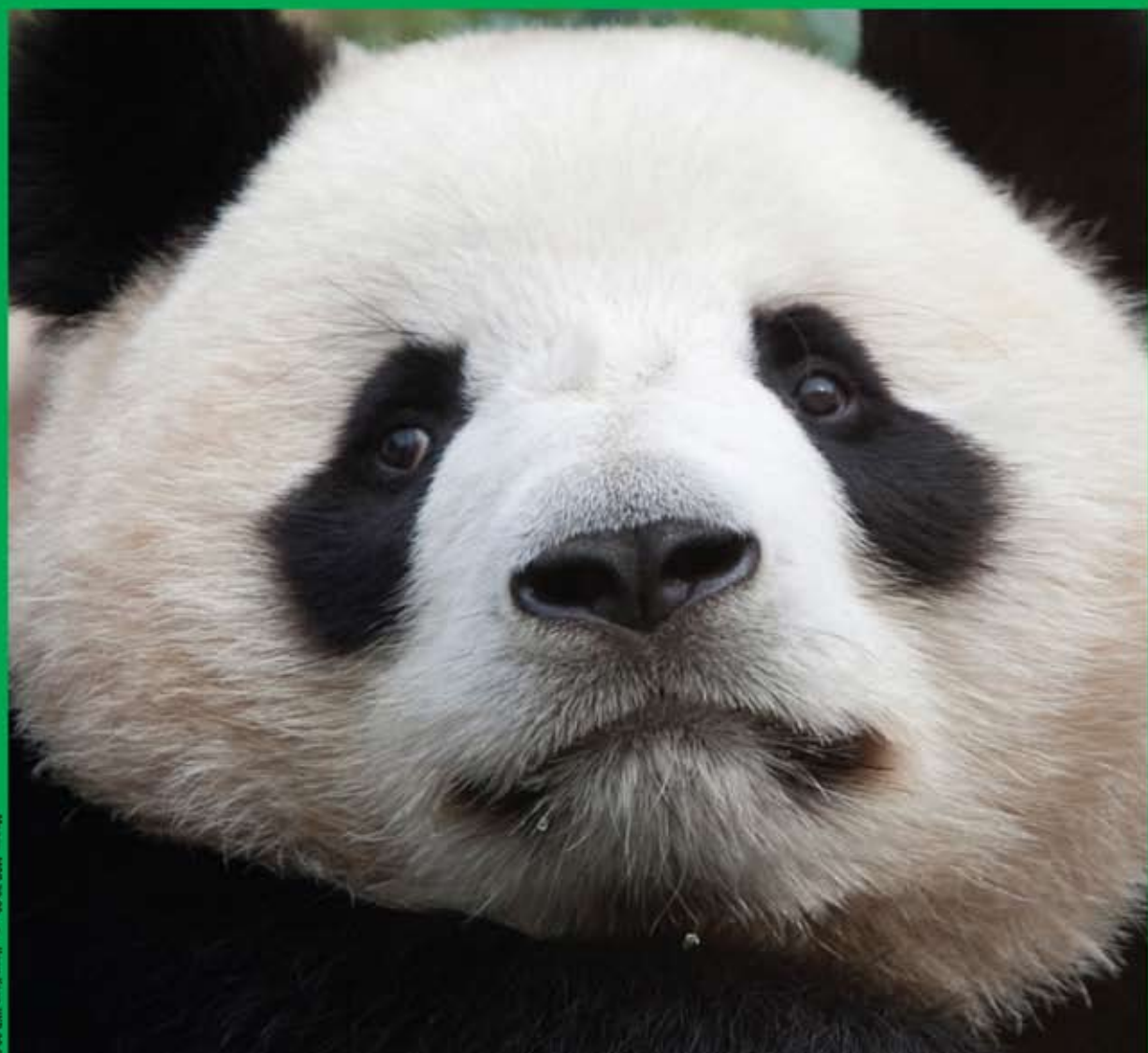


# macao

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Drunken Dragon Festivities



While Macao's economic development continues to be marked by its steep growth in casino receipts, its increasingly diversified tourism industry is offering tourists ever more non-gaming attractions such as the recent arrival of giant panda pair Kai Kai and Xin Xin from Sichuan, gifted by the central government in Beijing. The cute pair's state-of-the-art residence has already become one of Macao's top tourist sites.

Aside from its vitally important tourism industry, Macao is also making great strides in strengthening its scientific and technological research and development, based on the central government's policy recommendations that envision Macao as a global hub for academic and cultural exchanges and business services. The University of Macau (UM) is at the forefront of these efforts.

Macao Magazine's April edition continues its series of articles on the development of the Pan Pearl River Delta Region, this time focusing on the socio-economic impact of the recently completed inter-city rail link between Zhuhai and Guangzhou, the rapid development of Foshan city and efforts to protect the cultural heritage of Guangzhou's historic Shamian Island precinct.

A special feature article highlights the gradual improvements in cross-strait ties through a joint initiative by museums from the mainland and Taiwan to display invaluable exhibits on either side that represent their common past.

Another article focuses on the annual Macao Arts Festival involving hundreds of local and visiting artists, including the local "Step Out" theatre troupe striving to present cutting-edge productions.

This issue also includes a new analysis of Portuguese adventurer Fernão Mendes Pinto's famed 17th century travel book – titled "Peregrinação" in Portuguese – about his eye-opening sojourn in Asia. The article also shows the role that local graphic artists have had in the book's new presentation.

Last but not least, there is a special profile of one of Macao's oldest working journalists who recalls Macao's politically intricate situation during the Second Sino-Japanese War.



## Patience [Jên]

There is a well-known Chinese saying - "The character for patience has a knife over the heart". In other words, it is unwise to provoke a person's patience.

However, the truly patient heart is a firm one. In the character for JÊN, the knife blade (a developed form of an early pictogram) bears down on the "heart", yet the heart perseveres and endures.

JÊN can also be translated as "tolerance"; the Chinese language makes no distinction between this attribute and "patience", for the firm heart is also a tolerant one.

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



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# Macao's new mega stars



**Macao's first pair of pandas  
arrives to warm welcome**





The arrival of Kai Kai and Xin Xin



**A week before Christmas last year**, Macao rolled out the red carpet for two VIPs from Sichuan in southwest China – a pair of young giant pandas. They were sent by the central government as a gift to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the city’s return to Chinese rule.

Kai Kai and Xin Xin arrived in a chartered plane and were greeted at the airport by cheering senior officials, dozens of young students, and veterinary doctors. Then, guarded by a dedicated security team, the two big cuddly creatures were driven in a specially designed van to their 90-million-pataca home in Macao – the newly built 3,000-square-metre Giant Panda Pavilion in Seac Pai Van Park in Coloane.

Pandas are an endangered species, found mainly in China, where there are an estimated 1,600 in the high-altitude bamboo forests of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu. In these provinces there are breeding farms that are raising close to 300 pandas.

With their cute appearance and novelty value, pandas have been China’s ambassadors of goodwill for centuries. In recent decades, the Chinese government has presented pairs of pandas as gifts to countries like the United States, Mexico, Germany, Austria, Spain, Thailand, Australia and Japan. Hong Kong received two pairs of pandas

in 1999 and 2007, and Taiwan was given a pair in 2008. Wherever they are, pandas are very popular, especially with children.

In Macao, panda fever was building up for months as the city prepared for their arrival. The government set up a panda website, issued commemorative stamps and postcards, and organised a naming competition for the pandas, as well as press conferences with frequent updates on them.

So, when the pandas were ready to meet the public on 28 January 2011, after 30 days of quarantine, hundreds rushed to the pavilion for the 10–15-minute viewing session allowed for each visitor.

### The chosen pair

Kai Kai and Xin Xin, whose names were derived from the Chinese characters for ‘happy’, have lived up to expectations and brought delight to their fans.

Kai Kai, male, was born on an auspicious date: 4 August 2008, when the torch of the Beijing Olympic Games reached his home town of Chengdu. He quickly earned the nickname of Mickey Mouse for his pair of big, straight ‘bat ears’. He is “active and vivacious, a greedy, fast eater and likes to participate in group activities”, according to the

panda website set up by the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM).

Xin Xin, female, has a broad nose, and the hair around her eyes is in the shape of a water drop. A month older than Kai Kai, she is, according to the official description, “mild, smart, gracious, charmingly naïve and lazy, but lovely”. She likes to lean on a tree or lie on the ground when chewing bamboo.

Kai Kai and Xin Xin weighed 73kg and 64kg respectively in late January. A giant panda normally grows to 160cm–180cm in length and weighs up to 160kg.

Macao was promised the pandas when Chinese president Hu Jintao visited the city in December 2009, the tenth anniversary of the territory’s return to China.

One month later, a special panda-mission task force was set up and held its first meeting in Beijing. Representing the central government, there were senior officials from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office and the State Forestry Administration. From Macao, there were the Secretary for Administration and Justice, and representatives from the IACM.

Next, Macao officials made study tours to Hong Kong and Taipei, who have many years of experience

looking after pandas. They learnt about the many aspects of taking good care of pandas, from the storage of bamboo (the staple food of pandas) to medical issues. They also went to Shanghai, who had a special panda pavilion at the Expo held in 2009.

“I’ve learnt a lot from Hong Kong and other places,” said Leong Lok Chun Bernadette, head of the division of parks and gardens under IACM. “Training the pandas how to behave, when they are still young, would help us, among other things, to do medical check-ups and blood tests on them more easily in the future,” she said.

In May 2010, the joint task force met for the second time in Sichuan, to decide on the pandas for Macao. After three rounds of consultation and with 38 pandas shortlisted, Kai Kai and Xin Xin were selected. The decision was based on “their age, physical condition, psychological status and behaviour, appearance, and genetic factors”, the IACM said on its panda website.

Both are twins and both have mothers who are “strong in reproductive ability”. Kai Kai’s mother has successfully bred seven cubs in four pregnancies. Xin Xin’s mother has been equally fertile. Hopefully, such good genes will help the two pandas in Macao to produce many babies in the future.





*Kai Kai and Xin Xin's "residence"*



## Home from home

In building a home for the pandas, Macao considered many possibilities, from the floral garden to a site near the Macao Dome. Seac Pai Van Park was chosen eventually because it has a natural forest and a suitable gradient.

The panda pavilion, with a roof shaped like a seashell, consists of a logistic centre, bamboo-washing and storage quarters, a feed warehouse, a control centre and a veterinarian clinic. For the pandas, there are two 330-square-metre indoor activity quarters and a 600-square-metre yard. The indoor areas, for public viewing, have a translucent roof lit by both natural and electric light. Here, visitors can see the pandas playing, eating or sleeping in a setting that closely resembles their natural habitat.

Shuttle buses run to bring visitors to the scenic park, where there are also other rare animals and birds. Revenue from ticket sales will be put into the Panda Fund, set up to promote research and education

projects for the conservation of pandas.

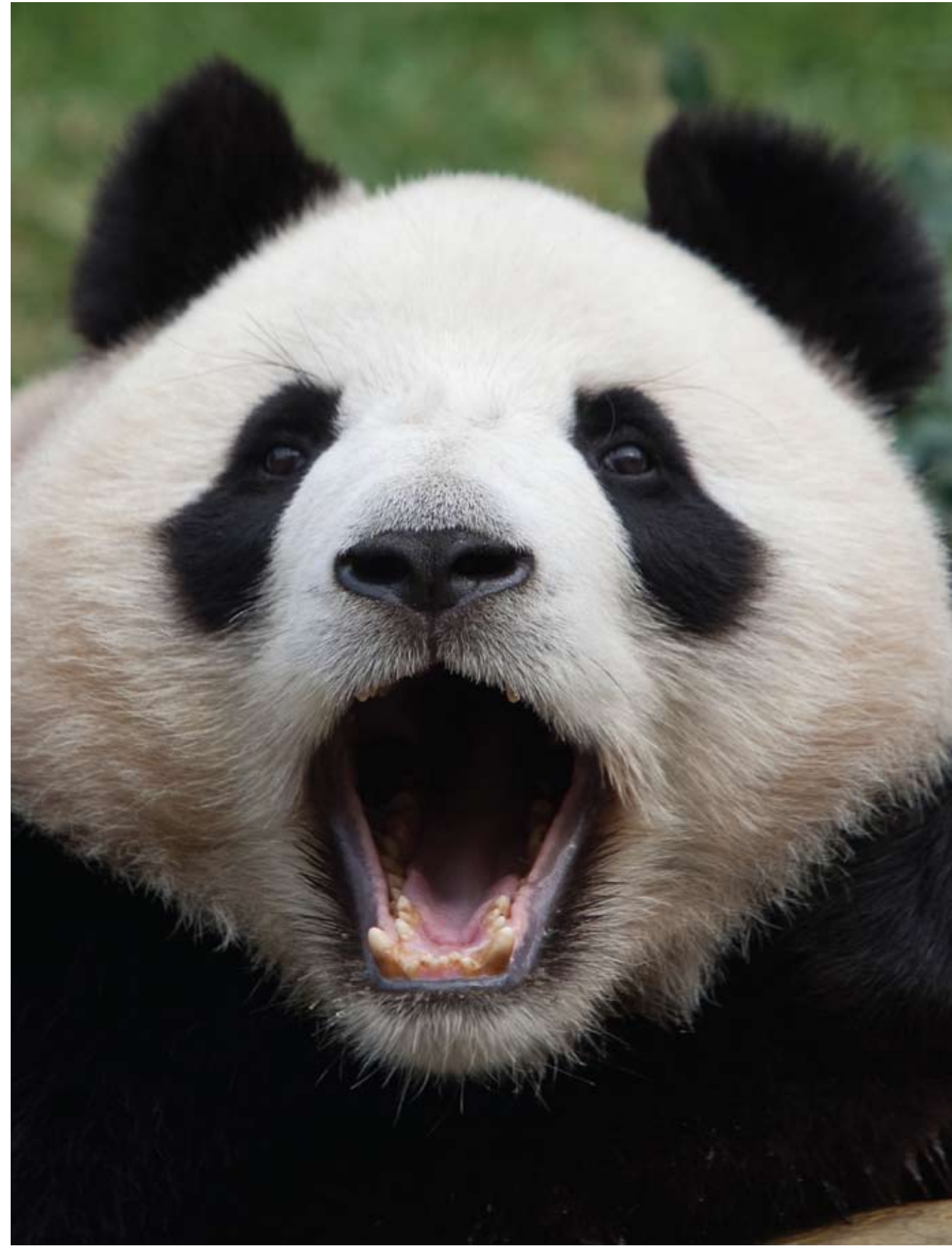
Since their arrival, the pandas have been settling in well, with no signs of jet-lag or missing home. To ensure that the pandas adjusted well to Macao, Leong and her staff made a few visits to Sichuan “to make ourselves familiar with the pandas, through activities like feeding them”.

On the day the pandas came to the park, Leong was nervous, but not for long. “The moment they got out of the cage, we could see they were making themselves at home, and our worries vanished.” The first thing the pandas did at their new place was to eat, said Leong. They also started smelling, touching and walking around their activity area. On the first night, the two squeezed themselves into one small wooden bed. On the second, they felt relaxed enough to find their own individual space to sleep. They have a good appetite too, even though they are fed with bamboo from southern China, not from their home town in Sichuan. ■

*Photos by Eric Tam*



*Leong lok Chun Bernadette*





# City of Mercy

Portuguese charity's long history of helping

By Filipa Queiróz







Bartolomeu

**Almost as old as the Portuguese presence in Macao itself**, the Holy House of Mercy stands rejuvenated and full of life. The path of this old Portuguese charity has not always been smooth. Yet now it is forging ahead, after the recent extension of the museum and day care centre – the only support centre for the blind in the city.

As we enter the door of 7 Travessa da Misericórdia, we find the first piece of Macao’s history – Mr Bartolomeu. A man in his sixties of short stature, wearing a black beret, he became named as Mr Bartolomeu by his Portuguese ‘brothers’. “Ni hou,” he salutes. He doesn’t speak any Portuguese nor English, but that doesn’t stop him from presenting one of Macao’s most historic charities to everyone who comes by.

For 38 years now, Bartolomeu’s routine has been the same. He opens the door of the neo-classical building, part of the ‘Historic Centre of Macao’ – a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2005. And he does this as if it’s his first, rather than his second home.

The Holy House was modelled on one of the most prominent and oldest charitable organisations in Portugal. It founded the first Western-style medical clinic in Macao as well as several other social-welfare structures that still function to this day. They include a nursing home, a day care centre and the only rehabilitation centre for the blind in the territory. Having survived the threat of disappearing along with the Portuguese administration, the Holy House stands refreshed, busy writing new chapters of its 442-year-old history.

### Dedicated host

Bartolomeu had been acclaimed since the days when he helped the priests ‘spread the word’ in the Church of St Agostinho. In 1966 he left his job at a law firm for a full-time ‘mission’ at the Holy House. The trigger was the “chaos infused into the city” due to the “1,2,3” popular uprising by Chinese pro-communist patriots. Today, Bartolomeu is the

“person who, after the head of the Holy House (António José de Freitas), knows the history of the charity the best,” says Gisela Nunes, secretary-general of the institution. Bartolomeu says he never learned other languages due to “lack of time”, but he is still able to communicate with the “many foreigners” who visit the museum daily.

According to Bartolomeu, around fifty people enter the museum per day. In high season, like Christmas, the figures rise up to “70 or 90”, including school visits. “It is generally groups of thirty children or young people at a time,” he explains, while pointing out dozens of pictures in which he poses with the youngsters, among other visitors. “They send these photos to me by post, and I also receive many letters,” he says.

These are expressions of recognition of Bartolomeu’s dedication. He also entertains himself collecting documents, pictures and every single article that comes out in the press about the Holy House and which he proudly shows off. One of the most precious is a sketch of the ancient building made by George Chinnery.

### Cultural heritage

“In the past there were many poor in the streets of Macao, such as orphans, elderly people and lepers. There was no government initiative to take care of them,” recalls Bartolomeu. Meanwhile, he points out the original ‘Commitment of Mercy of Macau’ displayed in the museum. Dated 1627, it is the oldest in the archives of the institution (founded by D. Belchior Carneiro).

On our left is a bell. It is the only piece that remains of the old chapel that used to occupy that very same site. It was demolished in 1883 due to its state of disrepair.

Also on display are objects of religious art, vases, jugs, and pieces that represent the history of the institution. They illustrate the meeting of different cultures, brought about by the diffusion of Christianity. One such piece is an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from the early 19th century. Another is the 18th-century Indo-Portuguese ivory pieces of Our Lady of the Annunciation and Christ Crucified.

The colours of the various porcelains – whites and blues, mixed with gold – point to Macao’s cultural melting pot. The museum also displays

Chinese, Japanese and European ceramics with the monogram ‘JHS’ (‘Jesus Hominum Salvator’) printed on them, the symbol of the Society of Jesus, which came to Macao in evangelical mission in 1562. All these pieces have been collected by António José de Freitas, head of the Holy House of Mercy.

“I very much appreciate Chinese art, and sacred art in particular,” says Carlos Marreiros, successor at the helm of the institution. “The museum was a new idea of the Holy House’s friary after the handover. We thought that apart from the social aspect, the Holy House had a duty to contribute to the dissemination of Macao’s culture,” he says.

With a proud smile, Freitas stresses that ten years after its foundation, the museum of the Holy House is now part of the city’s cultural itinerary. “It is classified, it has been widely visited, and it will grow,” he says.







António José de Freitas

## Missing information

The Museum is currently closed for renovations. "We will have a slightly bigger gallery, with pieces that are currently in my residence and others already here that are occasionally used in exhibitions," he says. He admits that the museum has an Achilles' heel: accessible information for the public.

According to the head of the Holy House, the historical archives of the institution are almost non-existent, due to a transfer of material to the historical archives of Macao in the 1980's, and later to a study centre in Lisbon.

"Many people knock on our door for more information about the institution, and we have little more to show them besides the Commitment," he complains, seated in the big gallery. This place is also open to the public and currently serves as a meeting room for the friary. It is decorated with more than a dozen photographs of benefactors, including rulers and merchants of Macao. "Here, on my left, is the father of former chief executive Edmund Ho. Over there is Francisco Xavier Roquete, the merchant navy pilot."

Freitas' office is located there too, next to that of Gisela Nunes, his right-hand lady since September. "My role is to help him manage his agenda, and to bridge the gap between him and all those responsible for the other facilities," says Gisela.

Between the two office doors stands a large 18th-century oil portrait of the Bishopric's Governor, D. Belchior Carneiro, and his preserved skull and cross.

## Rooted in history

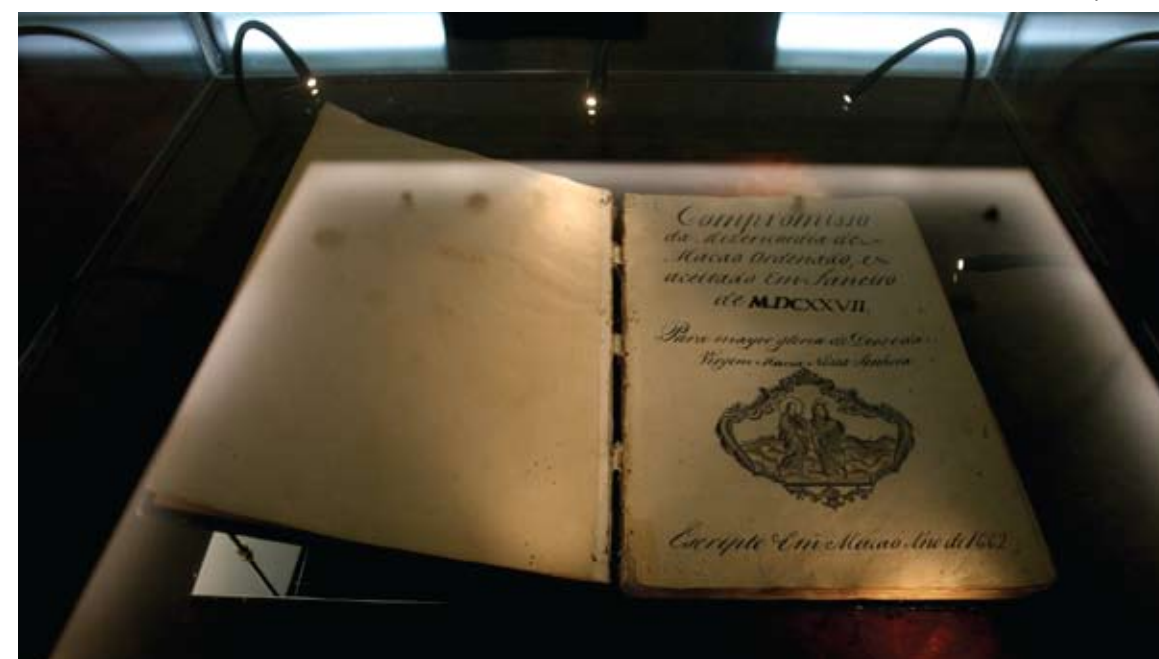
"These institutions began to spread around the world in the 14th and 15th century, inspired by Queen Dona Leonor, founder of the first Holy House in Lisbon," Freitas recalls.

