei went straight into teaching. Today, children in Macao enjoy 15 years of free education, from nursery to secondary school. "If a young person now wants to enter university, he or she can," says Lei. "They have several universities in the city, and the option to choose one in the mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan or overseas."

Lei, 69, has devoted his life to improving education in Macao. He currently serves as deputy chairman of the Macao Chinese Educators Association (MCEA); he was director for 40 years. In January 2017, he received the Golden Lotus medal for his outstanding service to the city.

Founded in 1920, the MCEA is one of the oldest non-governmental organisations in Macao. They were inspired by the example of Cai Yuanpei, then chancellor of Beijing University and leader of the Chinese



Educators Association, to set up their own branch in the city. Teachers all over the country did the same, establishing local branches with the aim of popularising and modernising education.

"The Portuguese colonial government only provided schools for Portuguese and Macanese students. The only option for Chinese students were schools set up and managed by private organisations such as churches, civic associations, trade unions, and individuals," explains Lei. "Education should be the responsibility of the government. But it required heavy spending, so the government did not do it. Ordinary Chinese people were forced to bear the double burden of paying taxes and paying school fees."

The lack of government involvement has meant that, for nearly a century, more than 90 per cent of Macao's children have been educated in private schools, one of the highest rates in the world.

Catholic and Protestant missionary schools account for about half of the total, with the remaining schools established by trade unions, civic associations, and other entities. While they worked to keep their fees low and provide scholarships, covering the basic costs of running a school meant fees were still too high for some, leaving the children most in need with no access to education at all.

STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION

Lei was born in Macao in 1948, the eldest of four children. His father, who had not graduated from primary school, sold clothes in a department store; his mother was a full-time housewife who had completed two years at secondary school. Lei's father supported the whole family on his salary.

Determined that their children would have the education they did not, Lei's parents budgeted meticulously to pay the school fees, and Lei worked in his spare time to earn extra money. Their combined efforts paid off; all four children graduated from secondary school.

Lei attended a primary school established by the trade unions. For secondary school, he went to Haojiang, a pro-Beijing institution. His graduation in 1966 coincided with the rise of the Cultural Revolution, which closed all of the universities in China. Macao had no universities at the time, and Lei's family did not have the money needed to seek higher education elsewhere.

“Luckily, I had been chairman of the student association at Haojiang and the principal had enough confidence in me to hire me as a teacher. It was a big challenge,” says Lei. It was also the start of a lifetime dedicated to education.

Lei continued his own education by studying in the evening after work. He earned a Master’s degree at adult classes run by teachers from the Huanan Normal University of Guangzhou, and a Master in Law at classes run jointly by the University of Hong Kong and Jinan University of Guangzhou.

After 18 years at Haojiang, he left to take a position as a teacher at a night school. The change in his schedule allowed Lei to work at the MCEA and other associations during the day, and play a greater role in public life.

DECENTRALISATION POSES PROBLEMS

One side effect of the fractured school system in Macao is the absence of standardisation. Each school has added subjects reflecting their political and religious interests, and there is no common exam which all students take.

“No publisher has been willing to publish material for Macao schools alone,” says Lei. “The market is too small. So all of the schools use the Hong Kong curriculum as their base, with their own additions.”

Mission schools continue to play an important role in the education of young people in Macao. They account for about half the private schools. While the principals today are rarely priests, nuns or ministers, the way schools are run remains the same; the principal must be a believer. According to the Basic Law, the government cannot interfere in the running of the schools.

GOVERNMENT GETS INVOLVED

According to Lei, things began to change under Governor José Garcia Leandro (1974–1979). “Before he left, he realised that the government had done badly. He decided that it should give subsidies to the private schools, with the money only to be used on education. These first payments covered 5–10 per cent of the expenses.”

Over the next two decades, the government gradually increased its investment in, and management of, education. “We in the MCEA and other associations continually pushed for this, it did not all happen in one day. We made sure the government knew that education was their basic responsibility.”

Another issue was the low pay of teachers. In the 1980s, the average teacher earned less than

a street cleaner and a principal less than a textile worker. Very few people were willing to go into the profession, even those who had trained as teachers in universities abroad and come home. Many working teachers had no university degree or teaching diploma.

In 1985, Huanan Normal University of Guangzhou sent professors to Macao to provide a three-year course, which enabled teachers in the city to obtain a professional diploma.

The government further increased its investment in education in the 1990s, including subsidies for schools and higher pay for teachers and staff. It introduced seven years of free education in 1995, increasing to ten years in 1997. After the handover, the government extended free education to 15 years, including the pre-school years.

AN ISSUE OF SPACE

Despite this significant progress, Macao still faces challenges in regards to education. For Lei, the lack of space at the secondary and university levels is an important issue.

“Some schools have no blue skies because they are located in the interior of buildings and have no windows to the streets. They have no sports facilities, and have to make due by going to a park or booking space in a sports centre,” Lei explains. “Some university campuses have no place for students to live, so they must stay at home, depriving them of the experience of living with others, mixing with foreigners, and developing their social skills. This must change.”

For the University of Macau, the solution came in the form of a 1.09 square kilometre site on Hengqin, Zhuhai. The new campus there is 20 times larger than the previous one on Taipa, giving them enough room to house 10,000 students on site while still maintaining green space.

But the Hengqin campus is hardly a model for other schools facing the same issue. “There are plans for the rest of the land in Hengqin,” Lei points out. “There will be no similar sites, with a tunnel from Macao and good access.” Macao will have to find its own land to improve its schools and colleges.

One potential site is the canidrome, which is due to close at the end of 2018, freeing up a significant area of land. Another possibility is

We in the MCEA and other associations continually pushed for [the investment in, and management of education]. It did not all happen in one day, said Lei Pui Lam

to use some of the 350 hectares of land on five sites which Macao will reclaim from the sea. “This could take over 10 years, though, with all the relevant environmental studies and approval needed from the central government. It is better to allocate existing land,” Lei says.

WORK LIFE

Education isn’t Lei’s only interest. A look at his name card reveals he is a member, often in a high ranking position, of an astonishing 29 organisations, including the National People’s Congress.

“My record was eight meetings in a single day, from early morning to late at night. I like to meet many different kinds of people and talk about different topics. I can sing many kinds of songs, from popular ones to folk music and Hong Kong melodies.”

“I sleep six hours a night, from midnight, and I sleep very well. I don’t let worries and anxieties affect the quality of my sleep,” Lei explains. “It has been like that for decades.”

He has slowed the pace a little in recent years. He stepped down as chairman of the MCEA in 2013, taking the position of deputy chairman, and no longer teaches. “I spend more time at home and have travelled with my wife, in the mainland and Taiwan, less abroad. But my travel time is still limited.”

Recalling the Golden Lotus medal he received in January, he felt it was also for those who had worked with him. “One person can only do so much. He needs those people behind him.” ■

LEI PUI LAM Macao Chinese Educators Association's deputy chairman



A positive evolution

Jorge Rangel, president of the International Institute of Macau shares his vision and plans for the organisation; and his thoughts on Macao's future prospects

TEXT CATARINA MESQUITA
AND GONÇALO CÉSAR DE SÁ
PHOTOS ANTÓNIO SANMARFUL
AND COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTE OF MACAU



Jorge Alberto Hagedorn Rangel was born in Macao to one of the oldest Portuguese families, which have been established in the territory since the 1800s. The president of the International Institute of Macau and well-known academic places a great emphasis on keeping the historical legacy of Macao alive.

Having worked for the Portuguese administration in Macao for over 20 years, he knows and understands the city inside out. He believes that the resilience that has enabled Macao to “come far will certainly allow it to face the future with even more confidence and the will to move ahead.”

Macao Magazine: The International Institute of Macau (IIM) was founded in 1999. In which areas has IIM dedicated its efforts to in the past years?

Jorge Rangel: The International Institute of Macau is a non-governmental organisation set up to develop academic and cultural relations with institutions in other parts of the world, and promote the image of a new Macao. It operates as a research and publications centre concerned with the history and legacy of this territory, as well as its present and future as a special administrative region of China.

The evolution of Macao has been positive. The opening of the gaming operations system began a new era of prosperity, generating abundant revenues that could be well invested in education, health, culture, sports, social welfare, housing, and infrastructure, said Jorge Rangel

The results achieved by IIM are the most powerful incentives for us to carry on with renewed confidence and determination.

Our annual plans have included important seminars, conferences, meetings, exhibitions, training courses, academic exchanges, awards, and diversified research programmes. More than 50 agreements and protocols have been signed, broadening IIM's scope of intervention abroad and creating new partnerships for joint programmes. IIM is an active member of several international entities, and often represents Macao at international events.

We have also offered our cooperation to local authorities and associations, who may use our facilities and share resources, and we continue to excel in the area of publications, with hundreds of books produced in Portuguese, Chinese, and English. At the request of the Chief Executive, we organised exhibitions to commemorate the 10th and 15th anniversaries of the Macao SAR.

MM: Things have changed in Macao over the last 18 years. How do you view the city's evolution and how is IIM responding to the greater importance of China in Macao?

JR: The evolution of Macao has been positive. The opening of the gaming operations system began a new era of prosperity, generating abundant revenues that could be well invested in education, health, culture, sports, social welfare, housing, and infrastructure. With new institutions of higher education (some

of which were founded in the '80s and '90s) in full operation, opportunities for the younger generations have expanded significantly. The community's participation in civic affairs has been encouraged and we have witnessed the emergence of new pressure groups that are becoming increasingly demanding. A permanent dialogue with these groups is indispensable.

The upcoming 20th anniversary of the SAR will certainly stimulate many political assessments of the territory from all perspectives. IIM shall be ready to contribute with its own independent, objective, and frank evaluation.

The presence of national official entities in the SAR is understandable; Macao is part of China. The most senior leaders of China have visited Macao, and delivered messages of confidence and support. Not everything has been perfect and mistakes were made, but those can always be corrected and prevented in future.

IIM has maintained a good relationship with the SAR government and with the official representation of the Chinese central government. Three years ago, IIM was entrusted with the responsibility of organising an intensive training programme in Portugal for 24 cadres of the State Council and the Liaison Office in Macao. We have also cooperated with the Liaison Office in organising several of their visits to Portugal and we have worked with academic and research institutions, including the Academy of Social Sciences. We always express our opinions openly, and our conversations have been interesting and useful. A few years ago, I was personally asked to submit my own critical assessment of the local civil service, which was inserted in a book released by the Academy of Social Sciences.

MM: Where does the main financial support of IIM come from?

