



MRI FORUM 12

Macau's Contribution to China's Modernisation along History

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Macau – from oblivion to regaining attention

Macau, or *Hou Keng / Ou Mun* in Cantonese, a tiny peninsula, a fishing village of no more than 2.5 km² at the southern bank of the Pearl River estuary, became known to the world only after the Portuguese settled down there in the mid of the 16th century, turning it into China's first free zone for external trade, an important hub in the Maritime Silk Route, reaching its golden age in the 17-18th century. But it soon declined drastically after its role in South China was taken over by Hong Kong in the 19th century, and when other ports in China, like Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai were open for foreign trade. During the darkest age, Macau could only survive from gambling, prostitution and "coolie trade". Even for a long time after World War II, Macau remained a shadow of Hong Kong in terms of finance, trade, transportation, manufacturing and tourism. It could only attract gamblers, voyeurs and holiday-makers from nearby regions. Its glorious past was almost forgotten, not only by the Chinese themselves, but also by foreigners, including some Sinologists. It sank deeper and deeper into oblivion. Neither could the Macau residents wake up from their deep slumber of inferiority complex.¹

Only when negotiation started between China and Portugal in the 1980s, did the Macau people open their eyes, starting to think about their own future,

¹ The Hong Kong people looked down upon Macau, calling it just as *Ou Mun Kai*, or a street, a back street of Hong Kong, and the Macau residents were quite happy by describing it as "Great Hong Kong, small Macau". Even many people in mainland China thought that Macau was just part of Hong Kong.

independent from Hong Kong. A lot of debates were going on about Macau's past, present and future during the transitional period towards its handover to the Chinese authorities on December 20, 1999, making it the second Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. It was made clear during the debate, that in spite of their similarities, Macau is still different from Hong Kong because of its different historical and cultural background. These differences can be noted in the Basic Laws of the two SARs.

When recollecting the four-and-a-half centuries of Macau's existence, one should never forget its substantial contribution to China's modernization process, its contribution towards the first step in the globalization of China's foreign trade, towards the deeper interchange between East and Western cultures in this part of the world, to promote mutual understanding and harmony. That's why before and during the handover ceremony, the international community turned its spotlight on Macau, which now has grown into a modern city with an area of 25km² and a population of almost half a million. Its past has been reviewed and lots of questions were asked about its future. This article just serves as a reminder about its past with a further look into the future.

Macau – an important hub in the Maritime Silk Route and its impact on the Pearl River Delta

Taking advantage of the navigation experience of their predecessors -- Arab and Chinese -- the Portuguese during their Great Discoveries of the East, settled down in Macau, with permission of the Ming Empire to turn it into a trading and distribution center. At that time, Guangzhou, closest to Macau, was the only gate open for limited foreign trade, while Macau was the only place left open for free trade under Chinese control. Due to its favourable geographical location, providing excellent shelter for ships waiting for the turn of monsoon winds to carry them further north, east or south, Macau soon became an important hub in the Maritime Silk Route, linking it with Korea and Japan in the north; with the western coast of the American continent, especially Mexico and Peru² via Manila; with South East Asia as far as Flores, Solor and Timor via Siam and Malacca; and with Europe via Goa and the African Cape of Good Hope. The Portuguese and Spanish navigators and traders linked it further to the eastern coast of the American continent. Chinese silk, tea and porcelain, its main merchandise for export, was distributed all along the Maritime Silk Route, in larger quantities and wider areas, far exceeding those transported through the millennia-old terrestrial

²The name of the present Macau currency "pataca", was inherited from the name of a coin used in Mexico in its trade of silver at that time.

silk route. That's why people said that this was the first step towards globalization of Chinese foreign trade.

Macau was able to survive and flourish, because it served as an intermediary between the mighty but often closed empire of the Middle Kingdom and the European-centered capitalist world. When the Ming was replaced by the Qing Dynasty in the 17th century, foreign trade was still restricted to Guangzhou. Macau was the only place open for foreign traders as a place for residence and logistics before going to or coming from Guangzhou. Foreign ships had to be examined by Chinese custom officers in Macau before they were allowed to sail into Guangzhou or waiting to sail out from Macau. That's why by the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, Macau had a significant European/foreign community, with their consulates and their East India Company offices well established in this small territory, as described by the British writer Austin Coates: "Macau became the outpost of all Europe in China".³ Later when Hong Kong was going to be built up as a new and better entrepot of trade and communication,⁴ it borrowed a lot of expertise from neighbouring Macau, especially from the Macanese who possessed bilingual/multilingual capacities.