"The Holy House in Macao has its roots in the institution that originated in Portugal more than four hundred years ago," he proceeds, stressing that despite these roots "it has always helped every poor person regardless of race, religion or creed. By the time it was founded, back in 1569, there weren't many Portuguese here and the ones that were here weren't the ones who most needed help. This institution was created to help Macao people as well as to project the Catholic religious doctrine."

As for finances, Freitas assures us that the charity is in good shape, but adds that things have changed. "The Holy House has for a long time had a fund that dates back to earlier times. It was an era when Portuguese and Chinese prestigious families made large donations, including buildings. Nowadays this doesn't happen."

But this institution still owns some of those buildings – the ones in Travessa da Misericórdia and Travessa do Roquete, the Popular Pharmacy and even the House of Portugal, where "only a symbolic rental is charged" says Freitas. He adds that rentals are the most important income support to balance the expenses.

Commitment of Mercy of Macau







Museum of the Holy House of Mercy

### Changes to come

António José de Freitas says that the Holy House is in a “very stable condition” to survive in Macao as a not-for-profit institution. It is a stability that, from his point of view, is due to the process of revitalisation that began with the transformation of Travessa da Misericórdia. “Until the year 2000 it was little more than a motorcycle parking lot,” he says.

The institution used to encompass a hospital, orphanages and centres for lepers. Today, the names may be different but the purpose is still the same: caring for those in need. And Freitas believes that more changes are to come. “After the creation of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR), the Holy House started to have a major impact. From an institution connected to Portugal, it turned into an institution and a building with its own identity and a different image,” he explains.

In addition to the activities undertaken by the home for the elderly, the day care centre and the rehabilitation centre for the blind, Freitas is involved in “multiple works together with other organisations and Chinese associations. The Holy House has been revitalised,” he concludes.

### Modern charity

“Nowadays, charity or social welfare is no longer a mere handout that is given to the poor. This is

especially so when it involves an institution, when there is so much money available, and when the whole society is trying to do more and to better satisfy these requirements,” explains António José de Freitas. The head of the Holy House of Mercy believes that Macao’s current situation shows clear signs that social action is set to improve at all levels, although it is not something that will happen overnight.

Referring to free education and projects in health, the head of the institution notes: “People don’t have much reason to complain. No one dies of hunger any more and, although Macao has the same problems as a lot of other cities, it also offers many advantages.” He talks of the annual cash handout given by the government; the social security fund; and free medical care for people over 65. “In Macao, the area covered is small and the problems not so difficult to solve. It just needs a better balance achieved among the different social classes.”

In terms of the Catholic population, Freitas considers it as quite old yet healthy, within the context of the modern world.

With its eyes fixed on the future and new generations, the institution is launching its official website. It will contain the history of the Holy House, along with other information, in Chinese, Portuguese and English. A book is also coming out shortly.

“We believe that, with the support of society and the government, the conditions are ripe for it to remain very much alive for at least another 50 years.”

### Cornerstones of the House

“To know Macao’s history is to know this institution’s history. It is one of the oldest in the territory, and indeed throughout South East Asia,” says António José de Freitas. The first and only head of the charity since the handover explains that, back in 1999, the fraternity was split in two streams. One advocated that the Holy House should be abolished, the other didn’t. “I belonged to the camp that believed that the institution should remain in Macao, maintaining its roots, but rethinking its strategy and improving its image.”

The current head of the institution already knows a lot about the social and human development of Macao, as he belongs to various charities in the territory.

In accordance with the compromise of 1627, the members, currently numbering 350, appoint the electors. They in turn choose the head, the secretary and the treasurer. Together with ten further members, these post-holders form the director’s board. The chosen individuals are free to accept or reject the functions for the one-year office term.

The head takes some resolutions himself, usually with the support of most of the board. The fraternity also meets in general assembly at least once a year. All carry out these roles as volunteers. “There are no salaries for anyone,” says Freitas, who has occupied the same chair for the last 11 years.

### Unique resource for the blind

Music lessons, knitting, board games, library, gym and computer room. It could be a social club like many others, except this one is designed for those who can’t see. The rehabilitation centre for the blind, in Avenida do General Castelo Branco 14, is the only place in Macao dedicated to this minority group.

Established on 12 October 1960, under the auspices of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc, it came to be managed and administered by the Holy House of Mercy in 1963. However, the institution’s support to the blind dates from 1900, subsidising the Canossian friary that had a similar mission.

The purpose of the centre is to integrate blind people in the community and enable them to maintain their autonomy, thereby mitigating the impact of their physical handicap. Currently there are around 30 regulars, all Chinese. The Holy House gives an allowance of around MOP 300 per month to the most assiduous, as well as offering lunch and snacks.

Janette Leung has been the centre’s director for eight years and ensures that the routine is lively. “I love working here and hearing laughs all day long. It is exactly what these people need in order to carry on with their lives in spite of their disability,” she says.





## Fruitful activities

The director manages the facilities, the money, the visits and the support from casinos and other organisations. Inside, some people entertain themselves, while others make some money with their handicrafts. One man in his forties makes wicker baskets in which to put bottles brought by the Nolasco company. For each 'basketed bottle' he is paid MOP 12 (US\$1.50).

In one room, a dozen people are dedicated to knitting scarves to sell to religious institutions. Mrs Waising has been coming to the centre for 31 years and has made several scarves and woollen sweaters that were purchased by the Bank of China. Aki is 40 years old and is also part of the centre's musical group. "But what I really like to do is knitting!" he says, smiling with satisfaction.

In the other rooms, while Mrs Jiu plays dominos with a friend and an old man plays traditional Chinese music, all the seats in the computer area are taken. "He's searching for his favourite singer's album to download," says Janette, pointing out a man who restlessly moves his hands on the keyboard. How does he do it? "Through a sound reading system adapted for the blind," she explains. There are also books and magazines written in Braille, donated by the Hong Kong Society for the Blind, as well as an organ and a guitar for contemporary music lessons. But despite the modern material, attracting the young to the facilities has been a challenge and one of the institution's main objectives. "They need to have more interesting things to do. I'm thinking of swimming lessons, for example, because young people are not interested in making baskets or knitting," says the secretary-general of the institution, Gisela Nunes, who accompanies us on this visit. "Moreover, it is very difficult to find work in Macao if you are blind," she stresses.

## Nurturing nursery

"The little train is about to depart! Go! Go! Whoever is late stays at home! Whoever is late does not go!" As we enter the nursery of the Holy House of Mercy day centre we are greeted by a group of children, singing this Portuguese song. There are Chinese, Portuguese, Macanese, British, Brazilians and even Russian youngsters, representing the centre's hallmark of multiculturalism. Eight years after it was



founded, the nursery has 108 children in its care, aged from 33 months to 3 years old.

António José de Freitas believes the centre "was a significant gamble for the community that chose to stay in Macao. We came up with the idea right after the handover. We requested the space from the government, which was ceded for fifty years on the condition that we use both Chinese and Portuguese as our working languages."

The head of the Holy House of Mercy stresses that the institution also supports the Macau Portuguese

School with subsidies for needy students set up since the first years of the MSAR.

Most of the 27 employees in the day care centre are women and are local, except for one who is Portuguese. In every room there is at least one educator who speaks Portuguese and English. "We speak many languages because it is important for the children to feel comfortable, but also to have the opportunity to listen to and learn other languages," explains the director of the nursery, Isabel Marreiros.

## Much-needed expansion

The centre has many rooms, all very colourful and filled with toys. It contains adapted toilets for the little ones to learn how to "create good habits", and even an outdoor space. But demand is very high, so the nursery of the Holy House is also currently undergoing building works for expansion. "We are extending to an adjacent block, and are training more staff in order to open 125 additional vacancies," she says.





Holy House of Mercy

The Executive is responsible for this increase since it has been trying to solve the problem of the lack of kindergartens in the territory. "We were included because our nursery is one of the most sought-after in Macao," explains the director, who got her Childhood Education degree in Lisbon, 30 years ago. The cost for children is MOP 1,700 per month, with meals and equipment included. What about dealing with children and parents from such different cultures? "Compared to the Portuguese, the Chinese children are much calmer, but mixing them together results in a very nice balance," says Mrs Marreiros. "Chinese parents are often fearful about their kids. For example, they can't see their children sweating after playing in the playground without immediately having to change them for fear that they might fall sick. Portuguese parents are not like that. They are from different cultures, and we must respect that and try to treat everyone equally," she says. The halls and corridors of the centre include mechanisms for disinfection, and each child is individually examined every day on arrival at the centre's private nursery room.

"It's rewarding when you work with love and dedication and receive good feedback. You never want to stop improving," says Mrs Marreiros. A few years ago she relied on the help of her husband, architect Carlos Marreiros, to make the centre area more functional and comfortable. "My sensitivity as an educator told me that certain things had to be changed, and the Holy House was careful to meet them. From the very first, it embraced this project and worked at getting the best out of it," she concludes.

### Nursing home: continuous care

There are 95 women and only five men in the Holy House of Mercy's nursing home for the elderly. The oldest lady is 103, and still able to walk unaided. But many are not as lucky. Founded in 1925, the institution was reconstructed in 1998 due to the degradation of the old building. It saw its capacity increase from 34 to 123 people. The new Home on Rua D. Belchior Carneiro opened on 21 June 2000.

As well as 55 double rooms and four private rooms for 'special cases', the home has a chapel, a gymnasium for physiotherapy, and different areas for older people and the infirm.

"We have activities for them such as morning exercises, group activities and mass, which is given by a Catholic priest once a week," explains the home's director, Terry Lee Kam Man. "Sometimes we also take them out for a walk and to sightsee." The area for less-mobile people will have some renovations done on it soon. Rooms are going to be extended and improved in order to enable constant observation and care from the nurses. "More and more of them are getting too old, with many of them bedridden and needing continuous monitoring for everything," she explains. "That's our job."

### New address – on the web

Gisela Nunes is in charge of the newest Holy House of Mercy's project: putting the institution on the internet. Along with her husband, Bruno Nunes, the secretary-general is undertaking the whole process of transferring all of the institution's background online. "It includes basic information about the House as well as updated news on each piece of equipment operated by the institution," she explains. The day care centre, the nursing home and the rehabilitation centre for the blind will be documented not only in text format, but also through videos and photos.

Meeting room of Holy House of Mercy



Photos by Eric Tam and Gonçalo Pinheiro

"We have recordings of the official openings made at the time, and now this material will be available to the public."

The records include a variety of events and VIP visits, such as those from Portugal's former presidents Jorge Sampaio and Ramalho Eanes. "Today the internet is everywhere. It's the most direct way of communicating not only with locals but also with the world, and the Holy House wants to monitor this development," said the secretary general. "It's a lot of work, but it's worth it," she stresses.

The website includes information about the Holy House of Mercy's museum. Currently it covers just basic information, although "the idea is to have more detailed records of all the pieces displayed there, and even the text of the pledge of brotherhood." The aim is to disseminate the institution's work both locally and beyond. The website can be found at [www.scomm.mo](http://www.scomm.mo).

The same goes for the new book set to be published about the project. "The project started eight years ago but didn't run continuously," Gisela Nunes says. "When I came to the Holy House (September 2010) and found out about the abandoned project, I immediately tried to get the process moving again," she says.

The secretary-general stresses that the book includes "very old and rare images", and will be important in strengthening the communication between the Holy House and the Macao society. Mrs Nunes says she plans to re-launch the institution's newsletters "as soon and regularly as possible". ■

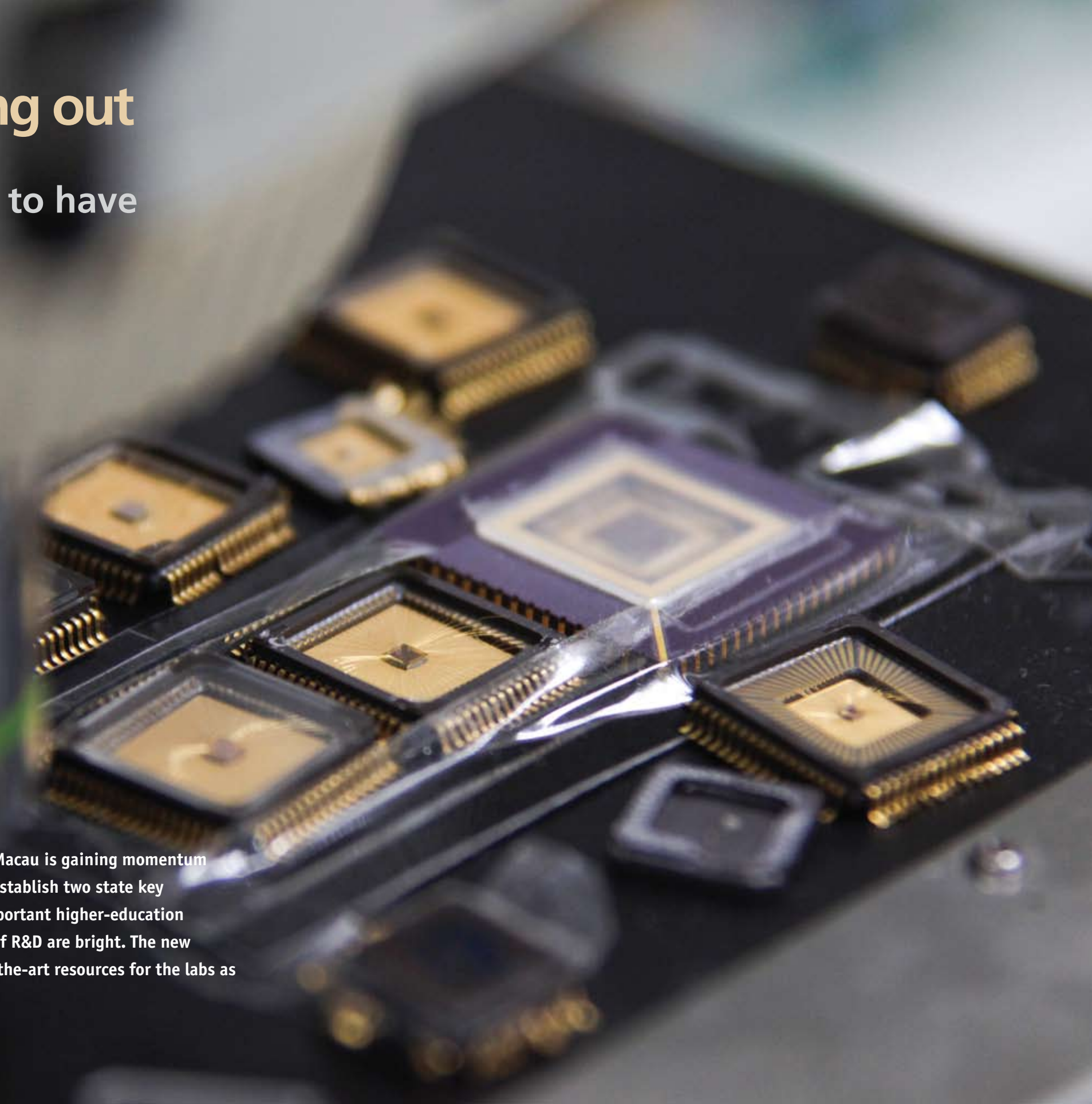


# Research reaching out

## Macau University labs to have far-reaching impact

By José Carlos Matias

Research and Development at the University of Macau is gaining momentum following the central government's decision to establish two state key laboratories in the region's largest and most important higher-education institution. The prospects for the development of R&D are bright. The new campus on Hengqin Island will include state-of-the-art resources for the labs as they take on their impressive status.





**What makes a university highly regarded is not only excellence in education.** The quality of a tertiary education institution is also measured by its added value to science. And the University of Macau (UM) has been climbing the value chain of Research and Development (R&D).

The number of articles published in top-rated international journals and participation of UM researchers in international conferences have been increasing steadily. An index by Thompson Reuters' Web of Science – an online academic citation index that covers only top-level journals and conferences – shows that UM researchers were cited almost 1000 times and published nearly 200 articles in 2009.

UM currently ranks higher than neighbouring institutions when comparing numbers of publications. Moreover, UM has been successfully registering some patents and trademarks in Macao, mainland China and the United States.

### Investment reaps results

Investment in Research at UM started in the 1990s and gathered real momentum after the establishment of the Macao Special Administrative Region in 1999. It is thanks to this continuous investment that UM has achieved so much. The creation of the Fund for Development of Science and Technology (FDCT) in 2004 was a very important step forward in boosting research conducted in Macao. UM has its own budget for research, but certain projects in science and technology involving costly materials and resources are largely financed by FDCT.

Overall, spending in R&D accounts for 8 per cent of the university's 2011 budget, up from 5 per cent in 2007. Rui Martins, Vice Rector for Research, said, "There is a clear commitment by the SAR government to further support R&D at UM." This has been demonstrated not only through high rhetoric, but also in the resources allocated. "We are asked to improve the quality of our research and that is what we have been delivering."

Year-on-year UM has been achieving results recognised internationally. Microelectronics is a good example of an area where UM has been able to reach the pinnacle. In 2011, local scholars will present two papers at the International Solid-State Circuits Conference, also known as the 'Chips Olympics'.



Rui Martins

In this conference, UM ranks fifth among Asian universities and second amid higher-education institutions from Greater China.

### State key labs: the keys to success

"We prefer UM to stimulate its students and researchers to publish in international journals and take part in top-level conferences, instead of setting up lots of journals within the university," said Rui Martins. Besides, it takes a long time before a local publication achieves international recognition. Nevertheless, UM has two well-established journals that have been playing an important role in promoting local research: the Journal of Macau Studies, published by the Center for Macau Studies, and the online journal Chinese Medicine from the UM-based International Society for Chinese Medicine.

The quality of research carried out by local researchers has caught the attention of the central government. In December 2010, UM passed the stringent evaluation of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and obtained the green light to set up two state key laboratories: the Laboratory of Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI (Microelectronics) and the Laboratory for Quality Research in Chinese Medicine (set up by UM in cooperation with the Macau University of Science and Technology). FDCT will offer a total of MOP (Macanese pataca) 62 million in funding to the two state key laboratories in the next three years.

### Microelectronics speed ahead

Research in microelectronics at UM dates back to

1993, when the first microelectronics integrated circuit was designed in Macao. Currently, the Laboratory of Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI – led by the Vice Rector and Principal Researcher – is divided into two lines of research: data conversion and signal processing, and wireless integrated circuits. Both are headed up by local talents. Terry Sai-Weng Sin has devoted the last ten years to high-speed analog integrated circuit designs: high-performance data converters. As coordinator of the data conversion and signal processing project, he supervises a group of 20 young researchers and students who have been striving to improve the speed and reduce the power consumption of different types of device. These range from computers to digital cameras or mobile phones and other multimedia and consumer electronic products.



Terry Sin's group has also been focused on clock generator designs for high-performance and high-speed mixed-signal systems. One of their objectives is to make these devices more efficient, smaller, lighter and more portable. Sin proudly says the equipment at his laboratory is top level – similar to the materials used by the Hong Kong Science and Technology University.

### **Nurturing local talents**

The ultimate goal of his research “is to reach out to industry and have a real impact on people’s lives”. For this to happen, transfer of technology is key. The aim for the future is to prompt the development of start-up cutting-edge technology companies. The Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI Laboratory has been in dialogue with private firms who have shown interest in their results. Recently, representatives from Media Tek, Taiwan’s major integrated circuits design company, came to the laboratory to discuss ways to work together with UM’s researchers. The state key lab status is seen as a “great achievement and challenge”. Terry Sin said this move by the Ministry of Science and Technology represents the acknowledgment that the laboratory is a national front-runner in this field. UM is teaming up with Shanghai’s Fudan University, to set up South China’s only state key laboratory. Sin adds that the approval by the central government of the state key labs is a “huge incentive to further promote microelectronics in Macao and to train more local talents”.

### **A wireless future**

In the other wing of the Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI Laboratory is Elvis Mak Pui-In. Like Terry Sin, he is a product of UM’s efforts to nurture Macao researchers and scholars. He is specialised in circuits and systems for wireless and biomedical applications. As head of the Wireless (Biomedical) Research Line, he has been coordinating a project on biomedical wireless technology. The group is developing a system that will make it possible to measure the heartbeat and transmit the data to a computer or mobile phone via wireless technology. They hope this project can be expanded in the future to other fields. Elvis Mak is also developing a new project in cooperation with the Dalian Institute of Chemical

Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The Research will focus on digital microfluidics for quality control of Chinese herbs.

### **A different kind of chips**

In the future, the Analog and Mixed-Signal VLSI Laboratory aims to promote technology transfer in terms of the application and commercialisation of their R&D results. They also aim to launch a local Applied Integrated Circuit Research Institute or eventually spin-off companies for bringing real industrial impact to bear on China’s strategic development towards full autonomy in IC design capability. Elvis Mak said the upgrade to state key lab will have a far-reaching impact. “It is not only the recognition of the quality of our work, but can also motivate new generations to create scientific added value and embrace a career in science and technology research.” There are several examples of young scholars in the past who had to go overseas to find a suitable environment to pursue their research. Nowadays, the prospects are different. Elvis Mak hopes that in the future when people talk about chips they will not only think of casino chips, but also of research in microelectronics in Macao.