JR: The Macao Foundation is our main financial supporter, as is the case for the majority of local officially recognised institutions, including associations and other organisations of the SAR's very active and diversified civil society.

IIM occasionally requests sponsorships from other foundations and private or public entities for specific projects not covered by subsidies from the Macao Foundation.



IIM PUBLISHES HUNDREDS OF BOOKS

Produced in Portuguese, Chinese and English

We also have an extensive memberships and partners involved in joint projects carried out in different countries, in the form of seminars, conferences, exhibitions, and publications. And we benefit from the excellent volunteer work of many researchers and collaborators.

MM: The IIM is very active in Brazil. Why is Brazil important to the IIM and what benefits does it bring to Macao?

JR: Brazil is the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world and one of China's most relevant trading partners. Both countries will play a leading role in shaping the future multipolar world; this has been one of our main areas of research. We are working closely with the Brazilian Institute for Studies of China and Asia-Pacific and other Brazilian research and cultural centres in studying and debating issues related to this theme. Macao's role in this context, as an economic and cultural platform, is always included in these activities.

We have signed agreements with various prestigious institutions based in Brazil, where we can count on the cooperation of the Casas de Macao (Macao's recreation and cultural centres) in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. We have also

hosted several exhibitions in various Brazilian cities to promote the Macao SAR.

MM: The publication of the history of Macanese communities and Portuguese communities in Shanghai and Hong Kong was an extensive piece of work. With the growing importance of China, do you believe it is a good time to work on the history of the Chinese communities in Macao and in the Guangdong areas that have been linked to Macao for centuries?

JR: We have done extensive research on those communities, as well as the history of the Macanese communities in Rio de Janeiro. Our publications have been well received and are highly regarded in academic circles.

I agree with you that more will have to be done on the history of the Chinese communities in Macao and in neighbouring areas with long-standing links to Macao. With so many institutions of higher learning now based in Macao, I hope much more can be achieved. They have the resources and IIM is ready to cooperate. In recent years, we have concluded several research projects on Dr Sun Yat-Sen and Macao. Our publications on Dr Sun's connections with Macao are now available.

MM: What is the image of Macao that IIM brings to other countries?

JR: Both modernity and tradition. One of the favourite themes of our activities and projects abroad is Macao's cultural and architectural heritage. The past is always present, but we look ahead and explain what Macao is today and the plans and programmes for the future. In this regard, we point to Macao's position in the Belt and Road initiative and in the recently announced Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area project.

We stress Macao's important roles as an economic platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and as an international tourism centre, with modern facilities and 30 million visitors each year. We also highlight Macao's position in the Pearl River Delta, which is one of the fastest and most consistent growth areas in the world.

MM: During the Portuguese administration you were responsible for the training of the public servants, many that later took on important positions in the Macao SAR. How do you see the evolution of the services since their inception in 1999? Do you think that more should have been done by Portugal?

JR: [In 1992] as secretary for Public Administration, Education and Youth, I was very much involved in all matters related to Macao's transition, from training senior civil servants to the coordination of the handover ceremonies. Among all the tasks that we had to perform in the last decade of the Portuguese administration, the so-called "localization" of the civil service was probably one of the most difficult to conclude. Recognizing all the constraints and insufficiencies, I believe the degree of success was high. We brought in the best candidates available and trained many for positions of leadership in our public services; their contribution to the success of the SAR has been remarkable. I wish we could have also restructured the civil service, but the Sino-Portuguese Joint Liaison Group decided that it should be done later by the new administration. It is yet to be done in a comprehensive and more effective way.

The general public became much more demanding after the handover, and while some official entities have responded very well, others have not, revealing frailties that have to be



overcome and mistakes that must be corrected.

Regarding Portugal's role, it is my firm belief that everything was done to guarantee a smooth and stable transition, in permanent dialogue and cooperation with China and with the correct establishment of the SAR as a permanent concern. From education to infrastructure, a huge programme was consistently modified to provide the best conditions for the SAR to develop, opening a new chapter of Macao's history. It was extremely challenging and the commitment was enormous.

MM: How do you see the intention of the central government to integrate Macao in its initiatives, specifically in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao megalopolis? Are you concerned Macao will be absorbed and lose its characteristics?

JR: The gradual integrations of Macao and Hong Kong are long-term objectives in accordance with the Sino-Portuguese and Sino-British Joint Declarations, defining a transition period of 50 years. Macao was given a special mission as a permanent platform for cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and it is in this capacity that Macao is now also part of

the ambitious Belt and Road initiative. When the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area project was announced, those who study China's new developments were not surprised. Plans and programmes are being finalized for an effective integration. The wide pictures are drawn and firm steps are to be taken to achieve the goals of integration and development.

What status will Macao ultimately enjoy and whether it will lose its characteristics are open questions. The two SARs may have separate administrative structures yet to be approved, it will depend on the evolution and pace of the integration process. But I believe that it is in China's interest that the SAR retains its core characteristics as much as possible. Macao has been useful to China as a special region – I always like to underline the word "special" – and it has a different historical background, giving the territory its own cultural identity and way of life.

MM: Any plans for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of IIM?

JR: Yes, in our next general meeting a special committee will be set up to prepare a programme for the commemoration in 2019. Seminars,

I believe that it is in China's interest that the SAR retains its core characteristics as much as possible. Macao has been useful to China as a special region – I always like to underline the word "special" – and it has a different historical background, giving the territory its own cultural identity and way of life, said Jorge Rangel

exhibitions, and new publications will be included with a special emphasis attached to our work as a research institution that is already operating as a local think tank. We are also preparing new leaders for IIM to take over from the present ones.

Our anniversary coincides with the SAR's 20th anniversary. Both Chief Executives requested our collaboration for the commemoration of the territory's 10th and 15th anniversaries. IIM organised a huge exhibition held in Portugal, Brazil, Canada, and the US in 2009-2010, and a photo exhibit of the SAR in 2014-2015. We are ready to provide the same service in 2019-2020, with the addition of seminars, screening of documentaries, and other smaller exhibits in several cultural centres abroad.

MM: And how do you see Macao in the next 20 years?

JR: I regard the future with optimism. Macao can continue to grow and prosper while the integration into the wider region progresses. Its vital role as a bridge or a platform for cooperation has every reason to be retained and enhanced, its position as an international tourism centre is a valuable asset to be consolidated, and Macao can continue to be useful as an advanced learning and research centre. The territory has weathered natural and political storms for centuries. More may come, but the resilience that enabled Macao to come this far will certainly allow it to face the future with even more confidence and the will to move ahead. ■

The future of Portugal-China links

China has become one of Portugal's key partners and the main source of foreign direct investment

TEXT **PAULO G. FIGUEIREDO**
PHOTOS **XINHUA NEWS AGENCY**

A group of Chinese travellers was pleased, and slightly bewildered, upon arriving at Lisbon Airport in the early morning of 26th July. They stepped off their 13-hour flight to smiling members of the Portuguese government and airline executives standing at the end of a red carpet, eager to greet them

With Portugal's tourist boom, new flights at Lisbon Airport have become commonplace, but none has had such a reception, which included champagne and the "national sweet" (custard tarts) for the tired newcomers. No other direct connection between two countries has sparked so much interest from the Portuguese government. Over the last few years, China has become one of the country's key partners and the main source of foreign direct investment. Another step in

strengthening a relationship that holds so much promise in terms of future developments clearly merits a little celebration.

The launch of the thrice-weekly Hangzhou-Beijing-Lisbon flight operated by Beijing Capital Airlines, a subsidiary of HNA Group, is expected to further boost economic ties between the two countries. It also holds major political significance. The high-level involvement in the project is only paralleled by the US\$3.5 billion acquisition of 21.35 per cent of EDP-Energias de Portugal, Portugal's national energy company, by China Three Gorges (CTG) in 2011. That privatisation agreement was signed at the highest level, with the then deputy prime-minister and minister of finance.

HNA Group also indirectly holds a stake in TAP Portugal, the Portuguese flag-carrier airline

recently privatised in a bid won by the Atlantic Gateway consortium, via a bond buy from Azul Brazilian Airlines in 2016; David Neeleman, the chairman of Azul Airlines and founder of JetBlue, also heads Atlantic Gateway with Portuguese partner Humberto Pedrosa.

Prior to the greeting ceremony, the Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa attended a presentation of the project with Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. According to Costa, who visited China in October 2016, the new air link will develop the relationship between Lisbon and Beijing while also assisting in the establishment of Portugal as a "major intercontinental hub" for European routes to and from South America and Africa.

The Portuguese government has shown great interest in the Belt and Road (B&R) initiative. In the greeting ceremony for the first Chinese travellers, Infrastructure Minister Pedro Marques called the Capital Airlines flights "the new air silk route for the 21st century", further affirming his country's commitment to the initiative. "Relations between the two countries have become very strong and intense over the last few years," Marques said, noting the positive impact of the Portuguese prime minister's successful visit to China.

EASE OF TRAVEL

The number of Chinese tourists visiting Portugal has increased considerably in recent years. In 2016, there were 200,000 Chinese visitors to Portugal – without the benefit of a direct flight to the country.

According to Jorge Torres-Pereira, the outgoing Portuguese ambassador to Beijing, Portugal could reach the ambitious growth rate of one million Chinese tourists a year. More than 135 million Chinese travelled abroad in 2016, up 6 per cent from the previous year, and that number is expected to increase to 200 million by 2020. Portugal currently has nine visa centres in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Chengdu, Shenyang, Wuhan, Fuzhou, and Guangzhou. HNA-Caissa, one of China's leading tour operators, is owned by the same company behind the Beijing-Lisbon route, HNA Group. With the introduction of the Beijing-Lisbon flight, accessing Portugal will be more convenient than ever before.



CAI RUN Chinese ambassador to Portugal



JORGE TORRES-PEREIRA Portuguese ambassador to China



BEIJING CAPITAL AIRLINES Arrives in Lisbon for the first time

Early indications of the new direct flight are positive. According to Capital Airlines, the first four flights were nearly full. The airline also plans to open a Macao–Beijing flight, which will coincide with the connection to Lisbon, in order to serve the 15,000 Portuguese residing in the territory. For Torres-Pereira, the direct link is “important to maintain the dynamics of a bilateral relationship that is effectively expanding,” noting that Chinese investments in Portugal have gone from “tens of millions of euros to billions of euros.”

Chinese tourists are known in Europe as big spenders. According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) figures, Chinese tourists spent US\$261 billion abroad in 2016, 12 per cent more than the previous year. Studies conducted in Portugal show that Chinese tourists are spending the most in shopping; some of Lisbon’s main shopping centres have begun offering new services, including tours in Chinese, to attract their business.