The lucrative business on the Maritime Silk Route not only made Macau a prosperous trading center, but also had a great impact on the economic development of the Pearl River Delta (PRD), growing from a traditional self-contained and closed rural economy to a more open, market oriented economy. It saw the turn from traditional paddy fields into mulberry bund and fish ponds, in which an ever growing large quantity of silk from this kind of new culture⁵ was needed for the silk trade. It also brought about the tremendous growth of handicrafts for export, especially porcelain/ceramics and lacquerware. When more labour is needed for these growing export oriented industries, the PRD brought in cheaper labour and food stuff from nearby poorer regions, spurring the growth of townships in the PRD, in which peasants and artisans, as well a landlords, were turning themselves into small and medium sized entrepreneurs directly and indirectly engaged in the import-export business⁶ that went mainly through Macau and later also through Hong Kong.

³ Geoffrey C.Gunn, "Encountering Macau," p.28.

⁴ The harbour in Hong Kong has clear water of over 14 metres deep, while Macau has been suffering from heavy silting of the Pearl River, making its harbour shallower (as shallow as 1.5 meters only in recent years) and no more navigable for big ships. The passage to the harbour has to be continuously dredged to make it navigable for small and medium sized ships nowadays.

⁵ It was a new cycle of equilibrium between the silk worms from the mulberry trees, the fish in the ponds fed with silkworm excrements, and the paddy using natural fertilizers from the ponds.

⁶ Foreign firms usually had to rely upon Chinese middlemen to do their business. These middlemen were called compradors. The compradors spoke pidgin Portuguese and later also pidgin English.

These merchants or entrepreneurs gradually climbed up from the bottom to the higher levels of the millennia-old Confucian social hierarchy.⁷ They were the driving force for socio-economic reforms in the direction for a more open market economy in China. The huge demand of silk and other Chinese merchandise on the world market was quite favourable in the balance of China's external trade for quite a long time before the opium trade became dominant. This favourable balance became an internal stimulus for a stronger growth of a market oriented capitalist economy in South and East China, especially in the PRD. Even when the door for a free economy was violently kicked open by foreign traders and invaders after the Opium War in 1840, the PRD remained a strong base for the embryonic growth of capitalism in China, often interrupted by social turmoil and change of regimes for over a hundred years. After all, the lucrative trade in favour of the local and central authorities in China, had gradually replaced the tributary system of a limited and unequal nature to a more open international trade, accelerated after the Opium War and turning it to the opposite direction of disfavour to the Chinese regime until the end of the civil war in 1949. In spite of its vicissitudes, the growth of capitalism in China could not be halted. When Shanghai was built into an important port of East China and trade center of the Yangtse River Valley, it borrowed not only expertise from abroad, but also indigenous entrepreneurship from the PRD including Hong Kong and Macau.

The PRD was made more easily assessable to the outside world due to its historic links with the overseas Chinese, which used Macau and later also Hong Kong as their spring board for going abroad. The diaspora was the strongest during the nefarious "coolie trade" in the 19th century, when poor peasants from nearby regions were sold like "piglets" via Macau⁸ to virgin lands, not only in South East Asia, but also as far as Cuba, Peru and other places in the American continent, and a small part of them also to Australia. Many *qiaoxiangs* (native towns and regions where they came from) benefited from the remittances, donations and investments from these overseas Chinese, in terms of infrastructure, manufacturing, schools, hospitals etc, channelled directly or indirectly through their *guanxi* (personal or business contacts) in Macau and Hong Kong, before and after the period of the republic and even during the embargo imposed on China after the communist revolution in 1949.

⁷ According to the Confucian hierarchy, merchants stood at the lowest level after soldiers, followed higher up by the peasantry, artisans and the scholar-type officials.

⁸ From the second half of the 19th century till the beginning of the 20th century, hundreds of barracoons (centers and inns) for the coolie trade mushroomed in Macau, contracting and trading the coolies, treating them like black slaves from Africa. Many of these settlers abroad traced their roots back to the PRD and other regions via Macau.

Based on these historical facts of PRD's contribution to the development of market economy in China, Deng Xiaoping was smart enough to create the two Special Economic Zones of Shenzhen and Zhuhai next to Hong Kong and Macau in 1980 as a base for experimenting and promoting market economy in the PRD, the experience of which was successfully spread to other 14 ports and cities along the coast from south to north, under Deng's slogan "to take the lead of becoming rich", breaking egalitarian practices of the Mao era. As a result, the coastal areas rapidly formed pockets of high economic growth, and the waves of market economic development have slowly been rolling westward further to the inland. This policy of Deng has officially been adopted as a national policy of developing "Socialism with Chinese characteristics"⁹ at the 13th congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1987, which is of course not the end of the transformation process. In this experimental process of the post-Mao era, Hong Kong and Macau continue to play an important role to bring in foreign investment, technology, information and modern management know-how not only to the PRD, but also further up north.¹⁰

Today, Hong Kong and Macau still serve as an intermediary link between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, before all barriers for direct trade and communication could be finally lifted. The Macau airport, operating since 1995, provides the easiest, cheapest and fastest transit for Taiwanese passengers in their cross-strait commuting.