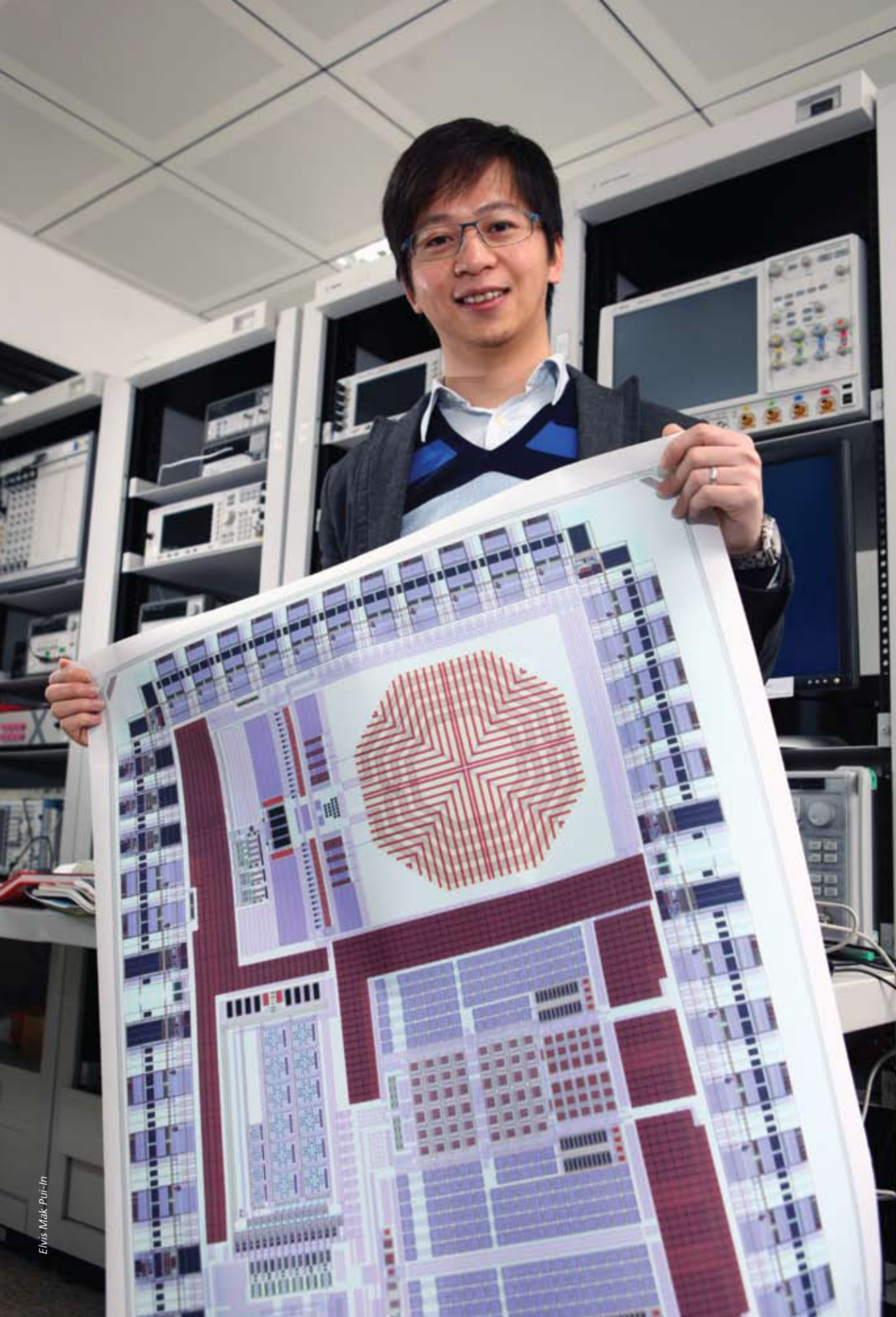
### **Chinese Medicine to promote diversification**

UM also has a well-established research project in Chinese Medicine. Active since 2002, the Institute of Chinese Medical Sciences (ICMS) has been developing postgraduate education and producing scientific research professionals in the fields of medical science and Chinese medicine. The upgrade of the Laboratory for Quality Research in Chinese Medicine to state key lab (in cooperation with Peking University) comes as Macao and Guangdong join hands to launch a Chinese Medical Technology Industrial Park. Chinese Medicine is set to become a key asset in Macao’s endeavour to promote the development of leisure tourism and enhance economic diversification. In the state key lab, Macao researchers will explore different types of medicines that promote blood circulation and remove blood stasis; reduce internal body heat and remove toxic substances; and improve the body’s immunisation system.



Terry Sin





## Enhancing quality control

Professor Li Shaoping has been focusing his research on quality control, a major issue for the development and internationalisation of Chinese medicine.

Li has been dedicated to researching quality control in Chinese medicine since the very beginning of ICMS. He said the approval of the state key lab "is very important because it confirms ICMS's previous works and also encourages the group of researchers to work hard in future". In addition, "The increased and continuous financial support from the government will improve and accelerate the research."

Li is very confident about the outcome of the research being conducted in the SAR. He believes "Macao can play an important role in the modernisation and internationalisation of Chinese Medicine". At this stage, "due to the shortage of human and material resources", the best way is to "focus on limited specific targets and go on our own path with innovative ideas".

## The Internet of Things and Macaology

Another high-profile research project approved by the Ministry of Science and Technology is the Internet of Things (IOT). Headed up by UM Rector Wei Zhao, it is a project under the '973 Programme', known as the 'National Key Fundamental Research Development Programme'. IOT is a wide ranging highly innovative field of research – it refers to the networked interconnection of everyday objects. Wei Zhao is a world-renowned expert in the subject, and his team includes more than 30 other top-level scientists specialised in areas such as sensor networks, real-time systems, telecommunication systems, software systems, electric power systems, and so on. UM hopes to have an impact on IOT research and contribute to China's endeavour to become a leading powerhouse in this cutting-edge field of knowledge.

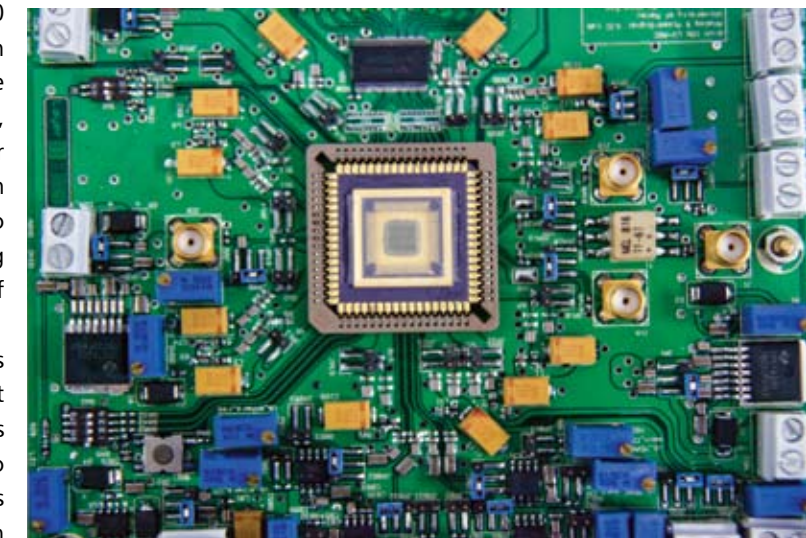
Developing research in social sciences is also something UM is keen on. In recent years UM has been holding conferences with scholars from around the world who study the different features of Macao's history and culture, a field of research

coined as 'Macaology'. Its main task is to explore the profoundness and uniqueness of 'Macao culture', from a global perspective. Macaology highlights how throughout history, people from different nationalities, religions and cultures have co-existed in a peaceful and harmonious way in Macao.

## New campus to benefit society

The new campus, under construction on Hengqin Island and set to be completed in 2013, will allow UM to take research to new heights. "It's a great leap," said Vice Rector Rui Martins. Currently, the university has about 35 laboratories that occupy an area of 4000 square metres. On the new campus, the Open Research Base will comprise three open scientific bases in several key research areas: medical and pharmaceutical sciences, electronics and information technology, and energy and environmental protection. Overall, laboratories and other research facilities will cover a floor area of 70,000 square metres. This will allow UM to step up its efforts in pursuing excellence in research innovation. "The new campus means more investment across the board, in research materials and in human resources, namely professors and researchers," said Rui Martins. The aim is to have an impact on society and the economy. On the new campus, UM wants to encourage the liaison between researchers and cutting-edge start-up companies. ■

*Photos by Luis Almoester*





# Macao going greener

Exhibition sets the stage for better environmental protection

By José Carlos Matias







#### Macao is a platform for international cooperation

not only in tourism and leisure, but also in environmental protection and green industries. Experts, officials and industry leaders from around the world flock to the Special Administrative Region every year to take part in the Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum and Exhibition (MIECF). This year's 'Green Forum', which took place from 31 March to 2 April, was themed 'Green Opportunities – Low-Carbon Urban Development'. While setting the stage for a showcase of some of the best environmentally friendly solutions, Macao has also been laying the groundwork for a long-term 'green' commitment. The government is preparing the region's first Environmental Planning until 2020, based on a government-commissioned report drafted by the South China Institute of Environmental Science.

As stated by Chief Executive Chui Sai On in the opening address of this year's MIECF, "Macao will continuously improve the environment, provide a low-carbon, convenient, comfortable, pleasant space for living and activity through integration of urban and environmental planning, transport and environmental infrastructures, to achieve the above goals and objectives."

#### A greener Pearl River Delta

Macao's green plans are in tandem with the blueprint announced by the Central Government for the integrated development of Guangdong province and the special administrative regions of Macao and Hong Kong. The Plan for the Reform and Development of the Pearl River Delta (2008–2020), which was approved by China's State Council in 2008, positions Macao as a 'World tourism and leisure centre'.

But in order to achieve that goal, the SAR needs to promote a cleaner environment, adopt energy-efficiency solutions and embrace a more sustainable development model. This will result in a better living environment and quality of life for both locals and tourists.

Macao's endeavours are being carried out alongside the efforts of the different local governments of the PRD region. Exchange of experiences in green technologies is one of the main areas of cooperation. Authorities from Macao, Hong Kong and Guangdong have drafted a new blueprint focused on sustainable development and quality of life: The Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary.



Lionel Leong



## Learning from China's best practices

The director of the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), Cheong Sio Kei, stresses that Macao has been strengthening its links with neighbouring regions and provinces. "We have been exchanging ideas with our counterparts from the Pearl River Delta region on environmental issues and pollution prevention." Cheong adds that in the future the DSPA will "gradually enhance cooperation on ecological conservation, protection of marine resources, and prevention of air pollution, among other issues".

As China strives to produce a more sustainable development model, setting itself ambitious targets, Macao could learn from the mechanisms adopted by the Central Government. In the recently approved 12th Five Year Plan, China rolled out several targets, including cutting energy and carbon intensity by 16 per cent and 17 per cent respectively by the end of 2015. In addition, the Central Government wants to boost the proportion of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to 11.4 per cent.

Local businessman and Executive Councillor Lionel Leong thinks that Macao can use China's legal framework as a reference point for putting into place suitable regulations adjusted to local needs. "It's very important to set up an appropriate legal framework in order to foster the growth of renewable energies. In terms of incentives and policies to spur the development of environmental industries, we can emulate some of China's best solutions," says Leong.

Moreover, given the position of Macao as a gateway between China, the European Union and Portuguese-speaking countries, "there is much room for cooperation".

Lionel Leong emphasises that Macao "can play a very positive role in promoting green cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries". Indeed, some of these nations have taken the lead in developing renewable energies, such as Portugal with wind energy, and Brazil with biofuels.

## The challenges of change

Given its constraints and the fast pace of the city's urban development, Macao faces a number of environmental challenges. According to official

data, in recent years the number of complaints regarding noise pollution and gas-exhaust emissions have increased steadily. Water and electricity consumption has also gone up dramatically – from 1999 to 2008 consumption climbed 40 per cent and 117 per cent, respectively. Moreover, the level of recycling and reuse of waste is extremely low.

On top of this, according to DSPA, in the coming ten years, water consumption is expected to climb 63 per cent, electricity consumption 29 per cent and greenhouse-effect gas emissions 32 per cent.

António Trindade, president of the Environmental Industry Association, puts it bluntly: "Macao consumes too much electricity and too much water." Therefore, energy saving and efficiency must be prioritised as "tourism cannot be developed without water and energy efficiency".

## Setting an example

Lionel Leong, who has also been a long-term advocate of green industries, says the government should set the example. For instance, public infrastructures should follow stricter regulations on energy consumption, and Macao should embrace a "green public-procurement approach". Leong argues that "environmentally friendly aspects should play a more prominent role".

To take environmental protection to new heights, it is important to promote awareness amongst people from all walks of life. "Ideally, when any citizen wakes up in the morning, environmental protection should be his primary concern," says Lionel Leong, who served as president of Macao's Environment Council, the predecessor of DSPA, for several years.

The government has been reaching out to civil society and private companies so that everyone can take part in the effort to make Macao a 'greener' city. DSPA has been collecting opinions on the Conceptual Blueprint on Environmental Protection in Macao, which sets the foundations for a general Environment Plan as well as specific plans addressing air pollution, water resources, solid waste, noise pollution, radiation, and environmental management.

## Engaging the private sector

Currently, the Bureau is revising laws and regulations on noise pollution and has been holding a series of public consultation sessions on the matter.



António Trindade



Recently, DSPA launched a number of initiatives aimed at engaging private companies. The Green Enterprises Partnership Plan is aimed at raising environmental awareness among the business leaders, staff, and customers of the companies that join the project. Another plan targets one of Macao's main industries: the Green Hotel Award honours hotels that emulate best practice in terms of energy saving and environmental management. Meanwhile, the Bureau is keen on promoting the concept of green public procurement, which entails a rationale beyond the mere cost-benefit analysis. The goal is to encourage government departments to purchase environmentally friendly and energy-efficient goods and services. "In the long term, the objective is to promote the development of a green industry and an eco-market," says Cheong Sio Kei. With time, there would be an overspill effect, resulting in private companies embracing the concept of green public procurement.

### Nurturing our greens

António Trindade argues that in order to upgrade the region's energy efficiency and environmental standards "it's crucial to nurture a local green industry".

He thinks that locally established companies should be encouraged to take part in this process through incentives and positive discrimination. This would help when foreign companies are being considered, who are not always in touch with the real needs of and features particular to Macao.

Despite not having a mass market for the application of green technologies, Macao "is like a laboratory and can host new solutions" that could be tested in a small-scale, highly populated environment.

Some of these solutions were showcased at the MIECF. Electric cars were among the main attraction of this year's event, as the number of green vehicles and respective equipment on display increased compared with last year. There were also several large heavy-duty electric vehicles on display, including buses and trucks – an indication that the research and development of electricity-driven cars can be applied to heavy vehicles. Companies involved in research and development of electric and solar energies introduced their latest products. This year's MIECF saw more than 8,800 visitors, and attracted 324 exhibitors from 24 countries and regions. During the three-day event, 31 agreements or pacts were signed on-site. ■

*Photos by Carmo Correia and Gonçalo Pinheiro*



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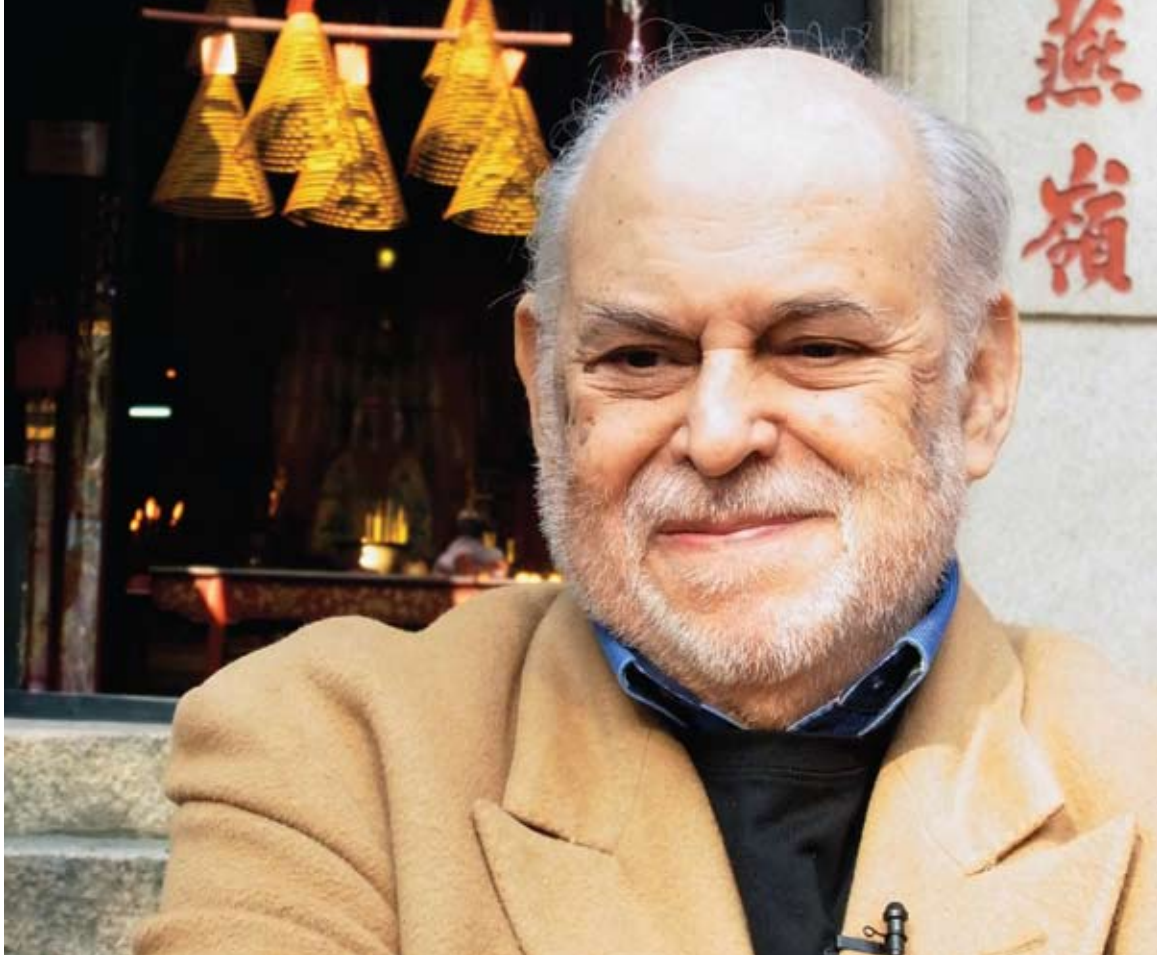
# Fabulous land

A Portuguese architect falls in love with Macao's dynamism

Manuel Vicente recently returned to Macao to visit the architectural legacy he left here. At a time when he had decided to take a peek into the past, we asked him to look at the present and tell us what he thinks of the new casino city. The Portuguese architect who designed the World Trade Centre Macao loves the new city. Because he loves Macao and always will.

By Helder Beja





Manuel Vicente

**The only thing Portuguese architect Manuel Vicente relies on for support is his walking stick.**

His elderly frame, now approaching the age of 80, is not very forgiving. Yet the voice, gaze, and particularly the sharp mind of this man who first set foot in Macao in 1962, have the vitality of a 20-year-old. And that can be seen in the forthright way in which he comments on the structures he designed for the new city. These structures have now been filled with massive buildings.

“What I like is the leap in scale. It’s like being in the Três Candeeiros neighbourhood. There you could only see sky in the past but now if you see something in the distance, you ask: ‘That’s the new Lisboa, isn’t it? No, it’s the Wynn.’” Vicente talks animatedly as we examine some pictures of the new Macao of casinos – so different to the one he knew 45 years ago.

**Soaring skyline**

We meet him at Casa Garden, the headquarters of Fundação Oriente (Orient Foundation) in the territory. The Lisbon-born architect has returned to Macao to

revisit his projects – including the World Trade Centre, the Fire-fighters’ Barracks (Quartel dos Bombeiros), the TDM building and the now-disappeared social housing of Fai Chi Kei. Vicente’s research is partly to prepare him for taking part in a documentary to register his contribution to the city.

The memories of a man with a background such as Vicente’s are many, but we ask him to set them aside for a moment, and look to the present and the future. Manuel Vicente enjoys this. “This capacity to create landmarks in the city of Macao makes us feel that we are surrounded by a foreground, a mid-to-far-ground and suddenly we are at the Leal Senado experiencing what is going on at Ilha Verde. That’s very attractive. The city vibrates,” he says.

Vicente’s hands never stop leafing through the magazines we have brought him, filled with photographs of the skyline. He lingers on the photographs. “This picture is really nice,” he comments, focusing on a night view of NAPE and all of its vertical neon lights. It cannot be said that the architect is surprised. The last time he visited Macao was in 2008 and a lot of what is here today was already here then.





But something happens every time Manuel Vicente lands on Macao's shores: "Every time I get to Macao I like it. There is a harmony between me and this place." That harmony does not fade with time or with the new buildings sprouting up in Macao.

"I have no nostalgia or fantasy of turning back time. I live very much in the present and try to find pleasure in my relationship with the here and now. I am always open to whatever arises in every area, from urban landscapes to relationships," he laughs.

### Symbols of the past

Vicente keeps looking at the pictures of the city he knows as though seeing it all for the first time. He recognises one of the symbols of the past that still remains. "Poor Bank of China," he says. "It used to provide an excellent view but now it's here in the middle. There was a time when nobody in Macao dared to build anything higher than the Bank of China."

Times have changed, and the projects of the new reclamation areas of Porto Exterior (NAPE), along with Grand Lisboa, dominate the skyline. "If you ask me if I find all of these buildings beautiful, I wouldn't say that. But I like the one with the two prisms at NAPE (Starworld Hotel). I find it very beautiful – a simple gesture, interesting enough to be worthwhile." The architect adds that he finds the new Lisboa casino intriguing because it is "so extravagant", yet he also found the old one interesting. "Other than that, it's obvious that I have some difficulty with the Venetian, though not much," he jokes.

### Dynamic density

Manuel Vicente quotes one of his old teachers as saying that "chaos is unidentified order. Everything is order; everything has a hidden logic that is difficult to unveil and is infinite." He is talking about Macao without having to name the city. "I find all of this enchanting, and I think this place is fabulous and very adventurous. Every time I'm here I feel I'm in an environment and context that is really exciting. It provides many anchorage points for my imagination, which stimulates it and leads me to react consciously and unconsciously." What fascinates him is the rhythm of life here. "In Macao, which is essentially a relatively small city,



there is a great density of occurrences. It's good to move around. Everything is always moving around. Things move, people move and the city follows behind us. I think that's brilliant, just as I like this dynamism, transformation and reclamation of land

from the sea to suddenly discover there's a 30-storey building," Vicente explains. When he talks about Macao's energy, this Portuguese citizen who has left and returned several times, uses the word 'excitement'. "It is

now very difficult to walk along Lisbon's Avenida da República, and feel excited. There are not many marvellous places and I think Macao is a marvellous place. If some of Lisbon's avenues had all of these casinos, perhaps they would be magnificent."





## Daring spirit

Since he arrived in 1962, Vicente has had the same viewpoint about Macao. On arrival, aged 28, he had professional opportunities that were inconceivable in Europe for somebody of his age. "I designed nine structures and built eight, which is completely incredible. In Europe there were architects ten years older than me who had neither designed nor built as much. That was the energy that I still feel in Macao today and across the whole of China. It is the energy that has led to the explosion of Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou," he says.

There is something that goes beyond the technical resources for building, which the architect calls a 'stock of desire'. In China, and specifically in Macao, "there's a belief that things can be done – a belief in things. They are societies with great dynamism, similar to those found at end of the 19th century in Europe." According to Vicente, the capacity to carry things out shows another of the characteristics of this place: "Macao is fearless, because fear is the worst enemy of society. Gambling is a structural element of that culture, and that daring element has drawn me to the territory a lot since I first came here."

## Backwards and forwards

Whilst he was in Macao, Manuel Vicente was acquainted with several versions of the city, but always registered the details of each period.

In the 1960s he remembers that "we knew people by their cars". The architect jokes that there were only half a dozen cars and that the people who owned them were well known; they had money. This talk should not be seen, however, as nostalgia, from a man who has learned to always love this place. "I was never one of those architects who wanted everything to stay the same – one of those whose clients were terrified when I went round and put everything back how I said it should have been. I've always made fun of that. I think that life is stronger than things," he says.