Tourism and real estate have become hotspots for the Portuguese economy, and according to Reuters, the economy grew 2.8 per cent from 2016; a modest level for Asian parameters, but unseen in Portugal for over a decade. Tourism growth proved crucial for the country during the recession years of 2010 and 2011.

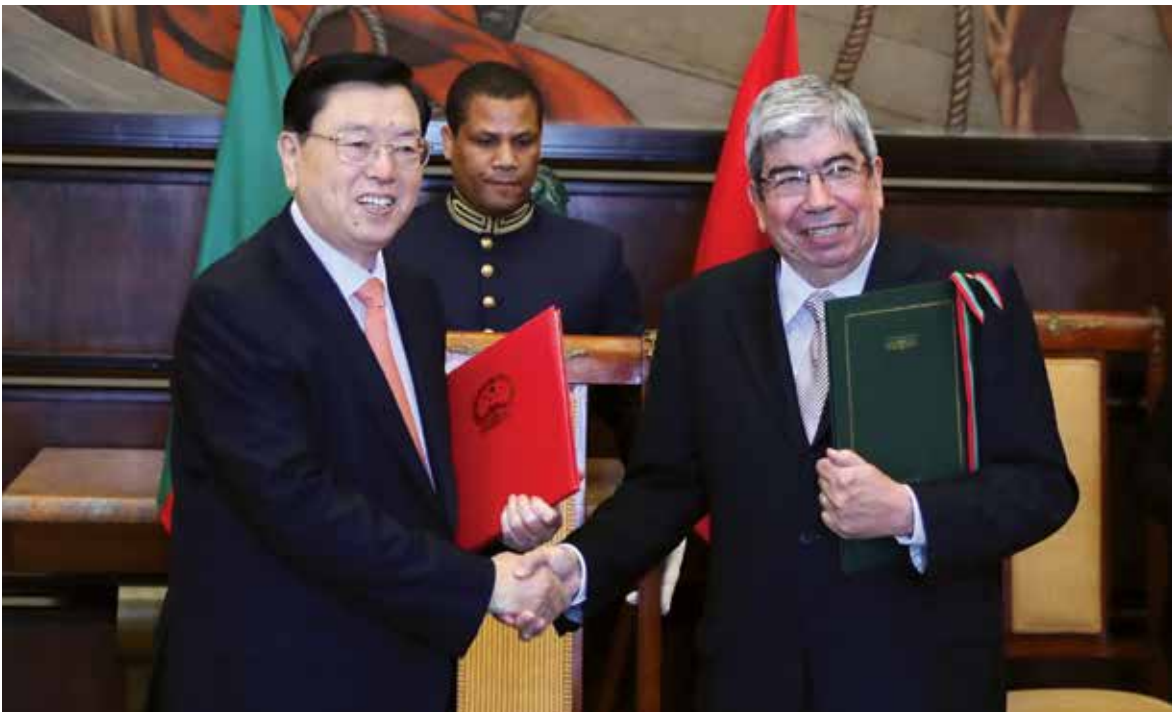
Small-scale Chinese investors have also

had a major role in the real estate market by participating in the Portuguese Golden Visa programme, launched in 2012. The latest Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) data shows that investment attracted by golden visas rose 14.8 per cent in the first seven months of the year, compared to the same period of 2016, to EUR656 million (US\$771 million). Total investment since 2012 amounted to EUR3.22 billion (US\$3.79 billion), the majority of which corresponds to the purchase of real estate. Of the total of visas granted, 4,849 involved the acquisition of real estate, 288 for capital transfers, and 8 for the creation of at least ten jobs. China was by far the country with most visas granted: 3,472 by June 2017, followed by Brazil (432), South Africa (201), Russia (179) and Lebanon (103).

BONDS BEHIND BELT AND ROAD

A recent study by Spain’s ESADE Business & Law School found that Portugal is currently the main destination of Chinese investment in Europe. A number of Chinese firms have acquired stakes in Portuguese companies, including the previously noted CTG acquisition. The State Grid Corporation of China acquired 25 per cent of REN-

CHINESE TOURISTS Torre de Belém, Lisbon



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress with Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, Portuguese Parliament president

-Redes Energéticas Nacionais, the operator of Portugal’s national power grids. Fosun became the largest shareholder of Millennium BCP, Portugal’s biggest private bank, when it upped its stake to 24 per cent in February 2017. Fosun already owns the country’s largest insurance company, Fidelidade, and the largest private healthcare provider, Luz Saúde. Each firm has a substantial presence in Portuguese-speaking countries, and trilateral cooperation has become a focus.

Transportation is another sector the Portuguese government believes it can rely on for future economic growth. Officials believe China can play a major role in boosting the sector, particularly within the B&R strategy.

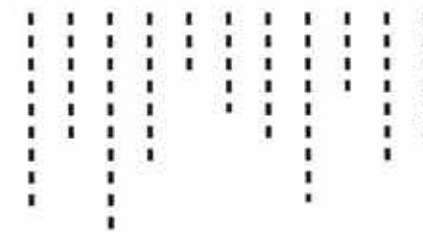
During his visit to China in 2016, Prime Minister Costa signalled his country’s willingness to participate in the initiative, noting that developing the Port of Sines as part of the Maritime Silk Road would make the most of his country’s strategic position to “deepen the connection between Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America.” The first Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation, signed on 11th July, makes reference to Portugal’s role in the B&R initiative. Chairman

Zhang, along with his Portuguese counterpart Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, signed the agreement during his visit to Lisbon, which states that, “within the framework of their responsibilities, both parties will support their governments in improving the documents and consolidating the legal basis for bilateral cooperation in all areas.” It also specifies that cooperation covers the B&R initiative “in order to create a better legal and political environment for enhancing mutual political trust, promoting economic and trade cooperation and exchanges between the two peoples.”

Speaking at a seminar in Lisbon at the Higher Institute of Economics and Management in late June, Chief Executive of Partex Oil and Gas António Costa Silva said that increasing the involvement of Portuguese ports in international maritime traffic networks offered important opportunities for the country. In addition to improved infrastructure, he noted the opportunity for “strategic port positioning, openness to new markets, development of information technologies, integration into the global logistics chain, consolidation of a multi-

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The cooperation between China and Portugal covers the Belt and Road initiative “in order to create a better legal and political environment for enhancing mutual political trust, promoting economic and trade cooperation and exchanges between the two peoples

-purpose Portuguese port centre that meets the requirements of the market, attracting investment to the ports.”

As China expands the geographical scope of B&R, financing will be key to developing ports like Sines into a more effective gateway for European markets. Opening up to foreign debt issuance through the so-called “Panda bonds”^{*} is a way for the Chinese government to internationalise the renminbi, while also providing critical financial resources to the countries involved in the B&R initiative.

Portugal recently confirmed it is preparing to issue debt on the Chinese financial market, becoming the first country in the eurozone to join the Panda bonds. The spokesman for the office of the Portuguese prime minister told Reuters: “In practical terms, the issue aims to diversify the sources of financing of Portugal, opening a new market for its debt, and support the internationalisation of the [renminbi].” In May, Portuguese Finance Minister Mário Centeno said that selling bonds in renminbi would allow Portugal to take advantage of rising demand for its debt at a time when its credit rating is expected to improve due to a better economic outlook.

Speaking to Reuters in July this year, Hong Kong-based Richard Mazzochi of the KWM law firm said that the issuance of Portuguese

Panda bonds would be easier if it were linked to a specific project. “Applications are easier to make where there is already an established connection and if an issuer would use the proceeds in connection with One Belt, One Road initiatives, that would be helpful,” he explained; Mazzochi, who specialises in banking and finance, has been involved in a number of Panda bond deals.

CONNECTIONS AT EVERY LEVEL

At a recent meeting in Lisbon, promoted with the support of Fosun-owned Fidelidade, between Chinese investors and Portuguese entrepreneurs, Secretary General of the Portuguese-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sérgio Martins Alves encouraged the government to make the most of China’s investment capacity. Channelling funds towards infrastructure projects, he explained, is essential to the development of the Portuguese economy. In addition to the Port of Sines, Martins Alves referenced the new Lisbon airport and high-speed railway as potential beneficiaries of Chinese investment.

Portugal is not among the 16 European countries currently linked to China via rail links, putting it at a significant disadvantage; linked countries can transport products to China in a fraction of the time it takes Portugal to ship goods by sea. Expanding the railway network would make Portugal more competitive and further strengthen its trade relationship with China.

According to Martins Alves, another key trend for the near future will be Chinese investment in startups and small- and medium-sized enterprises, as most of the large assets are no longer available. But investments by giants like CTG and Fosun attract attention, and may have boosted small investors’ confidence in the Portuguese market, which is part of the European Union market of 500 million people, the world’s largest trading bloc. ■

^{*}“Panda Bonds”: bonds issued in China and denominated in renminbi by a foreign bank or corporation. They are issued when a corporation wishes to raise capital from investors in China. According to Bloomberg Markets, by August 2017, such bond issuances amounted to US\$7 billion.

Weakening the dominance of king coal

Local authorities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area are seeking to rebalance the region's environmental and energy policies

TEXT NEIL FORD
PHOTOS ERIC TAM

GUANGZHOU



The Chinese government's increasingly ambitious plans to switch from coal-fired power plants to renewables will have a profound impact on power generation in southern China. Rapid economic and industrial growth has resulted in high levels of air pollution, as well as rapidly increasing carbon emissions. Yet Beijing has introduced ever tougher standards on emissions and air quality in an attempt to tackle both problems at once.

The National Energy Administration is introducing successively more ambitious targets on reducing the country's dependence on coal-fired plants. Most recently, in January, it announced a target of investing US\$360 billion in renewables over the period 2017-20, as well as

shelving plans for 85 new coal-fired plants, with the development of any new coal-fired capacity "strictly controlled."

Under the Airborne Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan 2013-2017, no new coal-fired power plants were to be approved in what is now known as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Beijing's aims and policies generally attract most attention but – as in the United States of America – local government often has just as much impact on environmental and energy policy. For instance, while Beijing wants national carbon emissions to peak by 2030 at the latest before then gradually falling, Shenzhen has set the far more ambitious goal of peak emissions by 2022.

COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT



There are still some concerning developments: most of the 37 coal mining firms listed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange recorded at least a doubling of profits for the first half of this year, while national coal production was 10 per cent higher in the first six months of this year in comparison with the same period last year. However, renewable energy production continues to grow faster than that for coal, even during the current coal recovery. Total Chinese solar and wind power production were a massive 35.1 per cent and 17.9 per cent higher respectively in the first half of 2017 than in the first six months of last year. By contrast, coal-fired output was just 7.1 per cent higher.