This is just a short sketch of how the Chinese learnt the practice of capitalism, starting from Macau and later throughout the PRD, working its way gradually up to the north, spreading wrinkle wise after the stone was dropped in the water. Looking back at history, the stone was dropped exactly in Macau – the first free zone in China. The wrinkles of the water have to break through many obstacles on its way to the other side of the river, where China's economy could be fully modernized.

Macau – an excellent bridge for East-West cultural exchange and an ideal basis to promote social reform

The boom of trade through Macau in the early days brought about a boom of cultural exchange between East and West, with a depth and broadness unprecedented in Chinese history. The Portuguese administrative and judicial autonomy under Chinese control in its first free zone of Macau, offered an

⁹ It was described by scholars as a liberalization of the Stalinist type centralized economy and transformation into "state capitalism", or market economy controlled by the state through the dictatorship of the CPC.

¹⁰ More than 80-90% of foreign investment came from or via Hong Kong and Macau in the early days when Deng opened up the country for foreign investment in 1980.

excellent opportunity for cultural exchange. The Portuguese *caravelas* (black ships) brought with them the pioneers of Jesuit missionaries to the East, who in 1575 established in Macau the first center of the Catholic Church in East Asia. In 1594, the St. Paul College, the first university of a western style in the Far East, was established in Macau, to train the Jesuits in the Chinese/Japanese languages, cultures and customs, before doing their missionary work into those countries. The Jesuits coming from different regions in Europe, such as Matteo Ricci (Italy), Adam Schall von Bell (Germany), Nicolas Trigault (Belgium), Thomas Pereira (Portugal) and many others, became the first generation of outstanding Sinologists. Their knowledge of Chinese was an important condition for them to get official permission from the Chinese authorities to travel further north. Their bilingual and bicultural knowledge as well as their humbleness was highly appreciated by the Chinese Court and the emperor himself, and some of them were appointed as advisers to the Chinese Court.

The Jesuits, with close cooperation from their Chinese counterparts and associates, such as Xu Guangqi, Mei Wenting, Li Zichau and many others, trained in Latin languages and culture, brought about a two-way exchange of cultures, by translating and introducing Western mathematics, astronomy, geography (cartography), physics (mechanics), weaponry, architecture, art of printing, medicine (pharmacology, anatomy, vaccination), music, fine arts, among other things, to the East, and introducing Chinese philosophy, theology, literature, medicine, tea, porcelain, lacquerware, architecture, decoration and painting, etc. to the West. There was an excellent atmosphere of learning from each other, spiralling into new heights of mutual understanding, and even producing some hybridisation in knowledge and art.¹¹

The significant cultural exchange was one of Macau's greatest contribution to Chinese and human history. It was made possible because of mutual respect and mutual tolerance, mutual benefit on equal foot – the spirit of Macau—embodied in the long standing ruins and façade of St. Paul's Cathedral with its occidental and oriental design elements vividly engraved on its facade, which has become the symbol of Macau's cultural identity. Although this flow of equal interchange was badly interrupted by heavy clashes between East and West in mainland China and other parts of the region since the 17th century, Macau remained calm and peaceful most of the time, its multicultural identity remained intact. In this process of interaction and conflict, one should never forget how Matteo Ricci and his supporters worked hard to accommodate Christianity with Confucianism, against the will of other groups of Catholic chauvinists who were sent to China from the Philippines to Fuzhou in Fujian, without passing strict training in Sinology

¹¹ The hybridization can be seen from the enlightenment movement in both Europe and China, and in the Lingnan and Rococo (chinoiserie) styles of art in China and Europe.

like in Macau. One should also not forget how the open minded and tolerant Qing Emperor Kang Xi encouraged the Chinese literati to learn from the West against the will of some narrowminded xenophobists in the Chinese Court. The chauvinists, later accompanied by gunboat diplomacy, and the xenophobists, often ending up in closing the doors, both very much self-centered, had quite disrupted, jeopardized and derailed the normal and equal exchange of cultures.