On this pilgrimage to the buildings he designed, his detachment remains. Of course Manuel Vicente would have liked Fai Chi Kei to have met an end other than demolition, but he accepts the decision. "If people die then why shouldn't things die? I've experienced that a few times in my life. If they pull it down, they pull it down. What can I do about it?"

Going back to the past was never his "favourite hobby."

"This thing of going back is always a bad decision," he laughs.

## Magnificent Macao

If we ask him to quantify the seeds he planted in Macao – the most recent of which is Nam Van Plaza, in the 21st century – he says they are "immense, I don't know how many A4 pages of my CV". Vicente notes that there were a substantial number, about 30 per cent, which remained on paper, but he is proud that the majority were built.

None of what is behind him is of interest to a man who wants to make the most of the years he has left and who still has the strength to do something in Macao. "Maybe circumstances would not allow for it, but I think that few people in this profession would be as deeply linked to Macao as I am. I think that I would have big ideas to organise the present and find anchorage for the future," he admits. According to Vicente, the relationship with the city "has to be fascination" and for that to be the case, "you have to like things, to like being alive and sharing."

Manuel Vicente enjoys living and maintains that he has had "quite a lot of luck" with what has come up along his path.

Optimistic, the architect that designed the now gone Torre dos Correios, Telefones e Telégrafos (Postal, Telephone and Telegraph Tower), has returned to Europe, a continent he does not like because he thinks "it is the old world, with everything falling apart, everything preserved in mothballs. It is a place where I feel uncomfortable and if I weren't so old I wouldn't be there. If somebody put me forward to make Zimbabwe's capital, I'd go right away."

With his hands clasping the sheets that show parts of Macao, Manuel Vicente talks about happiness. "There is a definition of happiness that I like a lot, describing it as a total agreement between being and life, between us and that which surrounds us. And, if you are open to it, you can live magnificently, because the world is magnificent." In Macao, or wherever you are. ■

*Photos by Allan Salas, Eric Tam, Mécia Gonçalves and Vítor Alves*



# 广州至珠海城际铁路开通仪式



## Getting Connected

West bank of PRD finally gets a railway line





**The west bank of the Pearl River Delta region (PRD)** has for a long time lacked a railway line to connect the cities and towns scattered in the region to the provincial capital of Guangzhou, and via Guangzhou to the rest of the country. Due to the problems of accessibility and connectivity, these cities and towns have therefore been more or less isolated up till now. The same is true for Macao and Zhuhai. The Beijing–Guangzhou and Guangzhou–Hong Kong railways, by contrast, have been in operation for more than a hundred years. The Beijing–Wuhan line started to run in 1905 and the Wuhan–Guangzhou line in 1936. In 1957 the two railway sections were joined together by the bridge across the Yangtze River. The Guangzhou–Kowloon line was completed in 1910/11. Yet it was not until 1979, after China began its economic reform and open-door policy, that the through train from Kowloon to Beijing resumed after a break of 30 years. Despite the long period of disruption, the Beijing–Kowloon railway has contributed significantly over the years to the integration of Hong Kong with mainland China. It has facilitated interaction and exchange as well as served as a route to refuge for Chinese at times of political turmoil in the mainland.

### A century-old plan

The rise of Hong Kong has led to Macao losing its role as a major international bridge between China and the overseas. The Beijing–Kowloon railway has contributed to the success of Hong Kong as a free-trade port connected to the Chinese mainland both by sea and by land. Macao has not been so fortunate. The Portuguese government signed an agreement with the Imperial Government of the Qing Dynasty on 11 November 1904 for the construction of a railway going through Zhuhai to both Guangzhou and Macao. However, with the change of regimes, it never materialised. In 1987, when Zhuhai became a special economic zone just like Shenzhen, the local government put forth a plan for a Guangzhou–Zhuhai railway. In January 1993 the then State Planning Commission approved the railway, and in both 1993 and 1997 the Zhuhai government held ceremonies to launch the construction of the railway. Both failed to lead to any progress, and in the first half of 1999 the project was suspended due to lack of funding. It was only in 2004 that the Guangdong government approved the Guangzhou–Zhuhai Inter-city Railway

as part of the regional inter-city railway network of the PRD. In September 2007 the State Commission of Development and Reform (successor of the State Planning Commission) finally approved the resumption of construction of the Guangzhou–Zhuhai line. Eventually the Guangzhou–Zhuhai Intercity Railway was completed and started operation in January 2011. The Guangzhou–Zhuhai Railway is slated for inauguration in 2012. There will be a division of labour between the two: the inter-city trains will cater for passengers, whilst the Guangzhou–Zhuhai line will be mostly for freight transport, its terminal situated in the Zhuhai port of Gaolan. So after more than a hundred years, the west bank of the PRD will now have railways connecting to the provincial capital – exactly a hundred years after the construction of the Guangzhou–Kowloon Railway. The delay may explain the economic eclipse of Macao in the last century, and the lackluster development of the cities on the west bank. Included amongst these is Zhuhai, which has become one of the special economic zones, but which has lagged substantially behind Shenzhen in every way. The new railways are thus strategically very important to Zhongshan,

Jiangmen, Zhuhai, and especially to Macao. The MSAR is going to build a light-rail system within the Special Administrative Region interchanging with the Guangzhou–Zhuhai Intercity Railway at Gongbei. The new rail links are crucial to helping the cities to rejoin the main business activities that centre on Guangzhou, very important to both Foshan on the one hand and Shenzhen on the other.

### Expanding network

More importantly, the two Guangzhou–Zhuhai railways are just the beginning of the extensive railway network the Guangdong government is building to revitalise the economies and societies on the west bank of the estuary of the PRD. There are other projects under construction to develop the railway links on the west bank into a local network embedded into the larger provincial and national networks. They are: the Zhongshan–Dongguan Intercity Line (to be completed by the end of 2012), the Guangdong West Coast Railway (planned to come into service in 2014), the Guangzhou–Foshan–Jiangmen–Zhongshan–Zhuhai Railway (whose construction is due to start in 2011), and



an extension of the Guangzhou–Zhuhai Intercity line (extended to the Zhuhai Airport and to be completed by 2015). The first cross-Pearl-River-estuary Shenzhen–Zhongshan Intercity line is also expected to be in service before 2015.

Beyond the current 12th Five-year Plan (2011–2015), there will be also the second cross-estuary line, the Zhuhai–Shenzhen Intercity Line, which is yet to be approved. By 2015, there will be a dense local railway network, centring on Zhuhai and Zhongshan, connecting to Guangzhou and Shenzhen the two key hubs of the provincial and national railway systems (including high-speed railways). The west-bank cities of the PRD will be merged into a residential zone one hour from the centre, creating a three-hour economic zone of the PRD. The latter will extend into capitals and major cities in the neighbouring provinces. In particular, the Guangdong Western Coast Railway will in the future link the coastal high-speed railway from Shanghai and Ningbo in East China to Hainan and the Beibu Bay in Guangxi.

### Accessibility and connectivity

The immediate effect of such a railway-led economic integration will be the improvement of the accessibility and connectivity of the area within the emerging PRD metropolitan region, avoiding any further marginalisation. It will also, through the railway connections at Gongbei and probably later at Hengqin, create a ‘seamless’ (as suggested by authorities in Zhuhai and Macao) connection of Macao with the PRD network, facilitating the integration of Macao into the regional system. By having the cross-estuary railways, the west bank cities and Macao will be part of the great circuit of subways, intercity lines and high-speed railways of the PRD. Guangzhou will remain as the centre of everything, but Zhuhai, and more importantly, Zhongshan, will be only half an hour to an hour’s travelling distance from the centre. They will find themselves in the middle of the metropolitan region, enjoying all the benefits of what the metropolitanisation process can offer.

### Shrinking distance

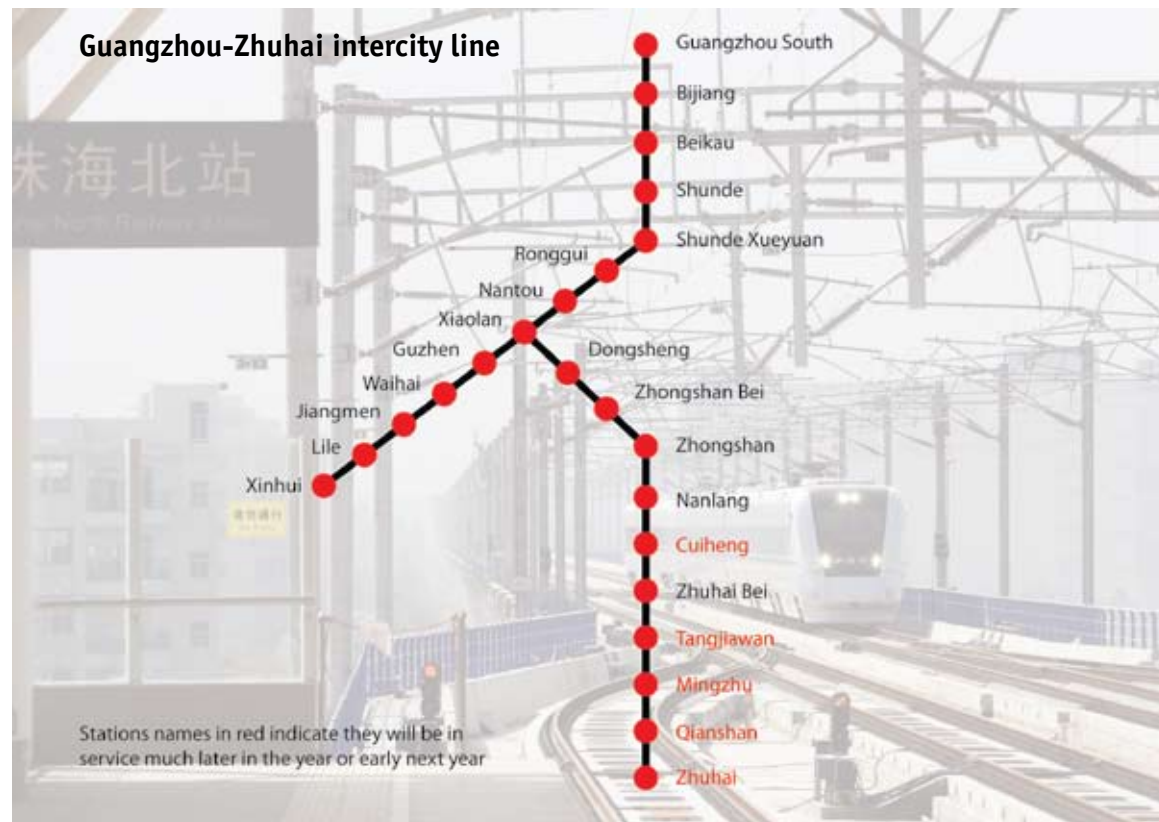
Economic and social integration should be the main outcomes of the intense investments into railways in the area. With only one hour’s travelling distance from Macao or Xinhui in Jiangmen to Guangzhou, people will be able to travel to and from easily. But more importantly, the difference between the property prices between Guangzhou city centre and the localities in the west bank of the PRD will drive businesses and residences away towards these localities. In terms of residences, the process has already started in the northern part of Panyu, which is adjacent to Guangzhou city centre. A large commuter community has emerged there, attracted by the significantly lower local property prices than in the Guangzhou old urban districts. Zhongshan, which is next to Foshan and Guangzhou, has also benefited already from the overspill of housing demand from Guangzhou and Foshan even before the two Guangzhou–Zhuhai railway lines have been put into operation.

International experiences, such as those of Japan and Western Europe, have shown that the shrinking of travelling distances by fast or high-speed railways can create an urban pattern of concentrated decentralisation. Concentrated clusters of businesses and residences spring up around railway

stations, especially around interchanges and hubs. Decentralisation from the city centres takes place as the shrinking distance has an impact on location choices of individuals and firms due to the large differentials in property prices between the city centre and the newly connected places.

### Road to success?

This pattern of urbanisation is very different to that supported by the proliferation of highways and roads. In Dongguan, for example, urbanisation has been linear along the highways. Supported by the extensive road system, they look very similar to urban sprawls in US cities – wasteful of land use and inconvenient for commuters, even when they travel by car, because of traffic jams. In Dongguan both businesses and residences have been scattered all over the city as well as at the town and village level, much against the urbanisation advantages of agglomeration and networking. The metropolitanisation process unleashed by Guangzhou by means of an extensive system of railways will, on the contrary, lead to an intensive pattern of urbanisation, concentrating at the nodes and hubs of the railway system, with much better benefits of agglomeration and networking.







### **A long way to go**

However, the benefits will not be seen immediately. So far only the Guangzhou– Zhuhai intercity line is in operation, and only travels up to Zhuhai North station, 4 stations away from Gongbei, near Macao. Most of the stations along the line are located far away from city and town centres, with poor connecting public transport. It will take years, probably until 2015, for the lines to be completed and for better arrangements for connecting transport. The current inflation of property prices in Zhongshan and Zhuhai have been more a result of speculation and investment rather than actual uses. The prices

are bound to come down after people realise that commuting is still not very convenient even with the intercity railways. It will be a few years from now till all the facilities and services emerge to make the stations better connecting points for commuters, travellers, shoppers and business people.

### **A new metropolis**

Even in these early days, with the intercity line incomplete, the railway system has gradually gained popularity as it is even cheaper than travelling by car and bus. Many people have already started to use the trains in conjunction with the park-and-ride

system. It would be better still if the railway-station operators added services to cater for the needs of the passengers, such as cafes and small shops selling souvenirs, food and other minor items of local speciality. The station economy of Europe and Japan may provide a good reference point. A better-serviced station would attract clients and induce passengers. Further business flows would in turn help to offer better services at the station.

There are still a few years to go before the network is fully operational. This may be our best chance now to consider how to utilise the railways for business and other purposes. No matter how the stations are developed, the greater connectivity of

the railways will save travelling and business costs of the local economies in the west bank of the PRD. It will also help Guangzhou at one end and Macao at the other to promote their services to residents and businesses within the railway network. With the cross-estuary railway lines in action before 2015, there will also be integration and more intensified exchanges between the west bank and the east bank. In the coming years we should see a steady metropolitanisation process covering more and more areas in the PRD. A metropolis from the PRD, Hong Kong and Macao will emerge and impress the world by the end of this decade. ■

*Photos by Gonçalo Pinheiro and Xinhua News Agency*



# Unique Island

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

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

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## Guangzhou ponders what to do with European heritage site

By Mark O'Neill

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**An island in the Pearl River in the centre of Guangzhou** contains one of the finest collections of European architecture in China. It houses dozens of buildings from the mid-19th century until 1949, when it was a concession given to Britain and France.

The city is debating what to do with this elegant legacy – the island of Shamian. Conservationists want the city to pay to restore the Shamian buildings to their original state, then turn them into a platform for Chinese and foreign culture. Others want to turn the island into a food street. A third proposal would lease the houses to major Chinese companies for use as offices.

The issue forms part of the future of Guangzhou, capital of the province of Guangdong, the factory of the world. Three decades of unprecedented prosperity from manufacturing and exports have transformed the city into a dazzling skyline of office blocks, five-star hotels, futuristic museums, an opera house, multi-layered expressways and traffic gridlock.

During this rapid transformation, much of the old city has disappeared and been replaced with new buildings, roads and subways. What place is there for history in the new Guangzhou? How much of its past does it want to retain, including that which reminds it of an era when it was the only city that could trade with the West yet when China was weak and subject to foreign powers?

“Shamian is a national treasure,” said Tang Guohua, Director of the Institute for the Research of Lingnan Architecture at Guangzhou University, and the most prominent conservationist in Guangzhou. “We should use it for cultural and not commercial purposes. The European Union has told me that it would be willing to rent the buildings for cultural purposes.”

But the government of Liwan district, which has management control of Shamian, seems uninterested. It prefers a solution that would generate rents and tax revenue, such as turning it into a food street or business centre.

### Rich history

While the debate rages, the island today offers a rich architecture that reflects the life of Guangzhou over the last 150 years.

After the Second Opium War of 1856–1860, the Qing dynasty leased 0.3 square kilometres on the banks of the Pearl River – 80 per cent to the British and 20 per cent to the French. The new tenants



dredged a canal to separate the site from the rest of the city as a security measure, and built two bridges over the canal.

The English bridge to the north was guarded by Sikh soldiers, while the French bridge to the east was guarded by Annamite French troops. The gates were closed each night at 10pm.

Foreign trading firms which had operated in Guangzhou for the previous 100 years in an area known as the Thirteen Factories moved to the safety and privilege of Shamian. They built large,

well-appointed offices and spacious homes for their managers to live in. Initially, the companies were British, like Dodwell & Co, Butterfield & Swire and ED Sassoon. Others followed from France, the US, Holland, Italy, Germany, Portugal and Japan.

Foreign banks followed, like the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank, Banque Indosuez, Citibank, the Bank of Taiwan and the Yokohama Specie Bank, which became the Bank of Tokyo. In 1904, electric street lights were installed. The visitors also built two small churches – one Protestant and one Catholic – some

hotels, a men’s club and a park and tennis courts on the riverside.

The buildings overlook the Pearl River outside Shamian, or, inside, a magnificent boulevard that runs the full length of the island. It boasts 143 trees, of which 134 are more than 100 years old, with the eldest 321 years of age.

While 12 Chinese cities had foreign concessions, only Guangzhou had the foreign buildings concentrated in a small area and on an island, making it a period piece that cannot be found in the rest of the country.





## Exodus and influx

During World War II, the foreign powers gave up their concessions. After 1949, all the foreign companies and their staff left Shamian. Their place was taken by Chinese companies who occupied the buildings, with a small number of their senior staff residing there. In a city recovering from years of war and destruction, the island was one of the best places to live.

Conscious of the need to preserve this treasure, the city banned cars from the island. Cyclists going there had to dismount and walk the rest of the way. The

city opened the park to the public in 1960. Everything changed with the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The ban on cars was lifted and hundreds of new residents moved in, many from outside Guangzhou. Large houses formerly occupied by a single family became home to dozens of people; they built makeshift kitchens and toilets, causing great damage to the structures. Shamian became a site of gambling and prostitution.

In the 1980s, the city began to appreciate once more the value of its legacy. Many of the new residents were moved out, and in 1996 the central government designated Shamian as a national cultural heritage

site. In 2000, the city government published a plan on how to preserve the buildings – the first such plan in China.

Since then, the debate has rumbled on as how best to use the site.

Only about half the original buildings remain. The rest have been demolished to make way for apartment buildings, offices and hotels. The most imposing new structure is the 34-storey, five-star White Swan Hotel overlooking the Pearl River. It opened in February 1983 as a pioneer joint-venture hotel in China.

The Customs Department and the provincial Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) have built large offices, the FAO

taking over the buildings that used to house the consulates of Britain, France and other countries.

State and private companies, banks, police stations and restaurants have moved into old structures, retaining the outside but transforming the inside to meet the requirements of modern business. There is a youth hostel, souvenir shops, a Starbucks and other coffee houses, as well as art galleries and workshops. The Polish consulate occupies one old building, with armed police on duty outside. Part of the US consulate is at one end of the island, although it is due to join the rest of the institution in another part of the city in 2013.





## A site for sore eyes

The main boulevard, lined by tall, veteran trees, remains unchanged and attracts a wide variety of visitors every day. In the morning, residents come out to walk their dogs, play badminton, do Taiqi and other exercises, and there is a small running track. "This is the best living environment in Guangzhou," said one of them. "We enjoy it daily. The rest of the city is a concrete jungle. But living conditions inside are not good – crowded and often poor toilet and kitchen facilities."

Then company staff arrive, many by car, to work in the offices. They are followed by tourists, Chinese and foreign, who come to enjoy the buildings, the ambience and the tranquillity. Among them are American couples who have adopted Chinese orphans – both boys and girls. Many stay at the White Swan Hotel. Two old buildings that have been completely restored are the two churches, which hold regular religious services. They attract many visitors.

The island is popular for weddings; it has a shop which specialises in wedding photos. It is also popular as a site to make advertisements or historical dramas for

television. In the evening, the island attracts dating couples and corporate guests invited to seafood restaurants.

The Asian Games, which the city hosted last November, was a great blessing for Shamian. The government spent 150 million yuan to restore the outside of the buildings and clean up the streets and green areas.

## Great Debate

Professor Tang leads the campaign to preserve Shamian and other historical areas of Guangzhou; he is adviser to the provincial government on cultural issues. "The next five–six years are a critical period," he said in an interview.

This is because, over the last two years, many of the residents have been relocated to new apartments, leaving 16 of the historic buildings empty. The urgent question is what to do with them. Tang wants the government to spend 300–400 million yuan – a fraction of what it spent on the Asian Games – to restore the buildings to their original state and provide security.

"It should offer leases of five–six years to tenants

who will use them for cultural purposes. If they do a proper job, the leases can be extended. It should not be for profit. Supporting us are the media, the public and the residents who come to love the place after they live there."

Like other cities in China, Guangzhou has demolished much of its historic heritage in the course of modernisation. Tang and the conservationists argue that Shamian is a cultural treasure which the city should cherish.

They received a boost in January this year when Mayor Zhang Guangning outlined his vision in the 12th five-year plan, which runs from this year until 2015. This included the objective of Guangzhou becoming a 'world cultural city'. "If the party, government, media and the public work together, this objective is tangible for us," Tang said.

The weakness of Tang's proposal is that it would involve spending money but bring no direct economic return. The other two proposals on the table would both generate substantial revenue. One is to turn Shamian into one of the city's 14 Food Streets, which would attract thousands of customers every week.

The other, favoured by the district government,

would invite major firms to set up headquarters on the island. This would bring in rents as well as the taxes which the firms would pay.

Both these proposals would mean demolishing the interiors of the buildings, to meet the needs of restaurants or modern, computer-centred offices; they would mean the end of preserving Shamian as a piece of history.

Susan He is director of the in-depth news department of the New Express daily; she has written extensively on the issue and campaigned to preserve the island.

"Many NGOs in Guangzhou are doing conservation work and raising public awareness. Thanks to their work, to our coverage in the media, and to lobbying by the residents, some of the old buildings and streets in Enning Lu (Road) were preserved. It is easier to do this in Shamian because it is a national preservation site. The question is how to protect it," she said in an interview.