Some analysts had expected US President Donald Trump's policy on the issue of global warming and desire to pull out of the Paris agreement to open the way for Beijing to take the lead on the issue, taking the moral high ground. In the long run, it also makes economic sense as renewable energy production costs, particularly for solar and wind power, are falling quickly. In addition, air pollution brings a wide range of economic, as well as social and environmental costs.

China as a whole invests more than US\$100 billion a year in renewable energy projects, more than North America and the European Union put together. As a result, China – including the Greater Bay Area – is the most important location for the manufacture of solar and wind power components.



AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR BAY AREA

Against this backdrop, local authorities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area are seeking to rebalance the region's energy and environmental policies. The Pearl River Delta has long been one of the main engines of China's economic boom but the designation of the Bay Area as an official entity should allow much greater co-ordination of energy policy between Hong Kong, Macao, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and other cities in the region. An agreement on its creation was signed by representatives of Mainland China, Macao and Hong Kong on 1st July this year.



BEIJING



SHANGHAI

The Bay Area's energy and environmental strategy can play a big role in overall Chinese policy in this area because of the sheer size of its economy, the number of cities it contains and the fact that it is one of the most important manufacturing centres in the world. The region had GDP of RMB9.35 trillion (US\$1.38 trillion) in 2016, out of total mainland Chinese GDP of RMB74.41 trillion (US\$11.19 trillion). The Bay Area plan, which was drawn up by the China Centre for International Economic Exchanges (CCIEE), the Guangdong Provincial Development

and Reform Commission (GPDR), forecasts GDP of US\$4.62 trillion in the region in 2030.

The city of Guangzhou, with its 14 million inhabitants, has already signalled its intention to improve air quality. All petrol and diesel buses are to be replaced with vehicles powered exclusively by electricity by 2020. Electric vehicles are what is termed energy agnostic. They are not intrinsically either carbon neutral or negative: their contribution to tackling climate change depends on how the electricity they consume is produced.

However, with southern China increasingly switching from coal to renewables, the use of electric buses should make a big contribution to cutting carbon emissions. More immediately, the adoption of electric vehicles will improve air quality in Chinese cities. There are expected to be 30,000 electric buses in Guangzhou alone by the end of 2020. The municipal authorities in the city are currently developing a comprehensive network of 100,000 charging points that will supply the new buses and also attract more private electric cars on to the city's streets.

Guangzhou had lagged behind Beijing and Shanghai in terms of phasing out fossil fuel powered buses but its new aim of eliminating the use of all such vehicles is now more ambitious than its two rivals. According to official data,

Guangzhou reduced its PM2.5 level by 42 per cent between 2012 and 2016, in comparison with just a 22 per cent fall in Beijing. PM2.5 refers to pollutant particulates of less than 2.5 micrometres diameter in the air; because of their small size, they can enter the blood stream and cause a wide range of serious illnesses.

IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

Greenpeace East Asia and the Shanghai Qingyue Environmental Protection Centre published a report at the start of this year that predicted that Guangzhou would meet national PM2.5 standards by the end of 2017, two years ahead of Shanghai and ten years faster than Beijing. Comparisons between China's biggest cities are the result of a government policy introduced in 2014, when Beijing decided to publish data on urban pollution in order to encourage competition between cities on air quality.

In September 2015, the Guangdong Provincial Development and Reform Commission published its Implementation Plan for *Speeding up the Development of Guangdong Province's Clean Energy Industry*. The Plan forms the cornerstone of the province's move away from coal, although it includes greater use of nuclear power and gas fired

plants, as well as renewables. The Plan calculates that the province has 14 GW of commercially viable onshore and 11 GW of offshore wind power potential, in addition to some of the best solar energy resources in China. The GPDR is also keen to see much greater development of the area's biomass potential.

As elsewhere in China, local authorities are seeking to phase out outdated industrial capacity in order to reduce the amount of air pollution and carbon emissions generated per unit of GDP. Guangzhou's target is to reduce the level of carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 40 per cent between 2010 and 2020. According to the World Bank, Chinese energy intensity per unit of GDP fell by 70 per cent between 1980 and 2010. Put simply, its economy was 18 times bigger in 2010 than in 1980 but its energy consumption increased by only five times.

HONG KONG ON THE BRINK?

Given its economic wealth, Hong Kong has been slower than most other global cities to promote renewable energy, particularly because of the lack of available land. Renewables accounted for less than 1 per cent of total power production in Hong Kong in 2016, while greenhouse gas emissions

Comparison of environmental protection of China's biggest cities are the result of a government policy introduced in 2014. Then, Beijing decided to publish data on urban pollution in order to encourage competition between cities on the improvement of air quality



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

were 23 per cent higher in 2016 than in 2002.

There has been no substantial financial or regulatory support for renewables, so that residents cannot sell surplus electricity from their solar photovoltaic systems to the grid. The government has appeared reluctant to regulate in any way that could raise the territory's very low power prices; but it needs to put a sufficiently attractive investment regime in place to ensure that large scale wind power projects are developed.

The first signs of changing attitudes have begun to appear. The government's Electrical and Mechanical Services Department estimates that 17 per cent of the territory's electricity could be produced by solar power alone, through the installation of solar panels on buildings and other manmade structures. Another city state in a similar position to Hong Kong, Singapore, is on course to generate 5 per cent of its electricity from renewables by 2020 because of the uptake of solar panels.

Only a single wind turbine is connected to the grid in Hong Kong but given the scarcity of available land, offshore projects appear to offer the best opportunity for the territory to tap into wind energy. It will be interesting to see whether the rapid falls in the cost of providing solar and wind power result in a determined push for renewables in the territory.

ZHUHAI A CENTRE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

Further west, Zhuhai is establishing itself as a centre of renewable energy investment. A 120 MW

wind farm is currently being developed offshore Zhuhai by Southern Offshore Wind Power Joint Development Co. The 120 MW Guishan Offshore Wind Farm will comprise 343 MW turbines and three 6 MW turbines when it is completed. Several renewable energy test parks have been set up in and around Zhuhai, including an offshore park, where wave and tidal power devices are being tested. In addition, 30 per cent of all vehicles, including buses and taxis, bought by the local government of Zhuhai in the twelve months to June 2017, were electric.

A wide range of companies have set up renewable energy operations in Zhuhai, including US firm DuPont, which uses renewable materials in its fabrics, Zhuhai Singyes Green Building Technology Co and Zhuhai Singyes Renewable Energy Technology Co. Zhuhai Singyes, which is an offshoot of China Singyes, produces and markets residential solar PV systems, solar street lamps and solar thermal systems. China Singyes recorded a 75 per cent fall in profit for the first half of this year, to RMB81 million (US\$12.3 million), partly because of rising competition.

However, in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the company announced: "The group secured several sizeable solar projects in southern parts of China and we are positive on the outlook of the solar business in the second half...demand for solar in China remains strong. Our long term strategy - through our innovative research and development team - is to diversify the application of solar and to widen the solar applications in different areas, like rural applications and irrigation." ■



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Denis Murrell: 28 years of art adventures in Macao

Famous for his technique of combining acrylic paints with ink and tissue paper, abstract artist Denis Murrell has created hundreds of paintings over nearly 30 years in Macao

TEXT CATHY LAI

PHOTOS CHEONG KAM KA AND COURTESY OF DENIS MURRELL



Australian-born artist Denis Murrell discovered his unique mode of artistic expression here in Macao, where he's resided since 1989. Over the last three decades, Murrell has created about 400 paintings characterized by a mix of vibrant colours and a particular textural appearance achieved through a technique that has become his hallmark.

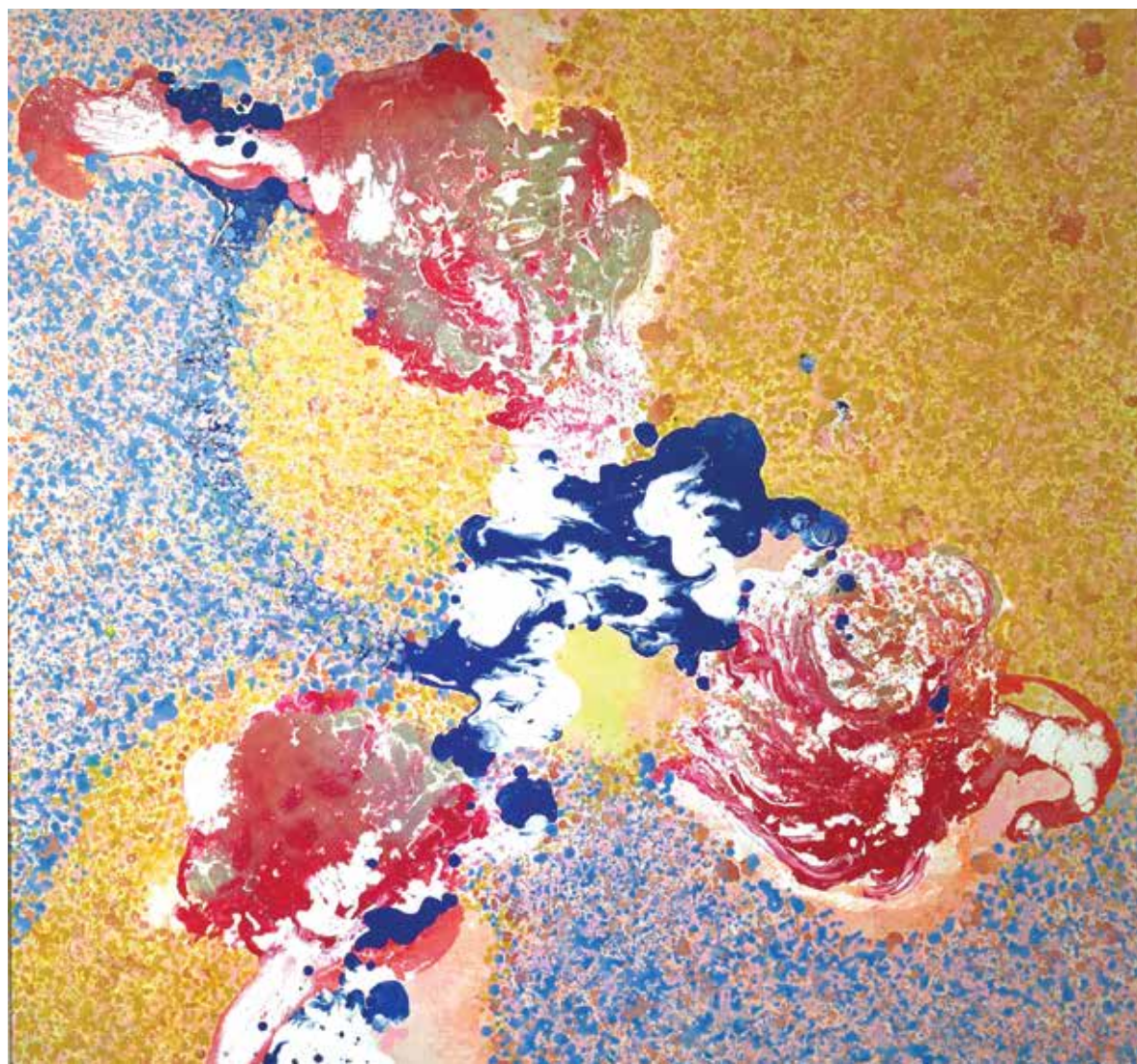
The Macao Foundation supported Murrell's most recent solo exhibition, *Down and Up*, in the Rui Cunha Foundation Gallery. Many of the 31 abstract paintings on display were created in the past three years. According to Murrell, they reflect the transformation in his technique, artistic taste,

and style over the years.