Macau has fortunately minimized and avoided this kind of disaster. The Chinese community in Macau, different from Hong Kong and other Chinese cities, has a longer history of exposure to the West, in which Chinese culture had to coexist, interact, clash and blend with cultures from the West. This process of coexistence and interaction seems to have produced different results compared to Hong Kong and other Chinese cities. A kind of equilibrium had been reached in this small territory: there was no way for the Europeans to assimilate the millennia-old Chinese culture, and no way for the Chinese to reject Western culture with its superiority in science and technology, as well as modern management. The two sides have lived in harmony for most of the time, learning from each other and avoiding many violent clashes and conflicts. The high degree of tolerance within the Chinese and Latin cultures may have contributed to reaching and maintaining this equilibrium, which was important for protecting this bridge of cultural interchange from being destroyed.

However, after the Opium War in 1840, when the British occupied Hong Kong by force, signalling the first successful attempts of Western encroachment and domination by force in China, the Portuguese took advantage of the corruptness and weakness of the Qing Empire by expelling the Chinese tax-collecting and custom offices, as well as the Chinese administrative and judicial institutions out of the territory, and enlarging their occupation northwards and southwards of the peninsula, turning Macau into one of Portuguese overseas provinces and trying to impose an unequal treaty in 1887, by profiting from the "Most-Favoured-Nation Clause" granted by the Qing to the British. But the Chinese top authorities never ceded its sovereignty over Macau, which became quite different from the colonial status of Hong Kong. It remained a "Chinese territory under Portuguese administration" until negotiations between the two countries restarted in 1978 and 1986, when it was finally decided to revert the administration to China by the end of the century. The difference in status gave Macau more flexibility in maintaining its stability and intermediary role.

As a result, the religious freedom in Macau was well preserved. Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam and the Bahaai Faith have been living side by side for centuries, retaining their own rituals and beliefs, without conflicts and bloodshed. This makes Macau strikingly different from

mainland China, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Middle East and the Balkans, where religious bloodshed could not be avoided. The Bishop and the Buddhist monks remain friendly with each other. It has become a unique phenomenon in Macau, when the Bishop and the Buddhist monks appeared together at major local ceremonies, bestowing their blessing on major events in their own traditions. Such religious tolerance is certainly scarce in the modern world, and could as well serve as a positive example for promoting religious freedom in China.

The cultural blending in Macau resulted in the creation of a hybrid community – the Eurasian Macanese.¹² Such a hybrid community never came into being in the parallel process of cultural interaction in Hong Kong. This community of Macanese, with bilingual or multilingual characteristics, has played an important role in the history of Macau, bridging the cultural gap between the Portuguese and the Chinese. Even during the establishment of Hong Kong and Shanghai in the early days, they had to rely upon the assistance and expertise of the Macanese, as mentioned above. As a matter of fact, the Macanese, who called themselves *filhos de terra* (natives of the place), have the strongest sense of belonging among the local population. Although a strong diaspora took place after 1949 and 1966, they still feel attached to their native place, which was vividly expressed during the 4 *encontros*, gathering of those who already left Macau, settling in Brazil, Portugal, Canada, the US and Australia. This global human network is still an important network in the anthropological sense that links Macau with the rest of the world, which could still benefit China in its process for modernization.

For the Chinese, as mentioned above, Macau has always been a city of migrants. The earliest settlers were the seafarers and fishermen from Fujian¹³, who brought with them the culture of Ah Ma, the goddess and protector of seafarers who protected them all the way to *Nan Yang* (South East Asia) and America, and brought back with them the Overseas Chinese Culture, which has absorbed some indigenous and western elements. This kind of mixed culture has permeated through Macau into the Pearl River Delta, the native place of many overseas Chinese, changing some of the social habits and behaviour of the local population. The impact of this cultural penetration can still be seen from the existing cultural heritage in the region, such as the

¹² The earliest generation of the Macanese were descendants from intermarriages along the Portuguese route to the Orient, from Africa, India, Malacca to Japan. Later they got more mixed with local Chinese. Traditionally, Macanese have a Portuguese name, baptized in the Catholic church, receive a Portuguese education from the father's side, but speak Cantonese as their mother tongue and adopt a lot of Chinese customs. Their language or dialect, called Patua, adopted some words from Malay, Indian, African and Cantonese, its grammar is different from the original Portuguese on which it was based. As a result of a continuous diaspora, the Macanese community in Macau has shrunk to around 10,000, much less than their folks that migrated abroad.

¹³ Until today, Fujianese still consist around one fourth of the local population, next to their countrymen from Guangdong (who are the majority), Shanghai (around 20,000) and other parts of the country.

diaolou (fortress type residence to guard against robbery) in Taishan and Kaiping near Macau.