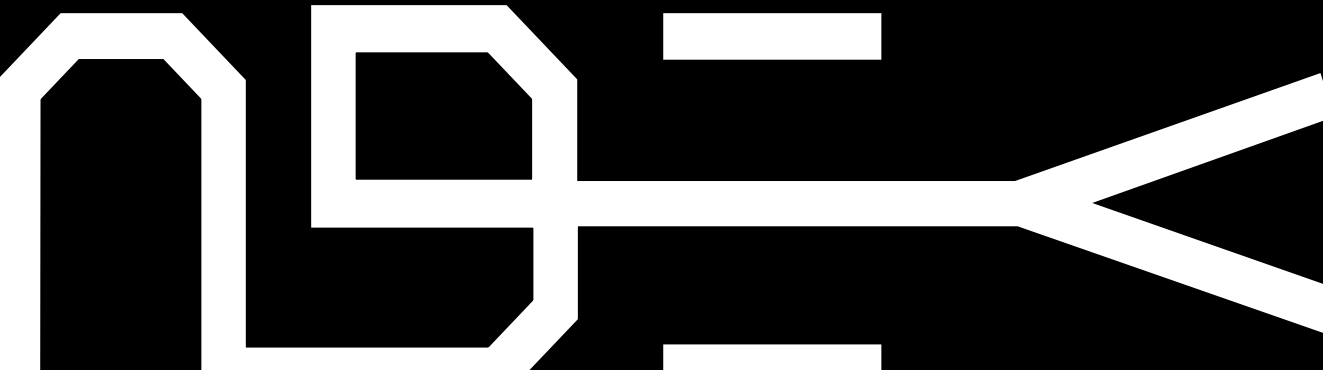
"We reflect the view of civil society. One proposal is to ask firms to do the restoration and give them compensation elsewhere," she said.

The future will decide the destiny of this unique piece of Guangzhou's history. ■ *Photos by Eric Tam*



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## Taking It to the Next Level

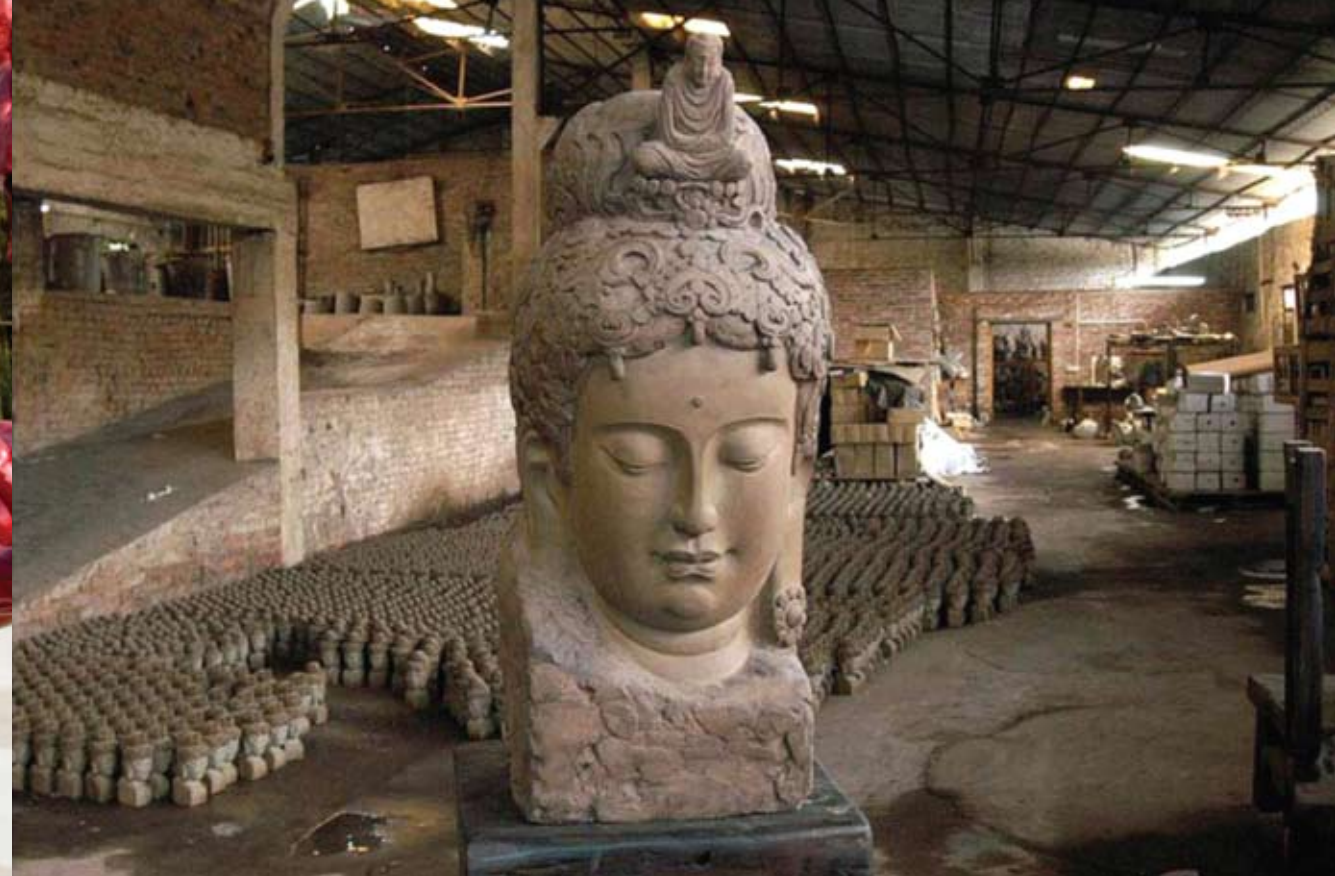
### Export-driver Foshan seeks to upgrade itself

By Staff Reporter

On a prime site in the centre of Foshan, in Guangdong province, a Hong Kong developer is building the largest real-estate project in the city's history. It plans to sell upmarket apartments to buyers from all over China and overseas, as well as to local people. "Foshan is in a transition phase," said Kinkey Zhang, a consultant in the project's sales office on the site. "Before, it was a city that made

porcelain and bath tubs. Now it is moving to another level." Lingnan Tiandi ('Heaven and Earth in South China') is the work of Shui On Land, which has built similar projects in six different Chinese cities. The most famous is in downtown Shanghai, where it built a complex of restaurants, bars, shops and boutiques on an area of 57,000 square metres in a style that imitates the city's traditional architecture.





The Lingnan project is a sign of how Foshan wants to redefine itself. Over the last 30 years, it has become one of the manufacturing powerhouses of Guangdong province. Last year its GDP reached 564 billion yuan, an increase of 12 per cent over the 481.5 billion of 2009. It ranked in the top 12 in the country, ahead of many cities with a larger population than Foshan's six million. In the same year – 2009 – its individual bank savings reached 394.5 billion.

It has become one of China's largest producers of household electrical appliances, building ceramics, aluminium materials and stainless steel as well as hosting the country's biggest markets for furniture, flower pots and soya sauce.

Foshan now wants to move out of low-cost, polluting industries into new and higher-value-added sectors. It is slimming down its centuries-old ceramics industry, in the interests of cleaner air and water, and is moving into high technology, tourism, finance and other services. It has attracted companies making photo-electron screens, LEDs (light-emitting diodes) and photovoltaics.

Its target for annual GDP growth in the 2011–2015 period is 10 per cent.

Covering an area of 65 hectares in the city centre, Lingnan Tiandi is an important part of this future.

It will have an entertainment and commercial area of 70,000 square metres – double the size of the complex in Shanghai – with bars, restaurants, hotels and cinemas. It aims to attract clients from all over Guangdong. Part of the complex has already opened, during the spring festival of 2011.

The project's first phase, covering 110–250 square metres, is offering villas and apartments at a starting price of two million yuan.

Guandong's rapidly expanding transport network is an essential part of this upgrading process. A subway line to Guangzhou, the provincial capital, opened in November 2010, enabling people to live in Foshan and commute to work in the capital. In January this year, a light rail line opened that links Foshan with Guangzhou and Zhuhai. These new transport links helped to take retail sales in the city last year to 165.7 billion yuan, a rise of 18 per cent over 2009.

### Foshan as forerunner

Foshan means the 'hill of the Buddha'. It was in 398 that a Buddhist monk from Kashmir arrived in the district and started to preach the religion. The town received its name in 628 because its many statues of the Enlightened One.

In imperial times, it was an important trading and distribution centre. It also became a major producer of ceramics, an industry that has continued until today. It is famous for Cantonese opera, martial arts, textiles and traditional medicine, as well as being the native place of millions of overseas Chinese.

Its transformation into a manufacturing centre of national importance began in the 1980s. Beijing announced a new policy of economic reform involving opening the door to the outside world. Guangdong was the pioneer province.

Foshan seized this opportunity like few cities in China. It aggressively courted foreign investment, principally from Hong Kong and the Chinese diaspora. These investors set up factories in Foshan, bringing with them capital, technology and raw materials while the city provided cheap land and labour.

Leading the way were two of the five districts that constitute the city – Nanhai and Shunde. By 1985, Shunde had 14 factories making 8.81 million electric fans a year, ranking top in China. The city encouraged each township to specialise in one product, including its parts and components, to bring an economy of scale and a competitive advantage.

Foshan pioneered the use of outside capital, including loans, bonds and shares, to finance infrastructure such as roads and bridges. It was also

a forerunner in the disposal of state firms, selling them to their managers, to outside investors and foreign companies, and reducing the number of government workers. By the end of 1996, Shunde had sold 1,001 state companies.

In February 1999, a Foshan ceramics firm listed shares in Singapore, the first private Chinese company to list abroad.

In 2009, the private sector accounted for 60.4 per cent of Foshan's economy, compared to 25.9 per cent for foreign-invested companies and 13.7 per cent for state firms. It had 324,500 private companies, which produced more than 60 per cent of the city's industrial output. It now has more than 4,000 foreign-invested firms, of which 70 per cent are owned by overseas Chinese.

Their main products include electrical appliances, machinery and equipment, metallic goods, ceramics, textiles, electronics, food, plastics, precision machinery, pharmaceuticals and furniture.

Foshan produces 60 per cent of China's building ceramics, 85 per cent of its ceramics machinery, 50 per cent of its processed aluminium materials and 25 per cent of its compact discs.

The measures Foshan took were followed by cities across China, Foshan's brave steps rewarded by gaining first-user advantage.





Midea Group Headquarters

In 2010, it contracted foreign investment of US\$2.188 billion, an increase of 116 per cent over 2009, and attracted actual foreign investment of US\$1.967 billion, an increase of five per cent. During the 2006–2010 plan period, it attracted a total of US\$8.32 billion in foreign investment, including 90 of the Fortune 500 companies, and an increase of 170 per cent over the 2001–2006 period. In 2010, exports rose 31 per cent over the year before to US\$32.2 billion, and imports rose 31 per cent to US\$18 billion. During the 2006–2010 period, it recorded foreign trade totalling US\$201 billion, an increase of 2.29-fold from the previous five-year plan period.

### Big brand names

Foshan's most famous company is Midea, one of China's biggest manufacturers of household appliances whose sales last year exceeded 100 billion yuan, up 33 per cent from the 2007 level. It has 14 production centres in China and three abroad, 21 overseas branches, three listed companies and employs 150,000 people. It exports a significant proportion of its output. Established in 1968, the company started producing household appliances in 1980, going on to use

the Midea brand the following year. In 1997, the management team reorganised the company with 'a separation of powers' between shareholders, the board of directors and management. In 1999, it started to offer shares to its employees, to give them an ownership stake in the business. Last year Midea became the first company in Foshan to achieve sales of more than 100 billion yuan. Its products include air-conditioners, refrigerators, microwave ovens, washing machines, electric cookers, water heaters and kitchen appliances. Chief Executive Huang Jian said the firm aims to become a global company along the lines of Philips and Matsushita (known globally as Panasonic). It aims to be the largest manufacturer of household appliances in the world by 2015. "Last year we spent one billion yuan on research and development of household appliances. We want to become China's Matsushita, which has more than 50 per cent of the Japanese market with its products." This year it will invest 200 million yuan to double the number of its retail outlets in China to 6,000, and aims for 15,000 by 2015, with one in each county across the nation. Chinese manufacturers account for 60 per cent of the global market for electrical appliances, with exports in 2009 worth US\$13.8 billion. In the third

quarter of 2010, exports accounted for 9.3 billion yuan of Midea's revenue of 21.1 billion. However 85 per cent of these exports carry the names of other companies and only 15 per cent the Midea brand. Huang said his long-term strategy was to establish the Midea name in markets around the world. Another global brand in Shunde is Galanz, the world's largest producer of microwave ovens. A private company founded by seven people in 1978, it started with the production of duck feathers. In 1993, it signed an agreement with Toshiba to make microwave ovens under licence. Now it produces more than 15 million ovens a year and employs nearly 50,000 people. It has R & D centres in the US and South Korea and 10,000 sales outlets in 170 countries and areas around the world. It plans to set up production bases in South East Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

### Pots for money

For centuries, ceramics was the most important industry in Foshan; it made the city famous all over China. But the government has decided that the air and water pollution that the industry brings is too serious, and so has published new pollution and

production standards. Only companies that can meet these standards will be allowed to remain in Foshan. Before 2008, the city had more than 260 ceramics producers. The new plan calls for only 42 to remain: in the first half of 2009, nearly 70 firms and more than 100 production lines were closed. Their owners have the option of taking their factories to other cities in China. It is a drastic and brutal restructuring, especially hard on those who have devoted their working lives to this traditional industry. It is part of what Guangdong Communist Party chief Wang Yang calls 'changing the bird in the rattan cage' – upgrading the province's industry from energy-intensive, polluting and low-value-added products to those with a high level of technology and skill as well as to the service sector. In January, a Hong Kong company that had been producing leather goods in Foshan for 25 years announced that it was moving its plant to Qinzhou in the southwest region of Guangxi. It is investing 300 million yuan in the new facility. In Foshan, it used French and Italian equipment and employed foreign experts to produce leather goods, mainly for export. This is the kind of transformation into less-polluted industries that the city wants.







The financial sector is a priority. In 2007, Foshan opened the Guangdong finance and high-technology service park in the Nanhai district, to provide back-office services to financial institutions, like data-processing, call centres and training. HSBC has opened a global operations centre there, providing financial and banking services, including credit cards, loans, insurance and management of human resources. Insurer AIA is investing US\$70-80 million in an office building to house its telephone sales, training centre and back-up services for South China. Standard Chartered Bank has signed an agreement

to open a branch in the park; it will be the first foreign bank branch in the city, which currently has 17 domestic financial institutions. Three decades of rapid growth have created a high level of savings and of demand for financial services. As of the end of last year, Foshan's banks had savings of 846.2 billion yuan, an increase of 17.35 per cent from the year before. Its financial institutions reported a profit of 14.4 billion yuan for the year, an increase of 4.473 billion over the previous year. The city aims to have 160,000 people working in the financial sector by 2015, making it the fastest-growing service sector. ■

Photos by Gonçalo Pinheiro

# XXII FESTIVAL DE ARTES DE MACAU

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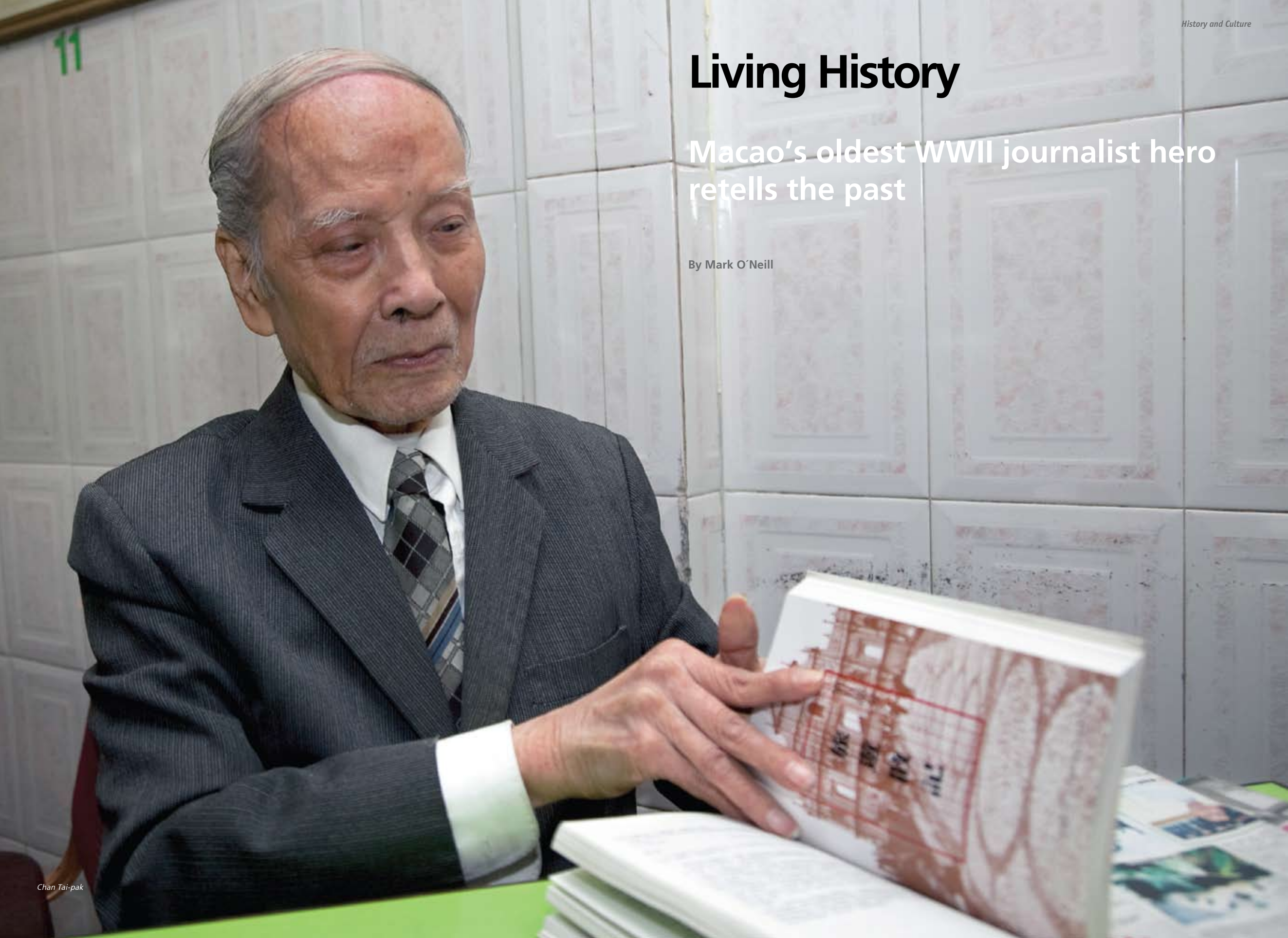




# Living History

Macao's oldest WWII journalist hero retells the past

By Mark O'Neill





**At 96, Chan Tai-pak is the oldest working journalist in Macao** – possibly the world. Last year he retired from the Tai Chung Pou newspaper after working there since 1935. Even now, he still writes articles for the paper.

Chan is the last surviving leader of the Salvation Society of Macao (SSM), the main anti-Japanese organisation established in the city in 1937. He has written a gripping account of the war years in a book “Tianming Zhai” (“the Dawn Breaks”), which he published in 1995.

“I worked every day through World War II,” he said in a clear voice as he sipped a glass of hot milk. We were in the place where he takes afternoon tea every day – the Vitória restaurant, named after Japan’s surrender in August 1945.

“Often we had a power cut and had to use candles. Newsprint was very expensive, so we had to use coarse paper, with the newspaper running to four or eight pages. You had to finish stories early, to give them to the censors to read. They would delete words like ‘patriotic’ or ‘enemy forces’ and leave a blank. So you had to be very subtle and find ways to express things indirectly.”

Chan himself is part of Macao’s history. In 2009, he donated his papers, photographs and other documents of the SSM to the Macao Museum, thereby passing on a priceless record of Macao’s wartime past. The then Chief Executive Edmund Ho received Chan in person to express the thanks of a grateful population.

### A tough start

Chan was born in 1915 into a poor family in Xinhui, Guangdong



“The Dawn Breaks / Courtesy of Macao Museum

province. He had one brother and five sisters. His father held a modest job in a transport company that ferried people between Macao and cities in Guangdong. His mother died when he was young, and his father went on to drink heavily and then die before he was 50. So Chan was brought up by his step-mother.

Due to poverty, he could only study up to the end of primary school, but he was determined to continue. Through the introduction of a friend, he moved to Guangzhou, where

he continued his studies at a Protestant school. Attached to it was a factory, where he worked at the same time; he lived on the lowest expenses possible.

In these difficult circumstances, often going without meals and sleeping little, he graduated from secondary school. Eager to become a journalist, he studied writing and literature, and read books on the profession. He also read European philosophers like Bertrand Russell and Georg Hegel, as well as Chinese classics, including books on Mencius and Confucius.



Salvation Society of Macao (SSM) / Courtesy of Macao Museum

Chan Tai-pak (second row, fourth from the right)

In 1935, he started work at the Chaoyang Daily in Macao and soon after took a second job editing at the Dai Chung Pao, where he would work for more than 70 years.

### Salvation Society of Macao

The editors and staff of these two newspapers were key players in establishing the SSM in August 1937, one month after Japan’s attack on the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing that was the start of its all-out invasion of China.

The chairman of the inaugural meeting of the SSM was Chen Xiaowei, the founder and director of the Chaoyang Daily. The meeting was held at a school, attended by more than 100 people from 50 different

organisations. Prominent among them were journalists, teachers, and people in sports, music and drama. As many schools from Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Zhongshan had moved to Macao, teachers were in the front line of the anti-Japanese movement, educating their students and the public at large about the meaning of the war.

The meeting considered how, in this corner of China far from the front line, they could help the war effort. They concluded that the best they could do was raise money to help the army and those made refugees by the fighting. It set up an 11-member board and was based at the Chaoyang Daily site. Its motto was ‘Raising money to assist with disasters and help our compatriots who are suffering’.

It was the start of the largest mass mobilisation in Macao’s history. Over the next few years, the SSM raised hundreds of thousands of patacas, which it donated to the national government to aid the war effort and for refugees.

On 13–15 August 1939, the public contributed 100,000 yuan – an enormous amount considering that the average monthly salary at the time was 17–18 yuan. The SSM organised charity shows, films and auctions, raised money on the streets and left donation boxes on ferries, in theatres and public areas.

The SSM had offices in Chan’s two newspapers; they were instrumental in explaining the issues to the public and inspiring them to make donations.



Chan was put in charge of the SSM's general office and helped to organise teams that were sent into Guangdong. He was so busy that he had time only for editing work but not to write his own columns.

"The period between 1937 and the winter of 1939 was a time of great energy," he wrote in his memoirs. "I threw myself wholeheartedly into the relief work of the SSM." It was the most important anti-Japanese organisation in Macao. But it had to cease operations after the winter of 1940 because of restrictions imposed by the colonial government who were eager to preserve their neutrality and avoid occupation by the Japanese army.

### Challenge of Censorship

From 1940, the situation in Macao began to deteriorate, and this kind of work became more difficult. "In 1942, things became worse with the fall of Hong Kong and neighbouring areas, making Macao into a 'lonely island'," Chan wrote. "The power of the enemy in Macao grew rapidly, with its lackeys running wild. On the war-news front, we had to continue our job and maintain the opinion of the nation, and absolutely could not let it be tarnished by the enemy's propaganda.