"Gluing different shapes of tissue paper with acrylic paint on the canvas is still the dominant technique, but now I am also using techniques I have never used before, like dotting and pouring paint directly onto the canvas," he explained, pointing to an abstract creation named *Untitled*; most of his paintings share the same non-title, reflecting his belief that an actual name restricts the imagination.

"I also use different kinds of material, such as toilet paper, restaurant tissues, cloth rag, and even denim," he added. "I will try everything to create an interesting texture on my paintings."

MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS 2017



MIXED MEDIA ON COTTON CLOTH 2013

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Finding the creation of realistic paintings "absolutely boring," Murrell's preference for making abstract art began when he was a teenager in the 1960s. When Murrell's high school art teacher told the class to draw fire, most of his classmates produced predictable images of blocks of wood with flames coming out. Murrell created an image of wood already burnt, blackened with little flicks of red coming out of it.

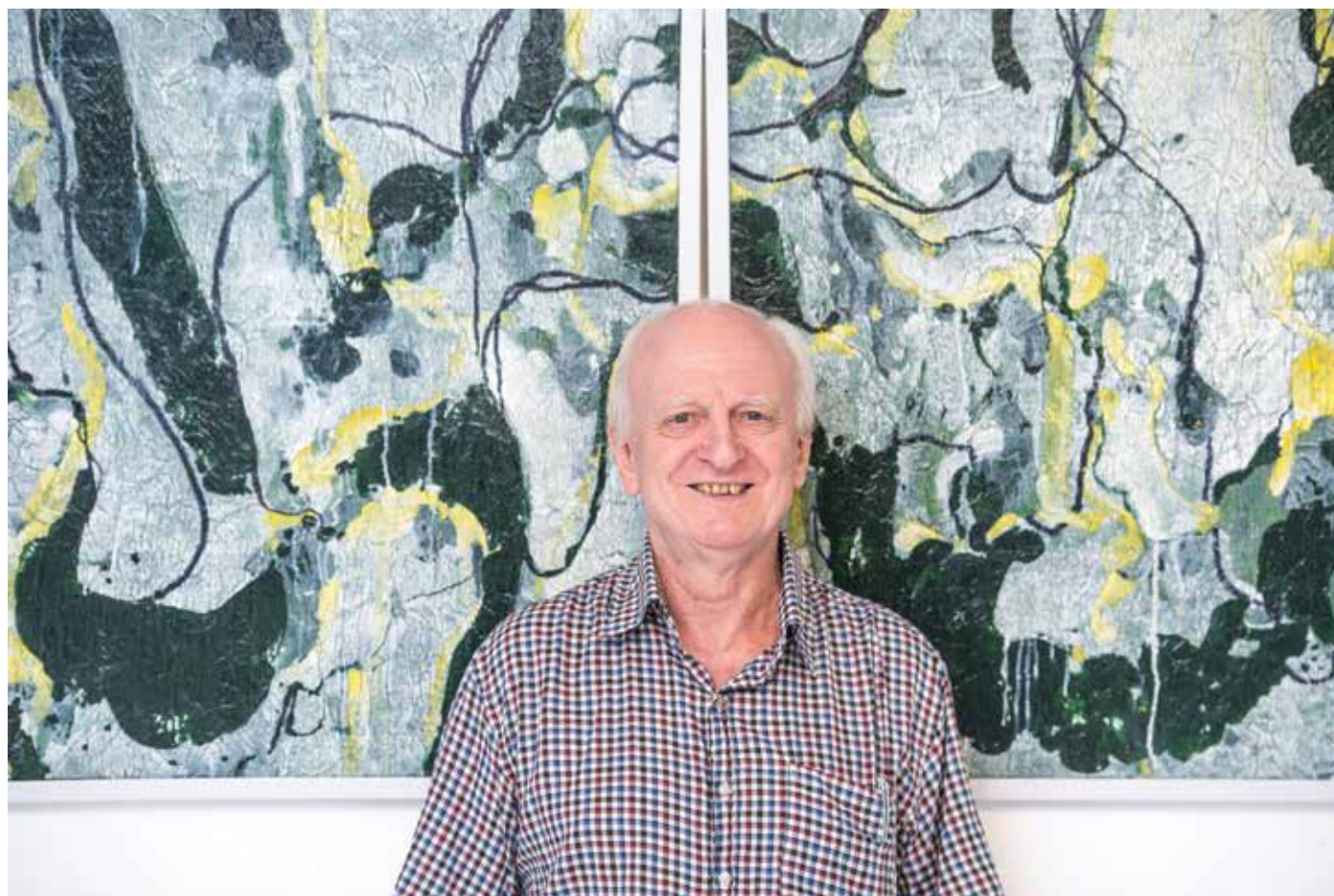
"I just want to do the things other people don't," Murrell said. "I like to search for a new way to do something."

When he relocated to Macao some 30 years later, that same adventurous spirit in artistic expression led him to the unexpected discovery of his signature technique.

"I was painting in my apartment one day in 1991, and I accidentally dropped some paint on the floor. I cleaned it up with a piece of toilet paper and I was surprised to find that the colour actually looked great on it," he recalled. "I glued it onto my painting and then thought, I'd like to do more with that."

As an established artist of abstract creations, Murrell is often asked about his thought process when he is painting, but he admitted he never has an answer for that question.

"For instance, people like to ask why I use this or that colour; my answer is, because it's lying nearest to me on the table!" he chuckled. "I believe all kind of things going through three lines – like, what time is breakfast, who is that person I met yesterday, would I put this line here or there... now and again you go back to painting, and then you drift off to something else."



MIXED MEDIA ON
CANVAS 2016

A WANDERING PATH TO MACAO

As a teenager, Murrell considered becoming an artist or photographer, but abided by his parents' wishes, joining a teacher-training program offered by the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney. The program required him to take a two-year service training in Papua New Guinea. He ended up spending 14 years in the tropical country, living there from 1967 to 1981.

Murrell recalled his time in Papua New Guinea as an enjoyable experience interspersed with danger. He contracted malaria there and experienced hair-raising moments with violent people, including being chased by a drunken man who tried to stab him with a knife. However, he also met and married his wife during this time; they bought a small hotel in 1975.

He also worked in the health department, teaching medical English to doctors and nurses, and even drew cartoons for a local newspaper. After separating from his wife in 1978, he moved to the small town of Popondetta, capital of Oro Province, where he taught students how to grow tropical commodities such as rubber and coffee.

Murrell returned to Australia in late 1981, taking a teaching job at the International College of English in Melbourne. He became friends with many of his Asian students, and when he resigned in 1988, they gave him a beautiful address book filled with all their names and contacts.

"They wanted me to visit them when I travelled to Asia," Murrell explained. "So I thought to myself, okay, I will. I flew to Macao during that first year of travel and I'm still here today!"

As a trained teacher, Murrell taught English during his early years in Macao. He also returned to painting after a long hiatus and befriended many local artists. Six or seven years ago, Murrell found the opportunity to become an art teacher. He continues to provide private tutoring to aspiring young artists, and has hosted painting workshops in a number of local art and education institutes such as Macao Cultural Centre and Institute for Tourism Studies.

Today, Murrell considers not becoming an art teacher earlier in his life as one of his greatest regrets. "I would have had a much happier life, if I have been teaching art from the beginning," he said. "Since starting to teach art, my feelings about teaching and my happiness have both improved."

I just want to do the things other people don't. I like to search for a new way to do something, said
Dennis Murrell

BUILDING A BOND WITH THE CITY

During his years in Macao, Murrell has entered into major painting contests. He won first prize for Western painting in the 2nd Macao Biennial Art Exhibition in 1995, and first prize in the Western Painting section of the 13th Collective Exhibition of Macao Artists in 1996. In 2000, his painting *Lunar Fantasy* won a bronze medal at the Forte Cup 20th Century Asian Art Competition, held in Washington DC, United States of America.

In 1997, Murrell became a member of The Friends Circle of Culture of Macao, and through his connection with the association, he's had a number of solo and group exhibitions in Macao, Hong Kong, and mainland China, as well as overseas in Portugal, Malaysia, Japan, Sweden, and India.

But for Murrell, Macao is home. He described the compact, multicultural city as providing a great environment for the development of aspiring artists.

"There are many art groups and projects going on in the city, and mostly everybody in the art world cooperates and gets along well with everybody else," Murrell said. "When I have exhibitions, other artists come to help me – putting the paintings up on the wall, helping me to transport, and even getting the frames made for my work. I feel that it's the best place for an artist to work." ■



Passion for cinema

Macao's first art house offers alternative cinema

TEXT **OU NIAN LE**

PHOTOS **ANTÓNIO SANMARFUL**

Near the Ruins of St. Paul, an elegant, colonial-era house has been transformed to offer Macao a new experience at the cinema – a wealth of local and foreign films not available in traditional commercial venues.

Cinematheque – Passion opened on 30th March of this year at 13, Travessa da Paixão in a three-storey structure built more than a century ago. The former secondary school, which also houses the Macao Ho's Clan Association, is part of a renovation project undertaken by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (ICM) in 2010. The ICM described the project as “opening a new page in the story of Macao’s cultural industry.”