Due to Macau's neutrality in the war, Macau became an ideal shelter for refugees during World War II, when Hong Kong and neighbouring areas were occupied by the Japanese. Among the refugees were doctors, engineers, professors, politicians, military officers, managers, artists, journalists, writers and other professionals, who contributed a lot to China's reconstruction after the war. In the 1960s Macau again became a shelter for repatriated overseas Chinese who were panicked by anti-Chinese social turmoil during the decolonization process in South East Asia and Africa.¹⁴ This endless influx and outflow of migrants, has given the local community a strong character of mobility. Around half of the Chinese residents are new migrants after Deng opened the door in 1978, who still maintain close contacts with their relatives and friends in mainland China. Most of the old Chinese residents who have stayed in Macau for more than 2 generations are Portuguese passport holders¹⁵, and most of them have relatives abroad. This demographic structure offers an excellent human network to keep Macau linked to China and the rest of the world, a human network that enables Macau to play the role of a bridge.

Being a meeting point between East and West along history, Macau got a unique opportunity of creating its own multi-cultural legacy, in the form of folklore customs, architecture, literature, painting, music and gastronomy, with a strong Latin (Mediterranean) flavour as a result of the long presence of Portuguese in the territory, different from the strong Anglo-Saxon trait in neighbouring Hong Kong. The special status of Macau's neutrality has protected Macau's rich and unique cultural legacy from being destroyed by wars and social upheavals in mainland China. The ages-old archives and documents, together with the temples, churches and monuments, as well as traditional customs, some already extinct in mainland China, are all well preserved, different from Hong Kong where lots of their legacies have been lost. That's why Macau offers a living museum for historians, anthropologists, sociologists, architects, artists, gastronomists and other specialists to make indepth research on the reality of East-West cultural interaction in this part of the world. That's why UNESCO is interested in listing Macau into the world

¹⁴ There were around 40,000 overseas Chinese stranded in Macau, comprising one tenth of the local population. They came from Indo-China, Burma, Indonesia, Mocambique, Madagascar, Peru, East Timor and other regions, keeping their overseas connections, and many of them still maintain passports of their country of origin. Many among the second or third generation migrated to the US, Canada, Australia or Europe.

¹⁵ Those who were born in Macau before 1981 could automatically become Portuguese citizens. Even those who came later, could still apply for Portuguese citizenship or could become Portuguese citizens through intermarriage. Unlike the Chinese BNO passport holders in Hong Kong, the Portuguese passport holders among Macau Chinese, have the right of abode in all EU countries.

heritage of culture¹⁶, adding another point of uniqueness in China's reputation of preserving world heritage.

During the long interaction between East and Western cultures, Macau has produced a lot of Portuguese, Macanese and Chinese outstanding poets, writers, architects, medical doctors, painters and other professionals who could combine the two cultures in their creative work. But let us just pick out some Chinese from the long list, those who had direct impact on China.

Tang Xianzhu (1550-1616), a Jiangxi born scholar, poet and script writer, was among the many visiting Chinese literati to Macau, who were impressed by the alien exotic flavour and scenes they saw in Macau, wrote it down in their works for circulation in China. One of Tang's famous and long standing drama was *Mu Dan Ding* (The Peony Pavilion), which depicted some scenes from Macau.

Qu Dajun (1630-1696), the Guangdong born patriotic poet, monk and social activist, took shelter in Macau, using the Kun Yam Buddhist temple to continue his *fan qing fu ming* campaign in his efforts to resist the Manchus and revive the Ming. He wrote many poems about his activities in mainland China and Macau.

Wu Li (1632-1718), the Jiangsu born poet and painter, learnt Latin language and culture in Macau and joined the Jesuits at the age of 51. He wrote a lot of poems about Macau and when he moved to Shanghai, he became an active promoter of European Renaissance culture. The Portuguese Jesuits erected a monument to commemorate his deeds.

Yin Guangren, the Jiangsu born scholar-official, was sent by the Chinese Court to work in Macau in the year 1744, to make regulations for foreign ships and foreign residents in Macau. In his later years, he made a systematic field research, with collaboration from his younger Mandarin colleague **Zhang Lulin**, on the identity, behaviour and customs of foreigners in Macau, published in 1786 under the title of *Aomen Jilue* (Records on Macau), an important reference for the Chinese Court.

Gao Jianfu (1879-1951), the Guangdong born painter and educationist, received his early aesthetic education in Macau, before going to study art in Japan, and later became an active promoter for the reform of Chinese traditional painting by adopting some Western style painting. During the Japanese occupation of Guangdong, he fled to Macau and continued teaching the art of painting in the college of art he created. He was respected as the

¹⁶ Under the encouragement of the Beijing and UNESCO authorities, the Macau government in 2001 submitted via the central government an application to UNESCO for putting Macau's most important historical relics into the list of world cultural heritage, to be discussed and formally approved in 2003.

creator of the Lingnan style of painting, quite popular in South China and Taiwan.