"The colonial government could not resist this pressure and was forced to ban all kinds of patriotic activities in Macao. The Japanese secret police carried out assassinations of people they did not like."

Chief among them was Liang Yan-ming, head of the Kuomintang branch in Macao and principal of the Chong Shi Middle School.

He was murdered on 14 December 1942. He had been a well-known personality in the city who had played a prominent role in anti-Japanese activities. The killing stunned the entire community.

One result of this pressure was censorship of the media imposed by the government. The censor required newspapers to submit all their copy, including advertisements, by 23:00 each day, and blacked out words like 'enemy troops' and 'war of resistance'. This tested the skills of Chan and his colleagues to find a form of words to report the news while satisfying the censor. It became especially difficult in the last months of the war, in reporting the victories of the Allies.

Collaborators of the Japanese set up two newspapers that carried the official line and promoted the idea of the 'Great East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere'.

### Fearful Famine

While fighting the propaganda battle every day in his office, Chan also had to fight the daily battle for survival outside. Like his fellow citizens, he saw the flood of refugees after the fall of Hong Kong, and the great efforts of civil society to feed, clothe and house them. With the Japanese imposing a sea blockade, the only source of food was the mainland. "In this period of shortages of grain and other necessities, a small number of collaborators seized the opportunity to buy up and hoard food, making the situation even worse. This caused a scenario unprecedented in Macao – famine: an uncountable number of people crying piteously

for food. Add to this an especially cold winter and the arrival of fierce, bitter winds. This made a 'black spring' (in 1942). People died of cold and starvation."

The police were forced to round up beggars and vagabonds and keep them in closed camps. They were like prisons – poorly equipped, with low-quality food and stern discipline. Many people died in the camps.

In the summer of 1942, thanks to the efforts of Macao people and overseas Chinese, 17,000 of these refugees were able to go home.

"At that time, a patriotic person faced all kinds of pressure and difficulties, to maintain his attitude until the day of victory," he wrote. "To preserve this unswerving national sentiment was not only very hard but also worthy of great respect."

### Secrets of Longevity

After World War II, Chan went on to a long and distinguished career as a journalist and editor in Macao. He has been an active member of the Macao Journalists' Association and of an association of SSM members, which has held regular meetings.

He never married; he leads a disciplined life, which follows his professional career. "When I worked in the newspaper, I became used to working late into the night and going to sleep at about four o'clock in the morning. I continue this routine now, getting up at midday and eating lunch."

He took afternoon tea at one restaurant every day for 20 years before it closed, after which he moved to the Victory restaurant. He orders in dinner

from outside establishments and eats it at home. He passes the early hours watching television or reading books, magazines and newspapers.

He does not smoke nor drink alcohol or coffee; he takes green tea, which has medicinal properties. He eats mainly fruit and vegetables and a little meat.

"I do not lose my temper. My heart is calm. My sight, hearing and memory are clear. I do not believe in religion but in philosophy."

His brother and sisters have passed away, though he has relatives in Macao and Hong Kong.

### Macao Memoirs

The Macao Historical Society published Chan's memoirs in 1995. They contain a total of 400,000 characters, dating back to 1933. They include commentaries, articles, profiles, travel pieces, discussion of Chinese linguistics, and historical material about Macao.

In September 2009, Chan donated more than 100 original photographs, letters and other documents relating to the SSM to the Macao Museum. He had preserved them meticulously for six decades, in the hope that the public would be able to see and understand the work of the SSM and the spirit that inspired its members.

The then Chief Executive Edmund Ho Hau Wah along with Heidi Ho, the then director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, received Chan to express their thanks for this invaluable historical gift. The former Chief Executive said that it would enable future generations of Macao to have a better understanding of their past and



Office for the Macao Four Circles for Disaster Relief Association / Courtesy of Macao Museum

get to know their own history. He expressed his deep admiration and respect for the indomitable patriotic spirit of the people of Macao during the terrible years of the war.

In April 2010, Chan donated to the Macao Journalists' Association a large collection of personal photographs and other materials which he had amassed over his life, including those related to the association itself.

Its president Lu Bo expressed his deep appreciation, saying that the collection was of great value and a distillation of Chan's hard work for many years. He said that it would enable the new generation of members to better understand its history and the history of Macao society. ■





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**Macao's panda era starts with opening of panda pavilion in Coloane island**

Macao, China, 18 Jan – Macao's state-of-the-art panda pavilion in Seac Pai Van Park in Coloane island opened its doors. But the general public had to keep waiting for 10 further days before they got a glimpse of the panda pair Kai Kai and Xin Xin.



18 JAN

**Edmund Ho receives top Macao medal**

Macao, China, 29 Jan – Macao's former chief executive, Edmund Ho Hau Wah, has been awarded the Grand Lotus Medal of Honour – the highest decoration granted by the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR). Ho, who headed the local government between December 1999 and 2009, received the medal from his successor Fernando Chui Sai On in an awards ceremony held at the Macao Cultural Centre.



29 JAN

**FM commissioner stresses Macao's role as hub for ties with Lusophone nations**

Macao, China, 15 Feb – Foreign Ministry Commissioner Lu Shumin on Monday underlined Macao's "strengthened" role as a hub for China's economic and trade ties with Portuguese-speaking countries.



15 FEB



19 JAN



07 FEB



17 FEB

**Macao records nearly 25 million visitor arrivals last year**

Macao, China, 19 Jan – Macao recorded close to 25 million visitor arrivals last year, representing an increase of 15 per cent over 2009, Director of the Macao Government Tourist Office, Joao Manuel Costa Antunes, said.

**Macao's exports drop, imports rise in 2010**

Macao, China, 7 Feb – Macao recorded falling exports and rising imports last year, resulting in an external merchandise trade deficit of 37.16 billion patacas (US\$ 4.64 billion), according to the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC). The trade deficit rose 27.1 per cent year-on-year.

**Macao logs 7.7 million hotel guests in 2010**

Macao, China, 17 Feb – Macao, which has around 550,000 residents, logged a record 7.75 million hotel guests last year, an increase of 15.5 per cent on 2009, the Statistics and Census Bureau has announced.



## Ten billion patacas in 10 years to upgrade medical services in Macao

Macao, China, 28 Feb – The government plans to spend about 10 billion patacas (US\$ 1.25 billion) within the next 10 years to improve medical services, including a new public hospital on the Cotai Strip. Construction is due to start in 2013, and the hospital is expected to be fully operational by 2020, Health Bureau Director Lei Chin Ion announced.

## Macao-Guangdong ink cooperation pact to boost ties

Beijing, China, 6 Mar – Macao and Guangdong signed a framework cooperation agreement in Beijing in a ceremony witnessed by Vice President Xi Jinping who oversees Macao and Hong Kong affairs for the central government. Guangdong Governor Huang Huahua said that the pact was creating the foundation and setting the principles and targets for bilateral cooperation in the next decade.

## Galaxy Macao to open on 15 May 2011

Macao, China, 10 Mar – Galaxy Entertainment Group, controlled by Hong Kong billionaire Lui Che Woo, said it will open the new 550,000-square-metre Galaxy Macao on 15 May at a total investment of HK\$14.9 billion (US\$ 1.9 billion). The new casino-resort will have 450 gambling tables when it opens, as well as 3 hotels: Banyan Tree, Hotel Okura and Galaxy Hotel.

## Macao inflation eases in February

Macao, China, 21 Mar – Macao's consumer price inflation slowed in February after rising in the previous month, data released by the Statistics and Census Service revealed. The consumer price index increased 4.70 per cent year-on-year in February, slower than the 4.92-per cent growth seen in January.

## Law-makers pass public servants' 5 per cent pay hike

Macao, China, 23 Mar – The Legislative Assembly passed the government-drafted pay-hike bill for Macao's 22,700 public workers, who may receive their 5.08 per cent salary increase next month – backdated to January.

## Macao's GDP rises 26.2 per cent in 2010

Macao, China, 25 Mar – Macao's GDP for the whole year of 2010 reached 217.32 billion patacas (27.16 billion US dollars), with per-capita GDP amounting to 398,071 patacas, the city's Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) said. According to the figures, Macao's GDP rose by 26.2 per cent in real terms last year. Economic growth for the fourth quarter of last year stood at 27.9 per cent in real terms.

28 FEB



06 MAR



10 MAR



21 MAR



23 MAR



25 MAR



03 MAR



06 MAR



16 MAR



22 MAR



23 MAR



29 MAR



## Macao light-rail project set to create 4,000 jobs

Macao, China, 3 Mar – The government signed the 4.68-billion-pataca (US\$ 585 million) contract with Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) for the Macao Light Rapid Transit (LRT) project. Transportation Infrastructure Office Director, Lei Chan Tong, said he expected the project to create about 4,000 job opportunities.

## Border checkpoint hours to be extended as early as year-end

Macao, China, 6 Mar – The daily opening hours of the Macao-Zhuhai Border Gate checkpoint are expected to be extended by two or three hours by the end of this year or early next year, the head of the government's Policy Research Office, ex-legislator Lao Pun Lap, said.

## Macao's economy expected to expand 13 pct on average in 2011 and 2012, says The Economist

London, United Kingdom, 16 March – The Macao economy is expected to see real average annual growth of 13 per cent this year and in 2012, after having posted growth of 25 per cent in 2010, according to the March 2011 edition of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), of The Economist group.

## Macao Arts Festival to liven up local heritage sites

Macao, China, 22 Mar – The month-long Macao Arts Festival enters its 22nd year this year, featuring the largest number of programmes ever for the event, according to Guilherme Ung Vai Meng, president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau. The festival boasts some 29 programmes with over 86 shows performed by artists from around the world, such as Argentina, France, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Israel, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom, as well as some home-grown productions.

## Macao visitor arrivals rise in February

Macao, China, 23 Mar – Visitor arrivals to Macao increased at a faster pace in February, than the same time last year, data released by the Statistics and Census Service showed. The number of travelers visiting the city grew 5.18 per cent year-on-year to 2.16 million in February.

## Survey shows job satisfaction in Macao rises

Macao, China, 29 Mar – A private study shows that the overall job satisfaction of both public- and private-sector employees is rising. The Macao Employee Confidence and Satisfaction Index 2011 (MECSI) was conducted by the Macao University of Science and Technology's (MUST) Market Research Centre, one of the sub-divisions of the university's Institute for Sustainable Development.



**Macao's Secretary for Economy and Finance says forum's development fund to be set up 'soon'**  
 Macao, China, 30 Mar – Secretary for Economy and Finance, Francis Tam Pak Yuen, said that a previously announced US\$1 billion development fund for the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries would be set up soon. Tam said that the China Development Bank was playing a leading role in the establishment of the fund and that preparation work was currently under way.

**Air Macau records a US\$ 29 million profit in 2010**  
 Macao, China, 30 Mar – Air Macau last year recorded its highest profit ever – 231.8 million patacas (US\$ 29 million), the flag carrier's executive board president, Zheng Yan, announced. The airline had recorded consecutive annual losses since 2005.

**Macao to have first environmental planning until 2020**  
 Macao, China, 31 Mar – Chief Executive of Macao, Chui Sai On, said that the government was preparing the first Environmental Planning of Macao for the next 10 years, with the vision of "Building a low-carbon Macao; creating green living together". Chui made the remarks at the opening of the 2011 Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum and Exhibition (MIECF), which lasts for three days.



## ANGOLA-CHINA Partners in Africa

30 MAR



30 MAR



31 MAR



30 MAR

31 MAR

01 APR

**Portugal gives highest award to former Macao chief for outstanding contribution**  
 Macao, China, 30 Mar – Edmund Ho Hau Wah, former chief executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region, was bestowed with the Grand Cross Medal of the Order of Merit by Portugal, for his contribution to Macao's rapid development and friendship between China and Portugal.

**Macao trade deficit widens to US\$ 396 million in February**  
 Macao, China, 31 Mar – Macao's merchandise trade deficit widened year-on-year in February, data released by the Statistics and Census Service showed. The trade deficit rose to MOP 3.17 billion (US\$ 396.2 million) in February from MOP 2.39 billion the previous year.

**Macao's casino receipts hit new record in March**  
 Macao, China, 1 Apr – Macao's casino sector hit a new monthly record last month when its gross receipts from games of chance reached 20.08 billion patacas (US\$ 2.510 billion), the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) announced.



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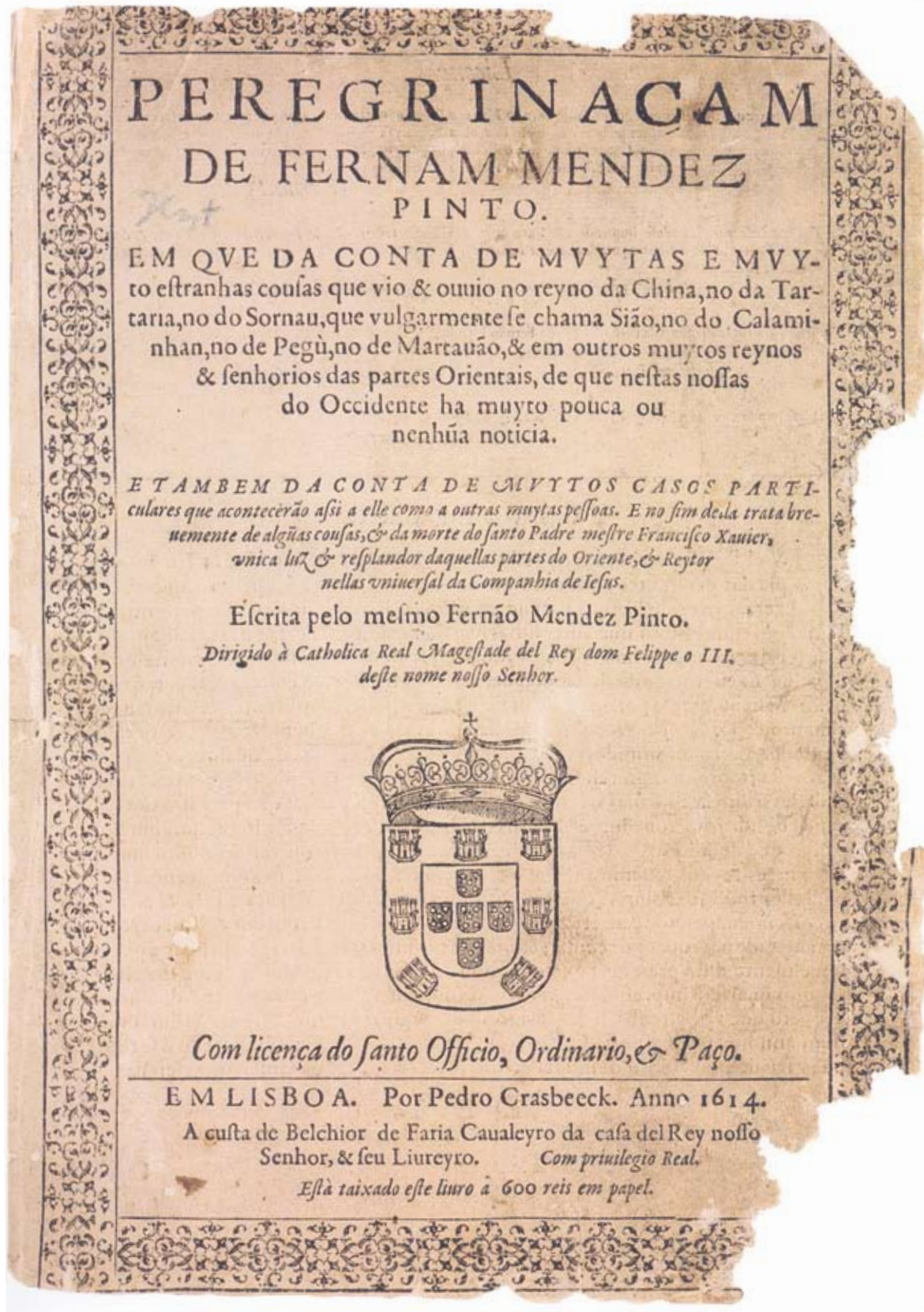
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# Asia Revisited

## New research gives 17th-century travelogue *Peregrinação* fresh value

By Staff Reporter



1st edition of *Peregrinação* dated 1614  
Courtesy of Macao Science and Culture Centre (CCCM) in Lisbon

**Peregrinação (Peregrination), is Portugal's answer to The Travels of Marco Polo. The autobiography by Fernão Mendes Pinto recounts the oriental adventures and misadventures of the Portuguese adventurer, explorer, mercenary, missionary, trader and navigator.**

**For a long time the narratives in *Peregrinação* were relegated to the realm of fiction, or at least to that of exaggeration and romanticisation of historical facts. The Portuguese pun 'Fernão, Mentos? Mintol!' ('Fernão, do you lie? Yes, I do!') neatly captures people's perceptions of the book. But nearly four centuries after publication, international research produced in spring 2010 has shed a new light on the historical value of *Peregrinação*.**

Published for the first time in 1614, Fernão Mendes

Pinto's book was often seen as a travel story. Deemed as fanciful in its narrative of extraordinary adventures and the exotic peoples and cultures it described, it was mainly studied from a literary point of view. Recently, however, it has been the focus of work by historians and researchers. This has established its value as an important source for studying not only the Portuguese presence in the East, but also, more importantly, the history of Asia itself, especially South East Asia in the 16th century.





Jorge Santos Alves

### Tireless team

A multi-disciplinary team of almost 40 Portuguese and foreign researchers have read, analysed, commented on and annotated *Peregrinação* in a systematic and substantiated way. They have provided it with a new historical validity, whilst clarifying the information contained in the text and revealing new research clues. The result is over 1,600 pages across four volumes following four years of research.

For the project's coordinator, Jorge Santos Alves, one of the starting points was to reject the "number of set ideas that lead to *Peregrinação* not being seen as a reliable document.

"It was not even a question of overcoming prejudices (about the credibility of the information in the work) because we denied them from the outset. The idea behind this work was to look at *Peregrinação* and at Fernão Mendes Pinto in a way that would outright deny what I usually call *Peregrinação*'s attachment to the lie detector."

The first volume of this revisited *Peregrinação* includes essays by specialists who analyse, comment on and provide historical context for the more

significant aspects of Mendes Pinto's work. The second volume restores the original text, recovering passages omitted from some editions and setting the writing and style of the era. The third volume brings together an impressive work of archaeology, along with annotations on a wide variety of references made by Mendes Pinto, from place names and demography of the locations he wandered around, to the region's botany, via observations about the political and social organisation of the kingdoms of the time. The final volume provides themed indexes that are vital for studying the work across the various strata and veins of knowledge it contains.

### Unravelling historical geography

"The aim was to create a new historiographical discourse about *Peregrinação* and look at the work in relation to multiple aspects – from political and economic history to religious and military history; from natural history to the history of art, to historic sociology and linguistics," says Jorge Santos Alves, researcher for the Institute of Oriental Studies of Portugal's Universidade Católica (Catholic University).

Mendes Pinto was himself an empire-builder and coloniser, and set out to write more than mere official stories of empires and colonisers. Through the narrative of his adventures and misadventures, his observations and reflections reveal a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-faceted world. This world is constantly in mutation at the whim of commercial interests and the political and strategic conveniences of the moment, in the 16th century just as they are now.

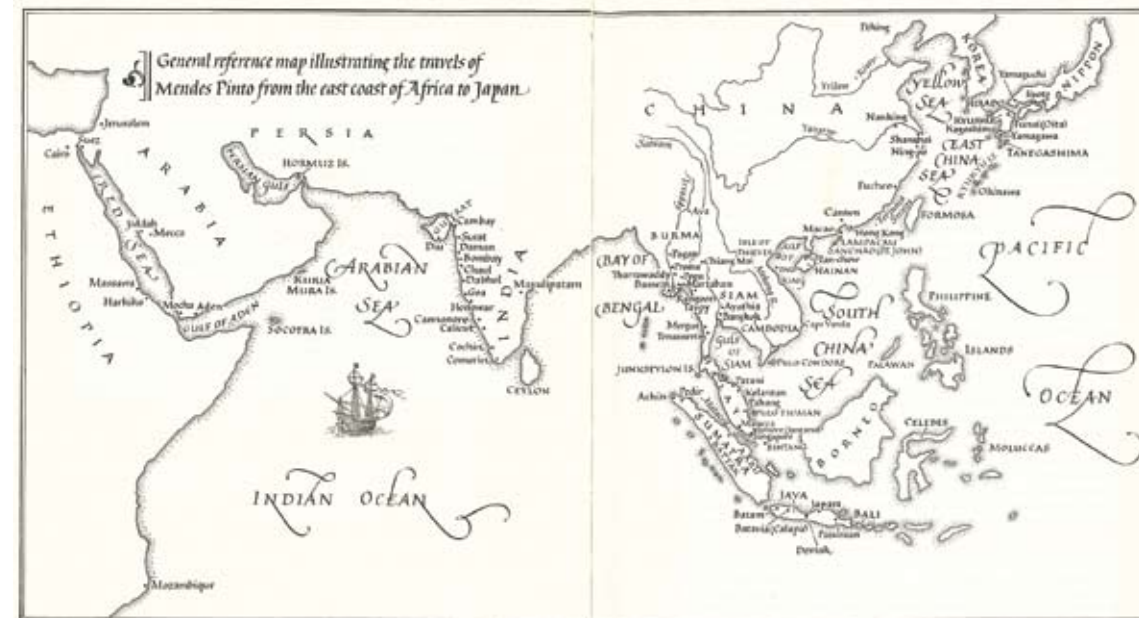
According to Jorge Santos Alves, "Fernão Mendes Pinto had a notable capacity for understanding the reality of Asia – an unusual capacity in a European of that time. He clearly understood what we call the historical geography. He has a comprehension of the regional geo-strategy of the time.

"When Mendes Pinto refers to the region ranging from the Malay archipelago to the coast of south China and Japan and calls it the 'Mediterranean', it shows that he understands that the region works as a block of exchange networks."

### Globalisation before its time

The analogy between the classical sea of the civilisations of Europe and the 'community sea' of Asia is enlightening.

By recounting his journeys in the 1500s, Mendes Pinto painted a picture of the politics, the societies, the geo-strategy and the commercial dynamics and entrepreneurship that founded Asia and are still defining elements of it today.



*Peregrinação* tells of a region of intense economic and cultural exchange and vast trade networks. It operated on a higher plane, or at least a parallel one, to the constraints of politics, the borders of empires, languages and ethnicities. What Fernão Mendes Pinto reveals is a 'globalisation' of markets in the Indian Ocean and the seas to the south and east of China in the 16th century, long before globalisation became the religion of the world economy.