“We are showing films that you cannot see in commercial cinemas, independent films made in Macao and overseas,” says Albert Chu Iao Ian, artistic director of the Cinematheque. “[Showcasing our local film industry] is very good for the city and it gives people more choices.”



The ground floor is an intimate, 60-seat screening room equipped to show regular and 3D films. On the first floor there is a lending library for film-related books, periodicals, and magazines, as well as local film materials. The second floor is an office.

The venue also serves as a centre for festivals and seminars, and a forum for audiences to meet filmmakers.

OPERATING DIRECTOR BRINGS EXPERIENCE

The chief operating director of the facility is Rita Wong Yeuk Ying, a Macao-native who received her primary and secondary education in the city. She completed her education at the University of Macao where she studied Communications.

Wong spent seven years working in marketing and communication in a private company before joining the government-run Macao Cultural Centre. During her decade-long tenure there, she was responsible for Local View Power and the Macao International Film and Video Festival. The work gave her an intimate knowledge of the industry.

“In the first few years of Local View Power filmmaking commission project, participants made documentary films because such films were eligible for a government subsidy. Eventually the subsidies expanded to include short films and animations. Over the years, Macao has produced a stock of nearly 200 films,” she explains, noting that Cinematheque presented a retrospective on contemporary Macao films in April.

In 2015, Wong left the government to work

as a freelancer, before joining the private firm CUT Ltd. It was one of three that submitted a bid to run the new Cinematheque – Passion. CUT won the tender, valid for three years, and began operations on 1st January 2017.

With Cinematheque – Passion, the Cultural Affairs Bureau aims to create a hub for local filmmakers for communications and exchanges, and to cultivate film appreciation and develop a stronger audience base in the city. To achieve these goals, CUT will need to organise at least two Macao-focused film festivals, as well as film-related activities to enhance exchanges. Cinematheque will need to offer audiences more non-mainstream and independent films, as well as Macao films. Providing this wide selection will require working with different curators, from different areas, for varied topics for festivals or special-theme film events.

The cinema is open from 10am to 11.30pm, Tuesday–Sunday, including public holidays. “We run it like a commercial cinema,” says Wong. During the week, it has 1–2 showings a day, with 3–4 a day on the weekends. Revenues from ticket sales go to the ICM, which in turn covers the operational and programming costs of the cinema. Cinematheque employs nine full-time and five part-time staff.

In the four months since it opened, the cinema has attracted 1,000–2,000 people each month, mainly Macao citizens and mostly young adults. Wong and her colleagues hope to attract a wider clientele, including some of the more than 25 million visitors to the city each year, which will require more marketing and promotion. Its location is excellent, just a short walk from the Ruins of St. Paul, the most popular tourist attraction in the city.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

“Our name is that of a cinema, and we’re dedicated to providing more film choices to audiences,” says Wong. “But we also want to be a platform for exchange, a place for culture, and a venue for events relating to film.

“The habits of cinema-goers are changing,” she explains, “so we have to be very flexible in our planning, to provide many opportunities to our audience.”

Her contract with the government sets out the themes and the services CUT Ltd. must

Cinemas used to be one of the major forms of entertainment for Macao people. But now there are only five left, including the Cinematheque. The others show large commercial and Hollywood films, and face intense competition from online entertainment

provide. The financial structure gives her a level of security not enjoyed by alternative cinemas that must survive on ticket income alone. With the high rental costs in Macao, such a business model is almost impossible.

Cinemas used to be one of the major forms of entertainment for Macao people. But now there are only five left, including the Cinematheque. The others show large commercial and Hollywood films, and face intense competition from online entertainment. Services like Netflix provide dozens of films, some made by them, for less than MOP100 (US\$12.41) a month, not to mention terrestrial and satellite television channels. There are many public sports facilities, and the proliferation of casinos mean that they are available in almost every district. The citizens of Macao are spoilt for choice when it comes to their leisure time.

“We started operations in January, with the official opening in March,” says Wong. “Selling tickets, running the films – we have to learn all the jobs ourselves. Now we are organising sales on the internet and our own website. In the future, we would like to develop a membership system, with a target of 5,000 members in three years. They will be able to enjoy discounts on ticket purchases.

“Macao is a small place with a large number of people. Ours is a small facility, but it fills a large hole in the cultural scene,” she says.

BEYOND CINEMA

Wong's mission is to organise a wide variety of activities, and she's off to an impressive start. The Cinematheque held a two-day workshop on film marketing in May. Li Ya-mei, an expert in this field from Taiwan, chaired the event, instructing participants on how to position and promote a film in a fiercely competitive market.

In June, it held a workshop hosted by Hong Kong director Cheung King Wai. He stayed in Macao for some time in May and June, holding periodic meetings with different audiences to discuss film shooting and show his work. One of his most popular films is the 2009 documentary KJ: Music and Life, which won Best Documentary, Best Film Editing, and Best Sound Effects at the 46th Golden Horse Awards. At workshops and seminars, he shared with many Macao people his experiences working in the industry.

Over 10 days at the end of July, the cinema organised training courses for secondary students led by four young Macao filmmakers who taught them how to make a short film, using games and theories.

In August, it organised six showings of My Uncle by Japanese director Nobuhiro Yamashita. The humorous, Japanese-language film about a

primary school student and his quirky uncle was presented with subtitles in Chinese and English. There were also showings of Heart Attack, the story of a workaholic graphic designer who falls ill after working for five days without sleep, directed by Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit. The young, up-and-coming Thai director included only three major scenes due to budget restrictions; dialogue accounts for over 60 per cent of the film. Tickets cost MOP60 (US\$7.45) without the various ticket discounts available.

Cinematheque Passion also collaborated with Jonathan Hung, a Hong Kong film festival director, to present the World Animation Film Festival in August. It featured 13 animation films by well-known foreign directors from around the world. A complimentary programme, Discover Macao: Local Indies Revisited, presented six animated short films by Macao animators Leong Kin, Cobi Lou, Sam Kin Hang, and Puzzle Lai, with a total running time of 47 minutes. The cinema has also arranged a nine-month course with six classes for those who wish to become film critics, with a maximum of 20 participants.

For Wong, the goal is simple. "We hope that Cinematheque - Passion will become one of the favourite cultural venues in Macao for filmmakers and cinema-lovers alike." ■

Rita Wong Yeuk Ying and Albert Chu Iao Ian



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The Palace Museum comes to Hong Kong

Beijing shares priceless treasures, to celebrate the city's 20th anniversary of its return to China

TEXT OU NIAN LE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION



**GOLD CHALICE OF
ETERNAL STABILITY**
Inlaid with gemstones

For the people of Hong Kong, one of the highlights of celebrating the 20th anniversary of the return to China is a chance to see rare artefacts from Beijing's Palace Museum (PM) in their city.

The Hong Kong Heritage Museum and Hong Kong Museum of History are each hosting exhibitions, which began at the end of June and run until October, featuring a total of 440 items on loan from the PM.

During President Xi Jinping's visit for the anniversary celebrations, he oversaw an agreement to build a new Palace Museum in Hong Kong, the third after those in Beijing and Taipei. It will be built on a 10,000 square metres site in West Kowloon Cultural District, a planned arts and education hub located in the heart of Hong Kong. The building itself will be 35,000 square metres, with two exhibitions galleries, a 400-seat lecture theatre, activity rooms, souvenir shops, and restaurants. Construction begins this year; it is scheduled to open in 2022.

At any given time, around 900 pieces or sets of artefacts on loan from the Beijing PM will be displayed in the new museum. The majority, at least 600 pieces, will be there as part of long-term exhibitions, with the remaining items in temporary exhibitions.

The agreement of the project was signed

between Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chairman of the governing board of the hub, and Shan Jixiang, director of the PM.

The original Palace Museum opened its doors on 10th October 1925 in what had been the Forbidden City, home of the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties, in Beijing. Today, it is the most popular museum in the world, with a record 16 million visitors in 2016, up 6.2 per cent over 2015. It boasts a collection of 1.8 million pieces.

The second iteration, the Palace Museum in Taipei, ranks tenth in the world with 4.67 million visitors in 2016. It has nearly 700,000 pieces in its collection, most of which were taken from the PM to Taiwan by the Nationalist government in 1948 and 1949.

Both museums have only a fraction of their collections on public display, which led to the idea for a third museum in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust will cover the HK\$3.5 billion (US\$448 million) cost of design, construction, and exhibition development. They are also the sole funders for the *Hong Kong Jockey Club Series*, a partnership with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department that supports two to three major exhibitions each year. In 2017, the series brings a taste of the Palace Museum to Hong Kong in two exhibitions.

PRESIDENT XI JINPING WITH HONG KONG LEADERS Surveying the model of the future museum





ZITAN HANGING PANEL Gilded cranes in bamboo grove



GOURD-SHAPED WALL VASE
Famille-rose flowers and poem in reserved panels with gilded floral scroll pattern on blue ground

HEART OF THE QING DYNASTY

The Hong Kong Heritage Museum in Sha Tin presents *Hall of Mental Cultivation of the Palace Museum: Imperial Residence of Eight Emperors*, a collection of 230 sets of artefacts that are among the most well-known and invaluable pieces related to the Qing emperors. This exhibition marks the first time these treasures have been displayed outside Beijing.

Built in 1537 within the Forbidden City during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the Hall of Mental Cultivation served as the residence of the last eight emperors of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The hall was also the political centre of the Qing dynasty, and today is one of the most visited places in the Palace Museum. The exhibit explores the political, historical, and cultural importance of the hall in the history of the dynasty.

Among the highlights are a pair of *zitan* hanging panels, with gilded cranes and rabbits in a bamboo grove; a gourd-shaped wall vase with *famille-rose* flowers and poem, with a gilded floral scroll pattern on a blue background; and the Gold Chalice of Eternal Stability, inlaid with precious gems.



1



2



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- 1. Interior of Central Hall of the Hall of Mental Cultivation
- 2. Interior of East Warmth Chamber of the Hall of Mental Cultivation
- 3. Zitan throne with jade inlay
- 4. Huanghuali screen with incised poem by Emperor Qianlong

President Xi said that West Kowloon was more than an entertainment venue for the public. “It is a hub for fostering the development of the city’s cultural and creative industries,” he explains. “I hope that Hong Kong will continue to pursue cultural exchanges with the mainland

QING DYNASTY Setting up of the banquet table for imperial Qing’s birthday celebrations



CELEBRATING LONGEVITY

The Hong Kong Museum of History offers a different perspective on palace life with an exhibition entitled *Longevity and Virtues: Birthday Celebrations of the Qing Emperors and Empress Dowager*, exploring the major celebrations and rituals of the Qing dynasty through a set of 210 relics.