Wang Zhaoyong (1861-1939), a Guangdong born writer, poet and Mandarin, retired in Macau and made research on local and regional culture. He wrote a lot of articles on this type of culture, which was later named by scholars as the Lingnan culture, a specific regional culture, influenced by elements from the West, which apparently came through Macau.

Xiao Youmei (1884-1940), the Guangdong born musician, who was much influenced by Western music when he moved with his parents to Macau, before he continued his studies in Japan and received his doctor of music degree in Leibzig, Germany. He was much respected by the Rector of the Yanjing University in Beijing, Cai Yuanpei, who helped him to create the first Chinese conservatorium in Shanghai in the year 1927.

Xian Xinghai (1905-1945), the Macau born musician, followed his mother¹⁷ to Singapore, from where he continued his studies in Guangzhou, Shanghai and Paris, and became the composer of the world famous Yellow River Cantata, which strongly encouraged the Chinese to fight against Japanese aggression in the 1940s. He, like his predecessor Xiao Youmei, was an active promoter to blend Chinese music with Western music.

Chen Kunpei (1896-1985), the Macau born architect, became an outstanding designer of many monumental buildings in Macau, like the General Post Office, the headquarters of the Fire Brigade, the octagonal Chinese library, etc. which together with the works of his Portuguese and Macanese colleagues and predecessors, contributed a lot to the unique architectonics of Macau. That's why he was appointed chief engineer of the Institute of Architectural Designing of Guangdong Province in 1957, enabling him to participate in the designing of many huge projects in the region.

Apart from the above mentioned writers, artists, architects and other kind of specialists, the Chinese intelligentsia have been using Macau's special status in history as an outpost to learn from the West and to promote social reforms in China, which is crucial for its modernization. Many of them came from the region close to Macau.

Lin Zexu (1785-1850), the Fujian born Mandarin, was assigned as special commissioner to Guangdong to lead the ban on opium trade. He used Macau as a base of intelligence to collect information on illegal smuggling and trafficking of opium in the region, which had destroyed the economy and

¹⁷When his daughter visited Macau in 1994, she recalled how her father was deeply impressed by her grandmother, a poor young widow struggling to make both ends meet, who often sang Cantonese nursery rhymes to him and encouraged him to study hard.

morale of the Chinese. Based on the translation of information, he published the famous *Aomen Yuebao* (Macau Monthly), which he used to lay out his strategy for the banning of opium. He even summoned the Portuguese administrators in Macau, asking them to be more collaborative in monitoring and checking the opium trade, and expel the British opium traffickers from Macau. The Chinese respect him as a national hero in the Opium War, and erected a statue and museum of him at the Lin Fong Temple where he visited Macau in 1839.

Wei Yuan (1794-1857), the Hunan born Mandarin and strategist, once visited Macau, consulted his friend, Commissioner Lin Zhexu in Guangzhou, and published his famous *Hai Guo Tu Zhi* (Illustrated Gazetteer of the Countries Overseas) in 1844, containing a discussion of how to handle the “barbarian”¹⁸ problem. He combined the ancient concept of *yi yi zhi yi* (using barbarians to control barbarians) with the new concept of “learning their superior technology (specifically warships, firearms and methods of training soldiers) in order to control them”. The *Zhiqiang Yundong* (Self Strengthening Movement) as initiated by Wei Yuan, was further extended from the military to other fields of diplomacy, fiscal and education after the defeat of the Taiping rebellion in 1862.

Cai Gao (1788-1846), a Guangdong born printer, helped the pioneer Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison, who translated the Bible into Chinese, to print the Chinese version of the Bible and other brochures on Christianity compiled by Morrison, and in collaboration with his colleague Liang Fa smuggled these material from Macau to Guangzhou.¹⁹ This kind of literature had a great impact on scholars like **Hung Xiuquan** (1814-1864) in Guangzhou, who became the leader of the peasant rebellion under the banner of *Tai Ping Tian Guo* (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace), which lasted for almost two decades, covering 18 provinces, shocking the decaying pillars of the Qing Empire. Hung borrowed the militant teachings of the Old Testament and combining it with traditional Chinese elements to form his own religion and ideology, which craved for equal distribution of land, equality of sexes, abolition of foot-binding and appointment of women as officers and administrators, prohibition of slavery, adultery, witchcraft, gambling, alcohol, opium and tobacco, while retaining the moral precept of filial piety and combining their brotherhood of men with the old tradition of social hierarchy and status. Although the movement, with all its internal weaknesses, was ruthlessly crushed and suppressed, their lofty ideals remain as a source of

¹⁸ At that time, the Chinese still looked upon foreigners as “barbarians” or aliens, *Guai Lou* in Cantonese, or *Yang Guizhi* (foreign devils) in Mandarin.