"Fernão Mendes Pinto tells of the operation, in the Asia of his day, of trade networks generated by groups of interests that these days we call multi-nationals. Where the majority of Europeans saw points of trade and ports where they could buy this or that product, Mendes Pinto linked those points on the map and saw the networks that crossed the region. They were based not on strict geographical, ethnic or religious ties, but rather on business opportunities, as are the networks of large modern companies today," says Jorge Santos Alves.

### From pirates to princes

The adventurous life and travels of Fernão Mendes Pinto leave no doubt as to the potential of *Peregrinação* as a source for the history of South East Asia. It shows how the region operated at its most concrete and pragmatic level, describing the players on the seas and in the bazaars as much as at the courts and in the palaces.



Fernão Mendes Pinto, who is thought to have been the first European to have arrived in Japan, was born in Montemor-o-velho, near Coimbra, central Portugal, in 1509. At the age of just ten he was taken to Lisbon by an uncle and started working in the house of the Duke of Aveiro, the king's son D. João II. He became involved in difficulties there that led him to run away on a ship headed for southern Portugal.

That first voyage was immediately a sign of things to come, as the ship was attacked by pirates and Mendes Pinto ended up reaching land on the Spanish coast. He managed to return to Portugal where he started working for a member of the local nobility.

In March 1537 he boarded a ship for India in search of his fortune, which was the start of his adventures in the Orient. In September he arrived in the Portuguese possession of Diu, on the northwest coast of the sub-continent.

In Diu he set off on an expedition to the Red Sea where he met Portuguese soldiers fighting on behalf of the Christian king of Ethiopia – the legendary Prester John of the Indias.

After crossing with pirates, Mendes Pinto became a slave, was sold to a Jewish merchant in Yemen and taken to Ormuz on the southern coast of what is now Iran, where he joined the crew of a Portuguese merchant ship.

This was the beginning of a life of travel that took him to Malacca, Malaysia, at the service of the commander of the Portuguese fortification, and to the kingdoms of Sumatra and Malaya as an emissary.

### Trading places

At this time Fernão Mendes Pinto also began a career as a trader and prospered in business with the kingdom of Siam, now Thailand. But ruined by pirate attacks, he was forced to become a pirate and merchant himself off the coasts of Indochina.

Mendes Pinto recounted how during his career as a pirate and merchant he was shipwrecked, captured and sold as a slave at least 16 times. Yet regardless of the difficult details of his adventures, what is clear is that his first-hand experience and his direct participation in the dynamic of the region was what made the rich and detailed report in *Peregrinação* possible.

Always aiming to return to Portuguese India, Fernão Mendes Pinto ended up travelling over the Middle Empire to Indochina where he boarded a pirate

junk. It was the year 1542 or 1543, and the vessel had been blown by a storm to the coast of Japan and reached the island of Tanegashima, in the south of the Japanese archipelago. This made the Portuguese adventurer one of the first Europeans to reach Japan.

He returned to China, specifically the port of Canton, where he joined the Portuguese merchants that had established themselves in the Chinese city. He told them of the new opportunities for trade with Japan. This would lead to the period of greatest prosperity and strategic importance of Macao, who went on to gain the monopoly on trade between China and Japan.

Yet another journey to Japan ended in a shipwreck, when Mendes Pinto was returning to Malacca. He had been sent on a diplomatic mission to the kingdom of Burma, which had just conquered the kingdom of Pegu, in what is now northern Thailand.

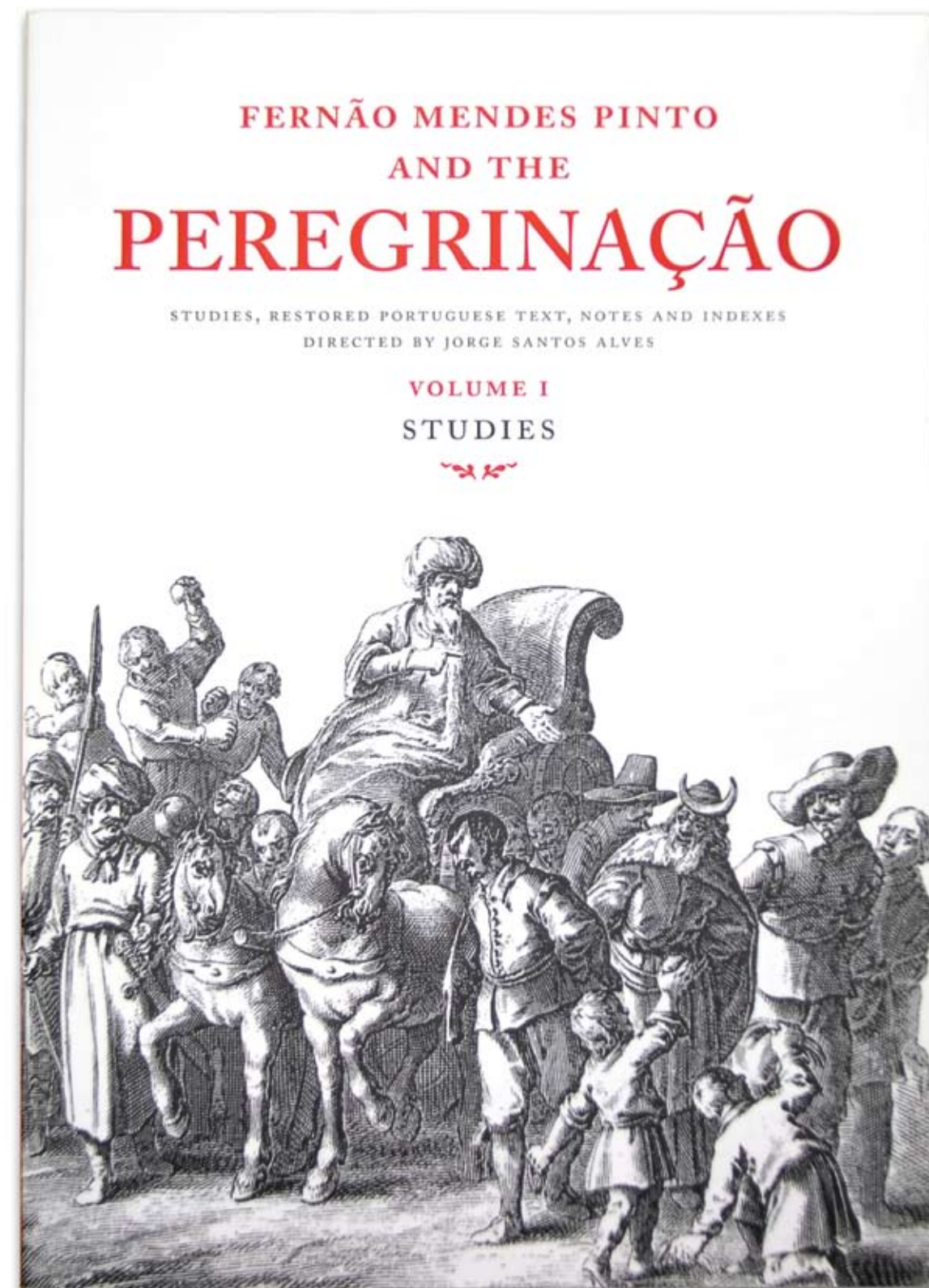
Taken prisoner by the Burmese he travelled through South East Asia arriving at what is now Laos, where he escaped his captors and managed to return to Goa.

Turned merchant once again he travelled to Java, where he got involved in a local war. So he fled, was shipwrecked, made a slave, freed, became a merchant, and got involved in the war at the time between Burma and Thailand. He described it all in what is now considered to be the first report of the history and politics of the region.

### Mapping out politics and history

These comings and goings of Fernão Mendes Pinto, as well as recounting his adventures, draw out a map of trade and political relations in South East Asia in the 16th century. These relations were established in both the formal interactions between the kingdoms of the time and the informal activities of the merchants and pirates. Mendes Pinto's account of them is now recognised as an important source for the history of the region.

As researcher Santos Alves says, "*Peregrinação* has revealed a more Asian side than one might at first think. It ends another preconception that surrounded the work which was that it summarised and had to fit into the period of Fernão Mendes Pinto's life. In reality, what is in *Peregrinação* is a compilation of knowledge from the Portuguese, Asian and Luso-Asian worlds of the time.



Published by Fundação Oriente / Imprensa Nacional - Casa da Moeda



“What is there is a repository of information, much of which is what would now be called intelligence, about several regions of seafaring Asia, particularly South East Asia and the China Sea.”

And, with preconceptions set aside, “what was revealed was that there is a lot of information that comes via Asia rather than via Portugal. It is information that Fernão Mendes Pinto gathered whilst fully aware of its value, but which sometimes caused some surprise when a reading of *Peregrinação* was merely from a Portuguese perspective. This is why some information was considered fanciful – not because it was false or incorrect, but because it did not fit with the Portuguese view (of the region).”

Much of that Asian information was gathered by Fernão Mendes Pinto in the Chinese seafaring communities. At the time they had been long established throughout Asia, particularly in the southeast, which controlled many of the routes and trade flows in the region.

Fernão Mendes Pinto returned to Portugal in 1558, at the age of 49. After spending some time at court in Lisbon, where his services in Asia were ignored, he set himself up in a small estate in Almada, to the south of the Portuguese capital, where he married and had a family.

The work that left the name of Mendes Pinto to posterity was written between 1569 and 1578. But it was not published until 1614, 31 years after his death in 1583.

*Peregrinação* was a success across Europe as a travel book, and was translated into the main languages of the time.

### Influence of the Inquisition

A significant backdrop for the historical context of the publication of *Peregrinação* is the influence of the Inquisition. The posthumous publication of the work is often attributed to the Mendes Pinto family’s fears about the Inquisition.

The first edition was handed over to editor Pedro Craesbeeck, 11 years after it had been analysed and approved by the Inquisition in 1603.

Despite its immediate success as a travel book – 19 editions in more than ten languages – the value of *Peregrinação* as a gathering of facts and a strategic picture of a region was somehow overshadowed by the circumstances of the time. The Portuguese

presence in the Orient was being narrated and sung, in a more politically correct way, by erudite authors such as João de Barros, Luís de Camões and Fernão Lopes de Castanheda.

But Jorge Santos Alves says that the information contained in *Peregrinação* “maintained a high level of topicality until the mid 17th century, until the Dutch and English started producing a large amount of information about the Asian areas in which they were establishing themselves.

“The figure of Fernão Mendes Pinto has often been highlighted for his critical position in relation to the Portuguese empire. Many times it has led to a juxtaposition that has become a cliché of the glorifying view of *Os Lusíadas* and the more raw view of *Peregrinação*. Mendes Pinto’s account was never anything other than that of a Portuguese of his time, but his great novelty was to give value to the Asian side, which was atypical for the period.”

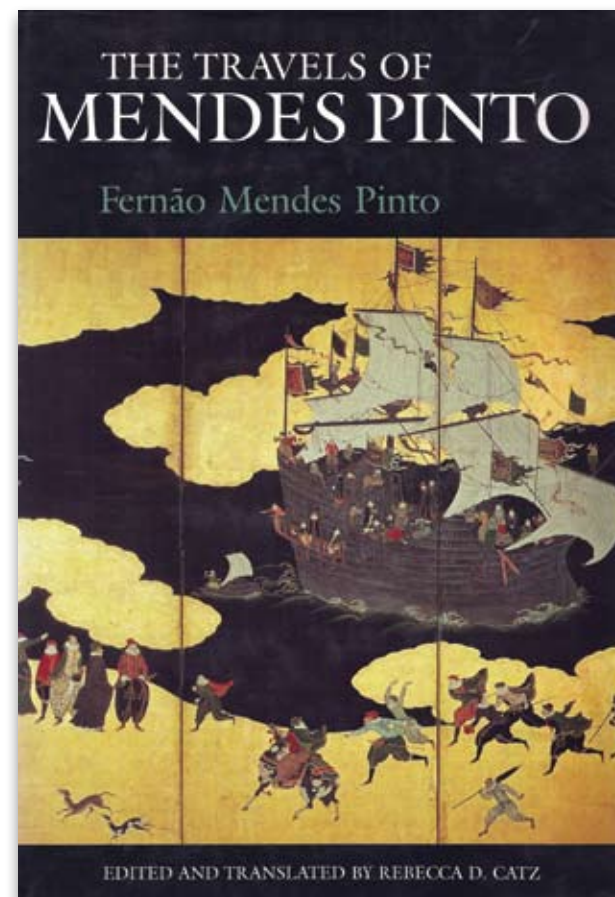
### Fragments still alive

Fragments of the world written about in *Peregrinação* still exist today. For example, Mendes Pinto referred to a community of Buddhist monks, the ‘Rolins’, who lived in seclusion in the highlands of Burma. One of the researchers who annotated *Peregrinação* for the recent study decided to check this reference, and travelled to Burma to find that there are still traces of the memory of that community.

Santos Alves, who was a professor at the University of Macao between 1990 and 1996, notes that, “the depth of *Peregrinação* allows both a mere amateur and the greatest specialist in a specific historical area to find material that is of interest to him or her in the work.”

As the renewed value of *Peregrinação* as a historical document is established, academics are looking at it with fresh eyes, guided by the four volumes of work of the international team of researchers. But the work of Fernão Mendes Pinto will continue to fascinate the layman too, as well as offer the pleasure of reading the equivalent of a Lonely Planet guide for Asia in the 16th century.

Even today copies of first editions of *Peregrinação* sporadically turn up at auctions and bookshops specialising in old books. ■



### TRANSLATIONS IN 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

#### Complete translations

1620 - Spanish (Reprints: 1620, 1628, 1645, 1664, 1666)

1628 - French (Reprints: 1645, 1830)

#### Partial translations

1625 - English

1625 - Dutch (Reprints: 1653)

1653 - English (Reprints: 1663, 1692)

1671 - German (Reprints: 1671, 1671)

### TRANSLATIONS IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

1979 - Japanese

1982 - Spanish

1989 - English

1991 - French

1992- Dutch

1999- Chinese

Macao's homage to Pinto



Photos by João Goulão and Mércia Gonçalves





*Pinto as a secret agent*

## A saga in pictures

Carlos Marreiros is an architect, painter and illustrator. He was invited to bring Fernão Mendes Pinto's *Peregrinação* to life, and brought the 500-year-old text up to date through his drawings. He did so with honesty, humour and football.

By Helder Beja

What do secret agent 007 and football player Luís Figo have in common with a book written in the 16th century? Nothing at all until Portuguese newspaper 'Expresso' decided to invite architect Carlos Marreiros to illustrate *Peregrinação*, a text in which Portuguese adventurer Fernão Mendes Pinto (1509–1583) tells the story of his journey to the Far East.







Books illustrated by Carlos Marreiros

## Squeezed schedule

In 2004 the idea to publish an updated version of the text was conceived. It involved using the pictures of the Macao-born painter and illustrator to call new readers to this travel-literature classic. "I was actually re-reading Peregrinação when this invitation came up; it was pure coincidence," Marreiros says.

The opportunity left the artist "happy but scared". This was not because of the responsibility of illustrating Peregrinação. After all, Carlos Marreiros had already done the same for texts by renowned Portuguese authors such as Luís de Camões. The fear was of a different order, based on the amount of work that accepting the project would mean. "It was ten volumes, sold weekly with the newspaper. That meant that I would have to complete at least three volumes in advance to be able to keep up with the weekly work rate."

The schedule was very tight, so to avoid further delays, the illustrator set two conditions. Firstly, he wanted all the graphic design to be done locally, in Macao, and in the hands of somebody he trusted. His brother, graphic designer Victor Marreiros, was ultimately chosen for the job. Secondly, and more importantly, he wanted "total freedom" in the creative process.

## Secret agent

The artist did not want to work with repeated formulas or classic interpretations, both of which he considers "very boring".

"I'm not saying the illustrations (in the original) are not good. No, the illustrations are very good. But when people see a copy of 'Lusiadas' (by Camões), they often see those very well-executed etchings but find them old-fashioned and boring; they don't read on." According to Marreiros, if the aim was to reach a younger audience, the book "had to be good-humoured and modern".

This is where James Bond, the secret agent created by Ian Fleming, comes in, hopefully bringing with him "Japanese with laptops and Portuguese with records by Fado singer Amália Rodrigues". As Marreiros says, "Fernão Mendes Pinto was a prisoner, who was sold I don't know how many times as a slave. There's a scene (in the book) in which he says 'they preferred a mound of dates to me', referring to his captors. He was an ambassador; he was a Jesuit. On

top of all this, he was a spy. This is my interpretation. He provided geographic information and military information etc... So he was clearly a bit of an 007!" Marreiros laughs as he looks at a drawing of Mendes Pinto dressed as James Bond.

## In a world of his own

By reading widely around the subject, and getting intensely into Peregrinação itself, Carlos Marreiros built up his own interpretation of the book – his own Peregrinação world. Modern images came to the artisan's pen via Figo, one of the most notable Portuguese footballers of all time. "I was working on the project during Euro 2004. Football had to make an appearance."

Pinto as a nobleman







This is all just a small indication of what was a much more exhaustive work, involving in-depth analysis of the text and parallel research. Marreiros printed out an updated version of the book to work from, and used a copy of the original so that he could lift out “very funny phrases that were written in archaic Portuguese and that were funny even graphically-speaking”. As he likes to write on his illustrations, the architect used Mendes Pinto’s original prose and, sometimes, his own.

The creative process, looked at from the vantage point of a few years later, is described as “crazy” and “an exhausting but fantastic venture” which took five months and “a lot of sleepless nights”. Marreiros read and re-read the book, made notes,

and recreated the story in his head. However, when the first volume of his illustrated *Peregrinação* was launched, the second one was not ready and there were just seven days to go before it was published. “Imagine how crazy it was. I was supposed to have prepared three ahead of time but the newspaper, for strategic reasons, wanted to launch the books close to Christmas,” he says.

### Image of an explorer

The first print run was a success and the 40,000 copies of the inaugural volume sold out. The illustrator understood that the book was reaching people and that the hooks he had created were

working. And it all started with the image of Fernão Mendes Pinto.

“In the first portrait I did of him, I realised that to have the capacity to survive all those hardships, he had to be a strong guy. For example, he had to be broad-shouldered. I imagined him as being big, with a scar on his left side as a ‘totem’ of his adventures, almost like a medal for his travels,” the artist explains. A significant part of the image created was the beard that Marreiros gave to Mendes Pinto.

The artist drew over 150 illustrations even though he was only contracted to do between 70 and 100. Fernão Mendes Pinto’s epic poem got to him so much that he still talks ardently about how he deconstructed the work. The eyes of Mendes Pinto, which sometimes appear separately from his body, with a life of their own, are a fundamental element and a feature throughout the volumes. “I had to characterise his eyes in an exaggerated way because, if you read *Peregrinação* carefully, there is something very funny: He uses alter-egos to speak about people whom he cannot offend directly.”

Marreiros noted that the adventurer was a contemporary of illustrious navigators in the history of the Portuguese expansion, such as Vasco da Gama and Afonso de Albuquerque. When he wanted to voice a criticism in the book, he would, for example, “make an indigenous child say, ‘How can you kidnap me? My father brought me up and is now old. He will be left abandoned. Where are you taking me? This is not a Christian thing to do.’ The eye then appears – like a camera – flying over events and pointing out the author’s ironic tone. “He is focused on faith, on God and on Portugal. But there is humour too. He often puts things in the mouths of his characters, using them as his mouth pieces, which makes it really fun.”

The eyes and other elements – “such as a fish that is a kind of inseparable travelling companion throughout the pages” – appear throughout the ten volumes of the work and make reading it an interactive experience. “There is a passage in which three captives are going to be thrown into the sea. This level of cruelty was not unusual 500 years ago. But we can show it today in a lighter, funnier way. Next to the text we inserted three crabs launching themselves from a board into the water. The people reading the text understand that the crabs are the unfortunates that have just been beaten up,” Marreiros explains.

### Socks and shields

The drawings gave rise to an exhibition in Macao, in 2005. Whilst leafing through the catalogue of that exhibition, Marreiros, who is also director of the cultural institution Albergue SCM, points out the symbols he used to define the personality of Mendes Pinto. From the duck with broken wheels that was his childhood toy, to the bamboo that even as a child we see growing from his head, the illustrator recreates ‘a walker for the world’. He includes signs of Mendes Pinto’s modest beginnings, because it was important to say he had come “from the people”.

Fernão Mendes Pinto was not a nobleman, yet Carlos Marreiros wanted to give him his own heraldry. He invented insignias, starting with the coat of arms of the Portuguese flag. He replaced the seven castles with seven eyes and the five shields with striped socks, “normally attributed to prostitutes and commoners... This is all fictitious. It is heraldry that I invented for him,” he says.

Amongst the illustrations there are drawings done with a single pen stroke, and also several literal and meticulous recreations of what Fernão Mendes Pinto wrote. Some battle scenes are strictly faithful renditions. “I had to study; to read in detail. Everything is illustrated: How he first cut the head and then the legs. Everything as he describes it; it was a huge amount of work.”

### Truthful pioneer

Marreiros has been to almost all the places that Mendes Pinto describes. “I know almost all of South East Asia and some Arab countries too,” he says. It was, however, in the small details that the illustrator found the greatest pleasure in reading *Peregrinação*. As a case in point, he says the descriptions of Chinese weddings in the book are very accurate “from the noisy orchestra to the abundance of food on the table... Everything is done with a fastidiousness that can still be seen today, which is why I think he was so incredibly faithful in his descriptions of what is now called cultural anthropology.”

“The (issue of his story being untrue) is a curse that was put upon him for a reason we cannot know,” the illustrator says about the accusations of a lack of veracity of the work of the 16th-century author.



"Not only is he not a liar, but he is actually rigorous," he adds.

The architect has no doubts about placing Fernão Mendes Pinto ahead of explorer Marco Polo, and even says that that was why Peregrinação, which is translated into several languages, took so long to be put into Italian. "I tell my students that he is much richer and more important, both for the extent of the work and for its information. He travelled much more than Marco Polo," he says.

The comparison with 'Os Lusíadas' by Luís de Camões also seems inevitable. The artist agrees that it is "a great Portuguese epic", but adds that "Many modern authors say it is a politically correct book, which merely lauded Portugal's actions as heroic." Peregrinação, however, "applauds the Portuguese endeavours in the world but also points out some aspects that are not so positive". Carlos Marreiros



Pinto as Japanese

actually cites Mendes Pinto by heart, noting that Mendes Pinto was referring to the Portuguese expansion in the line: "along with spreading the faith, with trade it also dealt." As Marreiros says, "In terms of being a pioneer of travel literature and even of epics, it is a very important book."

### Unfinished business

Born in 1957, Carlos Marreiros spends most of his time on architecture. He has designed over 200 buildings in Macao, Hong Kong, mainland China and other places, and "likes to see artistic production as occurring in cycles".