The Qing court attached great importance to the birthday celebrations, reflecting the belief that the emperor’s longevity was a testimony of his great virtue and effective rule. The Emperor’s Birthday, New Year’s Day, and Winter Solstice were the three most important festivals in the Qing palace. The grand celebration of Emperor Kangxi’s 60th birthday in 1714 set a new precedent. The subsequent birthdays of Empress Dowager Chongqing, Emperors Qianlong and Jiaqing, and Empress Dowager Cixi were celebrated with considerable pomp.

For each birthday, all princes and their children, peers, ministers, and foreign envoys would present birthday gifts or tributes. The route, stretching tens of kilometres between the imperial garden in the Western Suburbs and the Forbidden City, was richly decorated with lanterns and other items. Many temporary stages were erected to perform operas celebrating the ruler, and across the country, old people, men and women, would be honoured. All part of an effort to bring a festive spirit to the whole nation.

“BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF EMPRESS DOWAGER CHONGQING” Painting scroll



According to Shan Jixiang, director of the Palace Museum, family and state were inseparable in ancient China. “The emperor saw himself as sovereign and patriarch of his family-state, and obliged to preside over many rituals and ceremonies,” he explains. “The Palace Museum has a plethora of items from these events. The celebrations drove the handicraft industry to a state of perfection throughout the nation.”

A painting in the exhibition shows representatives of foreign countries and China’s tributary states queuing up in front of the palace to present their gifts. A dazzling array of such gifts—porcelain, lacquerware, jade sceptres, woven tapestry, poetry, Buddhist sutras, clothing and accessories of the court ladies—are included in the exhibition. The diversity and high quality of workmanship reflect China’s position as the world’s richest and most technologically advanced country during the early years of the Qing dynasty, before the Industrial Revolution enabled Europe, and later the United States, to overtake it.

There is also a gilt copper clock manufactured in the 18th century. The piece was a Sino-British joint venture, with the frame and mechanics made by a British watchmaker and the traditional longevity elements added by craftsmen of the Qing place. Emperor Qianlong gave clocks like this one to his mother, Empress Dowager Chongqing, to mark her 60th and 70th birthdays.

In 1751, Empress Dowager Chongqing received four scrolls, 25–29 metres long, which show the celebrations of her birthday. One is on display, featuring detailed paintings of court life and traditional opera performances.

The Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty used the birthday traditions of the Han Chinese with their longevity symbols, according to Hong Kong Museum of History Director Belinda Wong. Some examples from the exhibit include a plaque embroidered with the four characters *wanshou wujiang*, or boundless longevity; a lined, dark blue satin surcoat embroidered with four gold dragon roundels with multi-coloured longevity motifs; and a large blue and white vase decorated with 10,000 “longevity” characters. Even the name given to celebration of the emperor’s birthday during the Qing dynasty, *wanshoujie*, translates as “festival of 10,000-year longevity”.

Wong added that *Longevity and Virtues* marks the first collaboration between her museum and the PM.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Hong Kong will celebrate the completion of its own Palace Museum in 2022; it is currently under construction in the West Kowloon Cultural District.

In December 2016, then Chief Secretary Carrie Lam announced the deal to build the museum following a visit to Beijing. The news took people in Hong Kong by surprise; there had been no previous information about such a project, and many criticised the lack of public consultation. Lam, now chief secretary of Hong Kong, contended that she did not need legislative approval for the project since the Jockey Club would be providing all of the funding.

However, an eight-week public consultation process was launched in January 2017. It found a slim majority, 52 per cent, supported the project, while the remaining 48 per cent opposed it or had no opinion.

In his comments at the signing ceremony, President Xi said that West Kowloon was more than an entertainment venue for the public. “It is a hub for fostering the development of the city’s cultural and creative industries,” he explains. “I hope that Hong Kong will continue to pursue cultural exchanges with the mainland.”

West Kowloon will consist of 17 art and cultural buildings, including the PM branch and the Xiqu Centre for traditional opera, as well as outdoor venues and public green space.

“The West Kowloon Cultural District has been an important project through several terms of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region’s government,” says Xi. “It will provide a cultural and entertainment platform to benefit local people, while boosting Hong Kong’s cultural and creative industry. It will also enrich the culture of Hong Kong as an international metropolis and enhance its charm as a combination of Eastern and Western culture.” ■



JADE SEAL With the characters for “valued collection of the super sovereign”



Tea or *cha*?

It is little known that the rise of tea in Europe began with Macao with the 16th century Portuguese priests

TEXT MARK O'NEILL

TEA LEAF PROCESSING FACTORY
Guizhou province

Around 2 billion people start each day with a cup of tea, three times the number of those who drink coffee each morning. In fact, after water, tea is the most widely-consumed drink in the world, with numbers equal to coffee, hot chocolate, soft drinks, and alcohol combined.

Macao, and the Portuguese priests and merchants who lived there, played an important role in the rise of tea. They were the first to introduce it to Europe in the 16th century, and in the 17th century, a Portuguese princess made the drink a sensation in England. Early embrace by elites eventually reached the masses, and to this day, Britain is one of the world's largest consumers of tea relative to its population.

Professor Jin Guoping, a researcher at Jinan University in Guangzhou, wrote: "The spread of the tea culture to Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America led to local productions, adaptations and innovations, and different kinds of tea culture." His article on Macao's role as the birthplace of Portuguese tea culture appeared in the January 2017 edition of the *Journal of Macau Studies*.

"Macao was the base of tea culture for the Portuguese-speaking world and gateway for its entry into that world," he wrote. "It went from [Macao] to Brazil and Portugal. The Portuguese word for tea – *cha* – is exactly the same as the one used in China. It not only became a word commonly used in the language but also produced many sayings, proverbs, and slang. The number is even more than in Chinese—something rarely seen in Western languages."

Those who speak Portuguese ask for a cup of *cha*, while their Spanish neighbours ask for *te*, and an Indian orders *chai*. Portugal, Japan, and Korea took their name for the drink from one Chinese

dialect, while a different dialect provided the base for names used in Spanish, German, English, and Yiddish. A third branch combined Chinese with Persian influence to create the form used in India, Russia, Central Asia, and much of eastern Europe.

Then there are the oddities. The spread of "char" in Britain, an anglicised version of the Indian "chai" brought back by members of the British military in the 19th and 20th centuries, or the American instance on using the redundant "chai tea" when referring to certain Indian teas.

BY ANY OTHER NAME

To understand these variations, and through them, the spread of tea around the world, we must go back to the source. Cha comes from the Cantonese word *cha* or *c'ha*, the same word Portuguese priests and merchants would have heard in Guangzhou and Macao where they first came into contact with it; the Mandarin pronunciation is the same. The Portuguese adopted it, as did China's neighbours, Korea and Japan. Then cha was exported over the land Silk Road to Central Asia and Persia, which added the grammatical suffix "-yi" to create *chai*. The name spread across Eurasia, from India to as far east as Slovenia, the pronunciation unchanged even as the spelling frequently varied.

The Dutch followed after the Portuguese, with the first official export of tea to Europe in 1606. The cargo was purchased from merchants in Xiamen, and travelled to the Netherlands by way of Bantam, Java, then part of the Dutch East Indies. The word exported by the Dutch was *te*, a Chinese word spoken by people mainly from southern Fujian or Taiwan, then the Dutch colony



of Formosa. The Dutch East India Company was the main European firm trading tea in the 17th and 18th centuries, a history reflected in the number of western European countries that use some variant of *te*, including the English "tea."

The drink wasn't entirely unknown in Europe before 1606, though. The Portuguese had already begun importing it, and even the English were familiar with it. Professor Jin noted: "In English, the first mention of 'tee' was in the diary of Samuel Pepys on 28 September 1600." Pepys called it "a China drink," and mentioned, as if in passing, that he had never drunk it before. A 1615 letter by Richard Wickham, the East India Company's factor at Hirado, Japan, is sometimes credited as the first mention of tea by an Englishman (Pepys was also English). In it, Wickham requests "the best sort of chaw" in Macao from Mr Eaton, the company's agent at the Portuguese trading post.

According to Professor Jin, Portuguese dealing with Japan in the first half of the 16th century were the first Europeans to write of the

culture of tea drinking. In 1547, a Portuguese merchant named Jorge Alvarez compiled the first European eye-witness account of Japan, including the Japanese habit of tea drinking. In a letter dated 25 October 1562, Portuguese Jesuit priest Luís de Almeida mentioned that the Japanese used "cha" to describe their drink.

BLACK OR GREEN

Chinese and other Asians drank green tea, a taste too refined for many Western palates. One of the earliest westerners to experience tea was Italian Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci who lived in China for nearly 30 years. In a letter to French Jesuit missionary Nicolas Trigault, Ricci wrote: "[Tea] is always drunk or rather sipped hot, and on account of a peculiar mild bitterness is not disagreeable to the taste; but on the contrary is positively wholesome for many ailments if used often." Other Europeans disagreed, and it was increasingly black, not green, tea that was exported to Europe.

The rise of tea in Britain began with a Portuguese princess. The drink was not unknown in the country, but when Catherine of Braganza wed King Charles II in 1662, she brought her love of tea with her. The drink soon became quite fashionable among the British elite; its high price and exotic origins made tea a potent status symbol. Serving it to guests demonstrated status and breeding, and the ceremony around it gave rise to early tea culture in Britain.

In the late 17th century, British plantations in the Caribbean shifted production from cotton and tobacco to sugar, and began exporting it back to Britain in large quantities. By 1750, sugar made up one-fifth of all European imports. When tea imports increased between 1720 and 1750, the prices of both commodities were low and a new market opened up. Tea, once the domain of the wealthy, began to spread among the middle and lower classes. Where the elite consumed tea in elaborate rituals in spacious drawing rooms, the working class drank their tea in large mugs at their place of work, making a meagre meal more tasty. The addition of sugar had made the drink more pleasing to Western palates, heightening its mass appeal and creating a new source of profit for sugar producers.

For connoisseurs in China, of course, it was unthinkable to add anything but hot water to the tea leaf. The notion of adding sugar or milk—both popular among the British—was

heresy, like adding Coca-Cola to Bordeaux wine.

The British, along with the Portuguese, Dutch, and Russians, developed a taste for black tea. By the middle of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), exports of Oolong and black tea overtook silk to become China's most important export commodity. Records from the Guangzhou customs show that in 1838–39, the city exported 18,245.5 tonnes of tea, of which black tea accounted for 80 per cent.