¹⁹ Cai and Liang were the first Christian converts. Cai was later arrested by the Qing police and tortured to death in prison. The Chinese Christians in Macau set up a church and school in commemoration of him.

inspiration for younger generations of reformers and revolutionaries, who were searching for better ways of China's modernization..

Rong Hong (1828-1912), the Guangdong born scholar, was among the earliest students who profited from the reform of education in Macau during the Self Strengthening Movement, where he could join a Christian school set up by Robert Morrison, became the first Chinese student to study in the United States, and graduated from the Yale University in 1854. He conceived that "through Western education China might be regenerated, become enlightened and powerful". In 1872, with public support, he was able to realize his long-cherished dream of sending an education mission, consisting of 120 Chinese students, to study in the US. Rong was a staunch supporter of the reform movement of Kang-Liang and the revolutionary movement of Sun Yat Sen.

Zheng Guanying (1842-1922), the Guangdong born enlightened type scholar, Mandarin and entrepreneur, was educated in Macau and learnt his entrepreneurship at a British company in Shanghai, where he became a comprador, doing his own business in the tea and salt trade., and continued his career as general manager in the government-supervised and merchant-operated telecommunication and shipping companies. After the Sino-French war in 1883, he made his tour to South East Asia and retired to his home in Macau²⁰, where he spent most of his time in studying and writing, elaborating his ideas to promote free market economy and social reform. One of his most famous books was *Sheng Si Wei Yan* (Words of Warning in the Aura of Prosperity), which had a great impact on the younger generation, including Sun Yat Sen²¹ and Mao Zedong.²²

Kang Youwei (1858-1927), the Guangdong born ideologue of reform and his student from the same region **Liang Qichao** (1873-1929), were making full use of Macau as a basis to promote their ideas for monarchic constitutional reform, advising the young emperor Guang Xu to initiate some institutional reform after the model of the Meiji Reform in Japan. During the hundred days between June and September 1898, Kang and Liang acted as advisors behind the scene for Guang Xu, issuing reform edicts dealing with almost every conceivable subject: setting up of modern schools and remaking the examination system; revising the laws as a preliminary to get rid of extraterritoriality; promoting agriculture, medicine, mining, commerce,

²⁰ His home is called *Casa de Mandarin* in Portuguese, a huge mansion and complex, quite unique in the whole region, and classified by the government as protected heritage, which is being turned into a museum.

²¹ Sun respected Zheng as his teacher, who helped Sun in 1894 to hand in a letter to the most powerful Mandarin at the Qing Court, Li Hongzhang, urging the government to embark on a more effective road of social reform.

²² *Sheng Si Wei Yan* was Mao's most favourite book when he was studying at the Hunan Changsha Normal (teachers training) School before he became a communist.

inventions and study abroad; and modernizing the army, navy, police and postal systems. The failure of the Hundred Day Reform was a result of a counter coup by the Empress Dowager, who represented the conservative wing, arresting the leaders of the movement, and banning all their schools and newspapers. Kang and Liang fled to Macau on their way to Japan. However, the modern schools and the newspaper *Zi Xin Bao* (The Journal for Modern Knowledge) they created before in Macau, kept functioning for a long time.

Chen Zibao (1862-1932), the Guangdong born educationist, was an active follower of Kang and Liang in promoting modern education. After finishing his studies in Japan, he returned to Macau to run modern schools after the abortive Hundred Day Reform, promoting the use of *baihua wen* (spoken Chinese), opening the door for girls to study at primary and secondary schools, and compiled a series of modern text books, which had a great impact in the whole region.

Qiu Fengjia (1864-1912): the Taiwan born poet and educationist, visited Macau after the failure of organizing a resistance against Japanese occupation of Taiwan when the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed in 1895, obliging China to cede Taiwan to Japan after China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war. When visiting Hong Kong and Macau in 1900, he wrote many patriotic poems, and became a strong supporter of Sun Yat Sen in the field of education. A university in Taiwan was named after him.

Sun Yat Sen (1866-1925), the Father of the Chinese Republic, spent his childhood at his father's shop in Macau, where he was inspired to study abroad, first to Honolulu and later to Hong Kong, and was even converted to be a Christian. He used Macau as a base to discuss ideas of reform with his close friends and to carry out revolutionary activities under the disguise as the first Chinese western medical doctor practising at the Keang Wu Hospital and running the East West Pharmacy. After the abortive Guangzhou uprising in 1895, he fled to Macau, and under the protection of his friend, the Portuguese solicitor Hermenegildo Fernandes, he was able to escape to Japan. He received moral and material support from the Portuguese and Chinese communities in Macau, as both were longing for the termination of the monarchy in favour of a republic in their respective countries. When Sun revisited Macau twice after the 1911 revolution, he was offered an official warm welcome by the Chinese and Portuguese. The people in Macau kept debating Sun's Three Principles of the People (nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood or socialism) and his three-stage program (local self government, period of "tutelage" and constitutional government), bearing in mind Sun's last words that "the revolution has not yet been accomplished, comrades still need to work hard". After his death, his family in Macau was

well looked after²³, and people started setting up so many statues and monuments of him in the city, saying that the birth of the Chinese republic might not have been possible without Macau.