He has just completed his latest cycle, culminating in the Tobacco Wars exhibition, which brings together design from the tobacco industry and the history of smoking. The exhibition is on in Beijing, in the Art for All association gallery in the 798 cultural district, until 22 May. "I hate flying so I often draw on trips," the illustrator says. "Sometimes the drawings are four metres long because when I travel I have a folder with A3 paper and I assemble them. That's why sometimes I end up with enormous monsters."

There are some other series underway, one about the pleasure of eating and another about greed. But Carlos Marreiros knows that sooner or later he will return to Peregrinação. "I haven't finished this series yet. I wanted to do some drawings that I imagined and that are fantastic. The chapter on Japan, for example, is very rich in illustrations, but due to lack of time I couldn't do them."

Despite the fact that a Chinese translation has already been done, the illustrator is sure that soon he will "promote a Chinese edition" of Peregrinação with illustrations. "As well as enjoying the drawing itself – taking pleasure in it – it would be a great contribution to Portuguese culture," he says.

Marreiros set down on paper and in memory many sentences he read and re-read in Fernão Mendes Pinto's book. And he particularly likes one that serves as a response to those who are more sceptical about what the sixteenth-century author wrote: "They believe me little because they do not know even a little of the considerable amount that I have seen in this world." ■

## SIGNATURE

Art installation by members  
20 April - 9 May



MACAU BANNER BAG  
4 - 11 June



15 June - 2 July



14 - 31 May

topologies  
Benjamin K. Hodges



CHAN UN MAN  
8 - 25 July



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# Art Reunion

## Taipei museum to re-unite Chinese landscape-painting pieces

By Mark O'Neill



In June this year, parts of one of China's most famous landscape paintings will be re-united in the National Palace Museum (NPM) in Taipei. It was rent into pieces by its owner, who ordered it to be burnt so that he could take it to the next world.

One piece of 'Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains', measuring 51cm, will come from the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou, while another, measuring 637cm, will come from the NPM.

"It will be the first time in 300 years that the painting has been back in one piece," said Chou Kung-shin, director of the museum, in an interview. "It will be a rare opportunity for people from round the world to see it together."



## A symbol of co-operation

The exhibition is a symbol of the co-operation across the Taiwan Strait that has flourished since Ma Ying-jeou was elected the island's leader in March 2008, appointing Chou as director in May that year. Chen Shui-bian, Ma's predecessor for eight years, from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), had emphasised 'de-Sinicisation' and had frozen relations with the mainland.

Since taking office, Chou has built close ties with her counterparts on the other side of the Strait. In February 2009, she went to the Palace Museum in Beijing – the first such visit in 60 years. Later that year Zheng Xinmao, Director of the Palace Museum in Beijing, came to Taipei. The two signed nine agreements on co-operation in publishing, exhibitions and academic exchanges. The Beijing museum lent 37 pieces for a major exhibition in 2009 on Emperor Yongzheng (1723–35) that opened at the NPM in October. More than 700,000 people visited the exhibition during its three months, 30 per cent of them from the mainland.

During the summer of 2010, more than 20 specialists from the two museums celebrated the 85th anniversary of the foundation of the Palace Museum in Beijing by retracing the steps of the art treasures taken from Beijing to the south in the 1930s. The Beijing museum will lend 20 pieces to an exhibition later this year which will cover relations between Qing Emperor Kangxi and French King Louis XIV, 'Le Roi Soleil' – the two most powerful rulers in the world at that time.

The addition of pieces from mainland museums has added to the lustre of the exhibitions and drawn thousands of people. Last year, the NPM attracted more than 3 million visitors, about 30 per cent of them from the mainland, up from 2.5 million in 2009. The numbers are so great that the museum employs staff carrying signs urging people to be quiet. Guides give instructions through headphones worn by visitors, in order to reduce the sound and show proper respect to the treasures they are seeing.

## Poignant tale

The story of 'Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains' is a dramatic one. It is one of the few surviving works of a master named Huang Gongwang (1269–1354), who started on it in 1348. After three years, he finished

it, and gave the completed, 7m-long artwork to a Taoist priest. Over the centuries, it passed through several hands, including a man named Wu Hongyu. Wu loved it so much that he decided to take it with him on his journey to the next world. So, when he was close to death, in the early years of the Qing dynasty, he ordered it to be burnt. His servants set it alight, and it began burning and split into two. But Wu's nephew managed to rescue the work from the flames. Of the 12 pieces of the painting, one was burnt, and one passed through many owners before ending up in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou. The remaining ten pieces were purchased by high officials of the Qing dynasty, arriving eventually in the possession of the emperor who stored them in the imperial palace. In 1949, it was one of 609,000 art treasures brought to Taiwan by Chiang Kai-shek after he lost the civil war. The poignancy of the story as well as the quality of the painting will bring tens of thousands of people to the exhibition, many of them from the mainland.

## Crown jewel of Taiwan art world

In a northern suburb of Taipei, the NPM is the crown jewel of Taiwan's art world. It was carved out of the base of a mountain in the 1960s to house thousands of treasures which the Nationalist government brought with them from the mainland in 1949. It includes some of the finest examples in the world of Chinese works; about 3,000 are on show at any one time. They cover 8,000 years from the Neolithic period to the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

It has shared pieces with museums in many foreign countries – but not those on the mainland. It needs a legal as well as an administrative guarantee from the government that it would return the pieces.

"To lend our works to the mainland, we would need the same legal protection that we receive from other (foreign) countries, like the United States, France, Germany and Austria," said Chou. "This means that, if someone made a legal claim against one of our pieces in a foreign country, a court would not accept the case."

## Education extending out

During her more than two and a half years as director, Chou has taken it as her mission to bring the museum closer to the outside world.



Chou Kung-shin





*Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*

*Courtesy of National Palace Museum in Taiwan*

“Our number one objective is education,” she said. “Only if you understand how to market will your museum attract a large number of people. If people come often, then it will achieve its objective of education.”

To this end, she has arranged these major exhibitions with mainland museums and expanded the opening hours from 9am to 5pm to 8.30am to 6.30pm. She has added a two-hour extension on Saturdays until 8.30pm, when entry is free. She has invited artists to hold evening performances on the stage above the main entrance, with the audience on the approach road and gardens below.

She has invested heavily in the museum’s website, which offers information in nine languages and in different sections aimed at the general reader, the teacher, the student and the specialist.

All these measures aim to attract more people to the museum, physically or digitally, so it can share its treasures with a wider audience.

They have helped boost sales from the museum shops from NT\$320 million (US\$10.6 million) in 2007, NT\$360 million in 2008, NT\$550 million in 2009 and NT\$660 million last year. Chou expects sales to exceed NT\$700 million this year.

All this revenue goes directly to the government, who owns the museum. Organisationally, it reports to the Executive Yuan, the executive branch of the government.

### Creating and Expanding

Ma has given the NPM an additional 4.8 hectares of land that used to be a military school. Chou will turn

this into a ‘cultural creativity area’, including a training centre; a museum of Chinese characters; a place for cultural creation, experiments, furniture and utensils design; a restaurant; and a resort hotel.

In 2009, the museum began six-month training courses for the 15 companies that design and produce the items sold in their gift shops. They sent teams, including the chief executive, designers and those in finance and marketing. “We want to speak the same language with them, so that they can understand culture and cultural products, so that we can communicate easily with them. These courses open their senses, so that they feel the culture and design. For example, Giant, one of the world’s biggest manufacturers of bicycles, used to have only Western designs but is now using oriental ones.”

The courses are free. But, if the firms make products as a result, the NPM will receive one per cent of the profit.

The museum of Chinese characters will be the second in the world, after one in Anyang, in Henan province in the mainland. “It will show the beauty and development of characters and calligraphy. It will be more high-technology, digital and interactive than the one in Anyang.”

Ma has applied to UNESCO to make traditional Chinese characters part of the world’s intangible cultural heritage. Like Hong Kong and Macao, Taiwan uses traditional characters, while the mainland uses simplified ones.

### Branching into new museums

Since the museum shows only a fraction of its treasures, people have long argued that it should

open a second branch in the centre or south of Taiwan, where more could be put on display.

After years of bitter debate on the location, size and financing, the government has chosen a 70-hectare site in Chiayi in the southwest, with a total investment of NT\$7.93 billion. Chou said that the Asian Art and Culture Museum would open in 2015. “We have just 17 hectares here. There we have 70 hectares – as large as the Forbidden City in Beijing – of which 20 will be museum. The Chiayi government would like to have opened it sooner but it was very complicated to go through all the procedures and approvals.

“Since it will be an Asian museum, we have bought 2,000 pieces from Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and other countries for our permanent collection. We continue to buy.” The NPM will lend pieces to the Chiayi branch for exhibitions but continue to store them in Taipei.

### Special storage

The successful storage of 609,000 art treasures since 1949 is a source of great pride to the NPM. Taiwan has a hot and humid climate, which can easily cause the degeneration of manuscripts and other fine materials, especially those that are hundreds of years old. When the pieces arrived in Taiwan, the government built vaults near the central city of Taichung with the necessary temperature and lighting controls to preserve them in their original state.

When it built the NPM in Taipei, it excavated large vaults in the mountain where the treasures have been stored until today.

### Miraculous journey

The story of how the pieces arrived in Taiwan is one of the most remarkable journeys of the 20th century.

In 1933, as the Japanese army approached Beijing, the curators of the Palace Museum feared for its future. The museum had been established in the imperial palace used by the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties, to preserve the treasures of these two dynasties.

Afraid that the invaders would pillage the museum and take the treasures to Japan, the curators decided to move them to the safety of central China. The transfer was carried out in great secrecy; the government feared public anger that it was abandoning them to the Japanese army. In addition, the curators could find no-one willing to take responsibility for the shipment. The burden was too heavy – what if the pieces were stolen or went missing?

Finally, an official named Wu Ying agreed, his loyalty to the museum director overcoming his reluctance and fears for his family.

In February 1933, the first shipment left the palace in the dead of night, under military escort, and was taken to Beijing railway station, where it was loaded onto 21 carriages. Soldiers with machine guns were placed on every carriage of the train. The journey to Nanjing, the then capital, took four days, passing through Xuzhou, where a gang of 1,000 bandits had gathered, having heard rumours of the shipment. The presence of armed soldiers prevented an attack.



When the train arrived in Nanjing, Wu found that the government had not decided on the final destination of the cargo. He had to endure two anxious weeks, with the carriages sitting in a rail yard, protected by 500 policemen. Finally, a ship that specialised in carrying antiques took them down the Yangtze to Shanghai, where they were stored in the vaults of a Catholic church in the French concession. In total, five shipments were made and 19,557 crates moved to Shanghai.

### Continuing odyssey

But this turned out to be just the first part of the odyssey. In August 1937, a month after Japan launched its full-scale invasion of China, the artifacts were moved again to the southwest province of Sichuan, where the Nationalists had established a wartime capital in Chongqing. Over the next ten years, the museum stored the pieces in temples, caves, tunnels, private homes and other safe places in Sichuan and the neighbouring province of Guizhou.

Japan surrendered in August 1945. In late 1947, the museum treasures were moved back to Nanjing, where they remained while the civil war raged between the Nationalists and the Communists. After a major Communist victory in the Battle of Huaihai in November 1948, museum officials met to decide the future of the collection. After an intense debate, the majority decided to move it to Taiwan with the Nationalist government. But Ma Heng, museum director since October 1933, decided to remain in the mainland.

### Treacherous travels

The first shipment of 721 crates was packed onto a warship in Nanjing on 21 December 1948. Relatives of the sailors, fearful that they would never see their loved ones again, boarded the ship. Only the personal intervention of the head of the navy persuaded them to return to shore.

The same thing happened with the third shipment, but this time the head of the navy relented and ordered the captain to open all the crew dormitories for the family members. As a result, 728 crates had to be left behind. In March 1949, the third and final shipment reached Taiwan. In total, 2,972 crates from the Palace Museum in Beijing arrived in Taiwan, containing 597,423 pieces. In addition, 852



crates with 11,562 pieces arrived from the Central Museum. This took the total to 3,824 crates with 608,985 pieces.

On arrival in Taiwan, the crates were stored in warehouses in Taichung. Chou said that none of the pieces had been stolen, broken or damaged: "This was due to the care and diligence of those who had moved and guarded them throughout their odyssey. The museum officials regarded the protection of the treasures as their life mission."

"These cultural treasures are the cultural distillation of several thousand years," wrote Nai Chi-liang, who worked in the Beijing and Taipei museums for 70 years. "When a country dies, it has the hope of

being revived. But, when a culture dies, there is no hope of reviving the country."

### Precious artifacts

The artifacts were first put on show at exhibition halls in Taichung in 1957. By the 1960s, when Chiang Kai-shek realised that he was unlikely to return to the mainland, he ordered the construction of a museum in Taipei to house them. Work began in March 1964 in the side of a mountain north of the city. Fearful of air raids, the engineers built tunnels 180 metres into the mountain, with steel-reinforced concrete walls 70cm thick, plus a further 20cm of

earth and stone. In addition, the high humidity in Taiwan meant that the museum required ultra-modern cooling equipment for conservation. In 1965, the National Palace Museum opened on 12 November, the birthday of Sun Yat-sen, the father of the Republic of China.

Chou said that, since the first inventory was taken in 1924, each crate containing the treasures could only be opened in the presence of three people, a rule that has been maintained until today. "One person has the key or the computer card for each crate. He or she feels a great responsibility." ■

Photos by Jameson Wu





# Visit to the Macao Giant Panda Pavilion

## Bus Routes:

- 15, 21, 21A, 25, 26, 26A
- Shuttle Bus to Macao Giant Panda Pavilion (depart from Praça de Ferreira do Amaral every 15 minutes)

## Ticketing:

<b>Government Services Centre</b> (Rua Nova de Areia Preta, No. 52, Macau)	Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00p.m. (no lunch break); closed on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.
<b>Islands District Public Services Centre</b> (Rua da Ponte Negra, Bairro Social da Taipa, N° 75K, Taipa)	
<b>Central District Service Centre</b> (Avenida da Praia Grande, No. 762-804, China Plaza Building, 2/F, Macau)	Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00p.m. (no lunch break); closed on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.
<b>Toi San Service Centre</b> (Avenida de Artur Tamagnini Barbosa, No. 127, r/c Edf. D. Julieta Nobre de Carvalho, Bloco "B", Macau)	
<b>S. Lourenço Service Centre</b> (Rua de João Lecaros , Complexo Municipal do Mercado de S. Lourenço, 4° andar, Macau)	
<b>Seac Pai Van Park</b> (Seac Pai Van Park, Coloane)	Tuesday through Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00p.m.

- Each person may purchase up to eight tickets each time.
- Children of 12 & under and seniors of 65 & above may obtain free tickets at the above-mentioned locations by presenting their valid ID cards. Each ID card is entitled to one free ticket only. (Free ticket holders will be required to present their valid ID documents for access to the pavilion).



# Stepping Out

## Avant-garde troupe leads Macao in performance art

By Staff Reporter

Mok Sio-chong and Lou Chong Neng

During the Macao Arts Festival in May, audiences will have the opportunity to see an unusual theatrical experience – a performance in one of the city’s most famous homes by seven actors who will take them through its history of the last 140 years. The Mandarin’s House, built in the 1860s by the family of a famous merchant and scholar of the Qing dynasty, will witness ‘House of the Vagrants’ – a play written and to be performed from 7–10 May by Step Out, a ‘performance art’ troupe established in 2001. It will be one of 29 performances of different kinds from nine countries during the 22nd Macao Arts Festival, running from 29 April to 28 May. Of the 29 performances, 14 are local. The

theme of the festival is ‘Enjoy Life through Arts’. Tickets went on sale from 27 March at all Kong Seng ticketing outlets, with telephone and online bookings available from the same day. The mansion opened to the public in February 2010 after a meticulous eight-year restoration. It is the biggest private house in the city, covering more than 43,000 square feet, and a major attraction for visitors – part of the city’s World Heritage site. “The Macao Arts Festival wanted a performance here to celebrate the opening,” said Mok Sio-chong, whose wife Lou Chong Neng founded Step Out in June 2001. The couple work full time in the troupe.

### A home to history

“When my parents married, they lived in an apartment within this house for two months,” he said in an interview, as he sat in the courtyard of the house. “When I was growing up, I heard stories about it. As a student, I came here and used to bring young people to see it.” As he was writing the script, he interviewed people who had lived in the house. “I put these real stories into the play. I also created my own material.” They described to him a world far removed from the elegant furniture and tranquillity which the visitor sees today – of small and overcrowded rooms, dark and filthy corridors and constant noise.





One couple, also named Mok, moved to the house in 1973, just after their marriage. They rented a room with a wooden floor for 90 patacas a month. That was more than one third of the wages which Mr Mok earned mixing cement. They had almost no furniture and could not even afford a radio. Since many people worked as street vendors, the building was very noisy and it was hard to sleep late. So they awoke at five or six in the morning to prepare for the day and make breakfast for their children.

They remembered the mansion as sprawling, dark and mysterious, with many rooms and corridors. In the beginning, they paid no attention but later began to fear ghosts, and stuck to their part of the house.

The performance also includes the house's most famous resident, Zheng Guanying (1842–1922), who wrote his renowned masterpiece from there – 'Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity'. A work that called for the modernisation of China

through commerce, education and a constitutional government, it influenced thousands of Chinese, including Emperor Guangxu (1871–1908), Dr Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong.

### Merchant-writer prophet of the future

"Zheng was a prophet," said Mok. "He said that China must develop its commerce and put on a World Expo in Shanghai. Now, a century later, China is one of the world's biggest trading nations, and Shanghai staged the Expo last year, for the first time in China." The actors will take the audience through the history of the house, from the years when Zheng wrote his masterpiece to the period from the 1920s when his family lost the ownership and it became a crowded residential block. Elegant reception and dining rooms became sub-divided into tiny apartments; new arrivals built shacks in the garden. At its peak, more than 300 people lived in the house. Mok and his colleagues will put

on four performances for an audience of around 45 people, who will start with a seat in the courtyard and then be taken through the rooms. "It is our biggest performance and took six months to prepare."

Step Out was Lou's brainchild. "I returned to Macao in 1999 after studying dance in London for three years," she said. "I met a lot of different people there and wanted to stay, but my family wanted me to return. It took me a year to adapt to life back here. "I wanted to do a new kind of art and different kinds of performance. It was not easy. Macao had nothing like it. All the groups, in dance, music and theatre, were traditional," she said.

She worked as a teacher at a nursery school and developed her ideas with like-minded people. In 2001, she and five female friends put on their first performance. 'Nine Lives' was a 45-minute show, including dance and theatre, about the lives of different people; she was the author. There was an audience of 50, including Mok, then a school teacher.

### Marriage of life and art

In 2002, the group performed Lou's second creation 'Xin Xian Dong' ('Pulling Your Heartstrings'), about the lives of individual people, which included video and music. Mok enjoyed what he saw, especially the close connection between the content of the performances and the lives of ordinary Macao people.

In 2003, he joined Step Out and fell in love with and married Lou. The two resigned from their full-time jobs and devoted most of their time to creation and performances, taking on freelance work to support themselves. He was a graduate of literature and she of dance; they worked together to create the words and the performance. "Our families realised from an early age that we were unusual children," he said. "If they told us to do something, we were likely to do the opposite. So they did not oppose us or interfere. We have brothers and sisters who are more normal."

That year they created two major works, one entitled 'Shoes' and the other 'Days to See', inspired by 'Three Days to See' by American author Helen Keller (1880–1968), who was blind and deaf and became a famous author and social activist. "We who have sight miss a lot of what is in front of us," said Mok. "There is much more which we could see. We found our own history which people had forgotten."

The two became increasingly interested in Macao history. In their schools, local children learn about the history of Hong Kong and China but little of the place

where they live and are growing up. It was this interest which inspired a work about Joao Maria Ferreira do Amaral, the governor of Macao from 1846–1849. His governorship ended abruptly when he was assassinated by Chinese residents for imposing a tax on them against the wishes of the Qing government. He was the only Portuguese governor to be killed in Macao during its 450-year rule.

During a naval engagement in Brazil in 1821, Amaral lost his right arm. A statue of him on a horse used to stand at a major intersection in front of the Hotel Lisboa, one of the most prominent spots in the city, before it was

removed after the 1999 handover and sent back to Portugal. Shen Yami, the Chinese man executed for killing the governor, became a national hero.

"Amaral was an important and contradictory person in Macao history," said Mok. "He played a major role in modernising the city, knocking down the old walls and improving the roads and other infrastructure. During his time, the casinos became a major source of revenue for the government."

Step Out performed pieces about Amaral in 2009 and 2010.

The troupe has only three full-time members – Mok, Lou and a female administrator on a modest salary.



Artists from Step Out



They live on income from their performances and part-time work as teachers. They also receive subsidies: the Cultural Affairs Bureau is providing a grant for the performances at the Mandarin's House.

### Pause for reflection

In 2005, the couple left Macao for six months to live in London. "We needed to go far away, talk with other people and think about our next step," said Mok. "We were not happy with Macao. It had changed radically and was no longer the city we knew. We did not belong to this place." This change was a result of the government awarding new gambling franchises in addition to the one held for 40 years by Stanley Ho. Dozens of new casinos and hotels were built, the number of tourists increased incrementally and Macao became a 24-hour city. "Our parents and their generation grew up in a period of war and revolution. But our generation, those in their 30s, grew up in a time of peace. Macao was quiet. Many people had the same feeling as we did."

But they loved the city they grew up in too much to leave for good. They returned after half a year and resumed their work. They are selling their apartment, which badly needs repairs, and are moving to a new one, which they will rent but cannot buy because of the high prices – one result of this radical change.

"We do not go to the new casinos, unless we are taking friends round. Many young people work there because of the high salaries. But it changes your way of life, with shifts and night work. Parents do not see their children and instead have to leave them in the hands of Filipino and Indonesian maids. Some employees become gambling addicts or adopt the culture of speculation and fast money, of buying pricey goods and expensive cars.

"Gambling is not simple. It changes the hearts of people. Before, the casino was far from the homes of ordinary people. Now they are everywhere, in front of a school or next to a university. Macao people believe that gambling is good and that, without it, they would have no life. There is a contradiction."

According to government figures,

the gambling industry employed 44,806 people during the last quarter of 2010, an increase of 1.8 per cent over a year earlier, with an average salary of 15,700 patacas, up four per cent.

"The salaries in the casinos are good but the employees do not know how to manage the money," said Mok. "They become lost."

### Spreading the message

Each year the troupe takes its performances to other cities in the Chinese-speaking world, like Guangzhou, Shanghai and Taipei, as well as South Korea. In Shanghai, they have performed before an audience of 1,800.

"Other groups depend on invitations but we seek them," said Mok. "We want to introduce a new Macao, not the one which people are used to seeing. It enables people to understand the city better. They could not imagine such a performance. We are warmly welcomed and enjoy the discussions with the audiences."

They also work with foreign troupes, including those from Britain, South Korea and Taiwan. ■

Photos by Eric Tam and Mércia Gonçalves



"House of the Vagrants" by Step Out  
Courtesy of ICM

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