A HEAVY PRICE

For centuries, China dominated the tea trade. It had discovered the plant, developed the methods of cultivation and production, and seen its popularity spread around the world, bringing great wealth to the nation.

But, as Professor Jin wrote: “[This] small and remarkable leaf which had brought great profits also made China suffer a century of pain and humiliation.” After 200 years as the sole producers of tea, there was a vast trade deficit between China and the West. The monopoly on tea angered many, especially as appetite for the drink continued to grow. The British, eager to redress the flood of silver flowing into China, decided the country would be the perfect market for their newly-acquired opium monopoly.

China, however, was well aware of the dangers of the drug trade. The Qing authorities attempted to ban opium, taking increasingly severe actions in the face of the mounting threat. When an official seized and destroyed 1,210 tons of opium without compensation, and ordered a blockade on foreign trade in Canton, the British responded in force. According to Professor Lin, the resulting military clash “changed the shape of global trade and the destiny of China, and altered for ever the history of the world.”

In 1842, after the Treaty of Nanjing brought an end to the First Opium War, a Scottish botanist named Robert Fortune travelled to China to collect plant samples. Six years later, in 1848, the British East India Company hired Fortune to return to China. His instructions were explicit:

“Besides the collection of tea plants and seeds from the best localities for transmission to India, it will be your duty to avail yourself of every opportunity of acquiring information as to the



cultivation of the tea plant and the manufacture of tea as practised by the Chinese and on all other points with which it may be desirable that those entrusted with the superintendence of the tea nurseries in India should be made acquainted.”

During his trips inland, Fortune frequently disguised himself as a Chinese merchant, visiting many tea growing areas in Fujian, Guangdong, and Jiangsu that few Europeans had ever seen; travelling more than a days' journey from European treaty ports was illegal. He could speak Mandarin, though not fluently; many growers believed him to be an official of a minority tribe from a north or western corner of the vast Qing Empire.

He brought with him special cases, similar to an early terrarium, which enabled the plants to survive for several weeks. In two and a half years, from 1848 to 1851, Fortune visited fields and factories, collecting plants and learning as much as he could about the production of tea. He introduced around 20,000 tea plants and seedlings to Darjeeling in northeast India, where the climate and geography were similar to that of the growing areas in China. Most of the plants perished. But he had also brought with him a group of skilled Chinese tea workers; their expertise may have been critical to the eventual success of the Indian tea industry.

While Chinese and many modern commentators recognise Fortune's actions as

industrial espionage on a grand scale, Fortune himself saw it as botany research and an exchange of information with the growers. The level of deception and illegal conduct he employed rather belie this innocuous explanation.

The results of his work were dramatic. In the decades that followed, British growers developed giant plantations in northeast India and Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, that enjoyed an economy of scale lacking in the family plots of southern China. India overtook China as the world's largest producer, a status it held for a century. British companies were able to meet much of the demand in their home market, with black teas from colonial tea plantations constituting a majority of the British market by 1900.

The story of tea is one of trade, conquest, and conflict – a dramatic history for such a soothing beverage. Macao is where that story began. From the 16th-century Portuguese priests and merchants experiencing *cha* for the first time, to the Portuguese princess behind the rise of tea in Britain, none could have predicted how their love of tea would change the world. ■

CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA

Portuguese princess



Getting cricket back in the game

Over the years, cricket has had its ups and downs developing in Macao. The Macau Cricket Association, formed nearly a decade ago, is back with activities and has a new plan to put cricket back on the city's sport map

TEXT SANDRA LOBO PIMENTEL

PHOTOS ANTÓNIO SANMARFUL AND CHEONG KAM KA



A dnan Nasim left Pakistan for Macao in 1987 to study computer sciences at what was then University of East Asia, now University of Macau (UM). Academics were his priority, but Nasim also brought with him a great passion for cricket. Finding a way to enjoy the sport in his new home presented challenges. Despite being one of the most popular sports in the world – an estimated 2.5 billion people follow cricket, second only to football – cricket was virtually unknown in Macao, at least among locals.

“There was nobody, at that time, who wanted to play cricket. After a few days, asking more people, I was able to find a couple.” With no specialised facilities or equipment, Nasim and his fellow cricket enthusiasts got creative. “What we used to do is– we didn’t have cricket bats or any equipment, because we came to study,” he explained, “so we would go down and watch people playing tennis in the tennis court. When the court was available, we used the racket and the tennis ball to play cricket.”

Nasim played on a field hockey team, a popular sport in the territory, until 1992 but he never gave up on the dream: “It was an alternative. I was still searching for people to play cricket.”

After completing his degree, Nasim found a job at UM. When more casinos began opening in 2004, the sudden influx of people from Hong Kong and Commonwealth countries like Nasim’s native Pakistan changed the cricketing landscape. “Suddenly we found more people and came together to find some place where we could play.”

Groups remained largely segmented, though, making it difficult for the sport to take root in the region. “There was a British group,

that used to play with an Australian group, and then some Indians from Goa, and others that arrived and played themselves. And then the Muslims used to play in the Macau mosque,” Nasim explained. “That is how cricket used to be played at that time.”

That summer, a big cricket event was organised by an Australian group popular for doing similar events in Hong Kong. “That was the first time I met a number of cricketers. We were all hidden. And it was proper cricket. Big ground at the University of Science and Technology for a two-day event.”

Some people encouraged Nasim, as the most established in the territory, to do something about cricket in Macao. “But no one was interested,” he lamented. “I contacted a lot of official departments, and in the end we decided to completely give up. There was no hope.”

Then came the Harmony Cup. Despite the difficulties encountered, they were able to pull together a few small sponsors and secure a field at Hou Kong Middle School. The December event was “intended to join Christians and Muslims together” during a time of significant celebrations for both religions.

They also landed a VIP guest: lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho, deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Macau. “He encouraged us and was very enthusiastic and enjoyed cricket. And he told us we should do something for Macao. It was a very emotional idea, for us to do something for Macao. It was a big thing.”

Thus the Macau Cricket Association (MCA) was born. The official registration came in March 2008 with Nasim as president, a position he still holds today.



ADNAN NASIM President of the Macau Cricket Association

BUILDING CRICKET FROM THE GROUND UP

In the early days, the MCA had about 15 members, as many people stayed in Macao for only a short time before moving on. As the association grew, so did their optimism and ideas for establishing cricket in the territory. “We went to the schools and formed teams like TIS [The International School]. They were very excited about cricket and invited a coach from Hong Kong to start their own team. We went to Sam Yuk [Middle School] and started coaching there, also at Anglican College.”

That’s when reality crept back in. Macao is a compact city, with limited space to meet the varied needs of the community, and cricket requires a ground. “Suddenly we realised that, although we were invested,” Nasim explained, “we couldn’t have enough support, like a proper field to play and practice.”

Despite these obstacles, Nasim said: “The parents and the children expected a lot. They wanted to represent Macao in cricket and that was a big task for us. No finance, no resources. Everybody was pulling money out of their own pocket.”

It was a difficult time: members started to ask for more events, but there was no place to hold them. “They would ask why there weren’t more events, or more invitations for teams to come to Macao. We kept requesting for ground to play and practice, but couldn’t find any. Later we acknowledged that it wasn’t discrimination on cricket or us. It was a problem regarding sports facilities for any kind of sports.”

In 2012, the cricket activities almost completely shut down. From a peak of 50 members, the group shrank to about 30 with most members hailing from India, Pakistan or Nepal, countries with a strong cricket tradition.

OLDER AND WISER

In an interview with TDM, Nasim described the association as being naïve, believing they would find quick success without accounting for the realities on the ground. But a decade after its founding, the MCA is ready to get back in the game.

This July, the Macau Cricket Festival brought together eight teams from Macao, Hong Kong, and Guangdong for a one-day tournament in the city. Far from the sometimes days’ long matches of test cricket, each game lasted only 40 minutes, making the most of their time together while also keeping the game more accessible for new fans. The event was a success despite a morning typhoon making for difficult conditions on the grounds of Hou Kong Middle School.

The festival is one of four annual events organised by the association. After the summer festival there’s the Mid-Autumn Festival, the Harmony Cup in December, and the Macau Ashes in March, played between expatriates from England and Australia. “It’s a good development for us,” Nasim said.

Moving forward, the main purpose of the MCA will be to provide the opportunity for people

That’s when reality crept back in. Macao is a compact city, with limited space to meet the varied needs of the community, and cricket requires a ground.

in Macao to be able to play cricket. “Those who love cricket, regardless of their age, should be able to play. We cannot even watch cricket. There is no cricket on television, not even in cable channels. They don’t show cricket.”

This time around, Nasim’s ambitions are more realistic: “Cricket will not start to appear overnight here. It will take 20 to 30 years for cricket to go the way we hope it can go. We want adults to continue to play cricket and start to have teams at school level. Let’s say, we have a five year plan.”



A DIFFERENT APPROACH

At a certain point during their inactive period, people began to contact MCA about events. Nasim took a new approach: "I told them to organise events themselves and we would support them with equipment. If they had enough teams and players they should go for it. I went on a different direction. It worked, because once they got their own freedom, they started to contact more people to play and participate."

Nasim realised that supporting people enthusiastic enough to organise their own events could be the path to reboot cricket in the region. "We learned from the past. Now we allow people to do what they want and we come as support. As a result, we have a big group of Nepalese that organise cricket anywhere. We just provide equipment. We don't ask them to do events at a certain place or time, they call it and inform us. Right now, MCA is a sponsor."

Access to grounds remains an issue for the group. Sports facilities are in high demand in the territory, and none are designed for cricket, with its standard round field. The MCA has adapted, employing the same creative approach Nasim did during his time at university, to make the most of the grounds that are available, adjusting rules and length of play.

The MCA also plans to restart the youth project at the same school they reached out to in the past. Public schools, Nasim feared, might not be as open to the idea of starting a new sport because "kids are more interested in [football]." The group is also considering the path forward for young players. One of their long-term goals is securing an associate membership in the Asian Cricket Council, giving Macao cricketers the chance to represent the territory in competitions in Asia. It would also open the door to membership in the International Cricket Council.

Laying the foundation comes first, though. Nasim told TDM: "We need to have a base first, established firmly, so we can continuously produce cricketers from the schools. And then they can go on to other places, to represent Macao." But the main goal is to have people playing cricket. "When somebody is playing, some other people are watching and more can join." For now, cricket is played mostly at Hou Kong Middle School for events, and the grounds near Macau Tower for casual games on Friday nights and Sunday mornings. Curious parties are encouraged to contact the MCA or just drop by and enjoy the game. ■



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