Stopping here at the long list of Chinese celebrities, we can proudly say that Macau has closely followed the footsteps of China's modernization, not just as an observer, but more as an inspirator, supporter and active participant.

Continuation of Macau's function into the future

From the above mentioned review of Macau's contribution along history, we can easily see that its role as a hub in the first steps of globalization of China's external trade; as a catalyst and promoter of a free market economy starting from the South; as an ideal bridge for free and equal exchange of cultures between East and West; and as a well protected base and shelter for reformers and revolutionaries, would not have been possible without its status as China's first free zone, an embryonic form of the "one country two systems" formula.

Based on the experience of over 4 centuries of evolution, Deng decided to adopt the "one country two systems" formula for Hong Kong and Macau's future, guaranteeing the continuity of the second system under control of the first system. The control is limited by the high degree of autonomy, which gives ample space for the second system to develop, within the limits of not harming the first system through subversion or confrontation. This dialectical relationship is still being experimented with slightly different conditions in Hong Kong and Macau.

Due to a longer history of mutual respect and mutual tolerance, the relations between the two systems in Macau implies more harmony than conflict, more check and balances than confrontation, more reconciliation than alienation, maintaining stability in plurality. This is the so called "Macau model",²⁴ which is more acceptable by Beijing over other models of conflict²⁵, which was often the case in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, the second system of a well developed international financial and trade center with a strong middle class and well established rule of law, is strong enough to confront the first system. That's why the central authorities

²³ Sun's first wife, Lu Mu-zhen stayed in Macau until her death in 1952. The house where she stayed, often visited by her relatives, has been turned into a memorial house of Sun.

²⁴ The Macau model has been elaborated in Professor K.C. Fok's 1978 dissertation at the University of Hawaii, entitled "The Macau Formula", translated and published in Portuguese by Gradiva, Lisbon 1995.

²⁵ Beijing prefers the political structure of Macau, with no political parties and a weaker opposition, a more balanced and controllable legislature, and no specific date for universal suffrage. Obviously, Macau's pace for democratization is falling behind that of Hong Kong.

are concerned of losing control and trying to check it with the so called article 23 of the Basic Law, which is now coming under heavy debate for its further legislation in Hong Kong.²⁶ The continuing political crisis, if not correctly handled, could affect the credibility of the “one country two systems” formula.

In Macau, the second system of a less developed free economy with a weaker middle class and the rule of law often haunted by corruption, nepotism and even gangsterism²⁷, is much easier to put under control by the first system. The problem here, opposite to that of Hong Kong, is how to upgrade and develop the second system. There is still an existing danger for the second system degenerating into the first system, if Sinisization / “mainlandization” or a form of self-centered extreme nationalism as a negative aftermath of Mao’s “cultural revolution” is allowed to prevail²⁸. If this happens, Macau could easily degenerate into another small Chinese city, or an appendix of neighbouring Zhuhai²⁹, which of course is against the will of the Central Government.

That’s why preserving and upgrading Macau’s own identity, which is different from Hong Kong and other Chinese cities, is becoming a top priority. It involves the improvement of Macau’s economy which is depending heavily on the gaming and tourist industry.³⁰ The gaming franchise which was split into 3 licences in 2002, with two newcomers from Las Vegas, would hopefully upgrade and diversify Macau’s gaming industry, with more theme parks based on Macau’s own identity (not duplicating a Disney Land in Hong Kong or any other existing themes in China and the region) for family entertainment and relaxation, and turning Macau into a regional center for

²⁶ The article 23 of the Hong Kong Basic Law was drafted right after the Tiananmen incident in 1989, which scared the Beijing leaders of Hong Kong becoming a “base of counter revolution” against the central government. Being concerned of losing their freedom and human rights, half a million Hong Kong people poured into the streets recently to protest against the controversial legislation of article 23 of the Basic Law. It could become more eruptive if no compromise could be reached.

²⁷ A turf war broke out between several groups of the underground mafia who tried to grab a bigger slice of the cake from the casinos only a few months or weeks before Macau’s handover in 1999, scaring away the visitors. But after the handover, with a stronger grip from the Chinese security forces, the public security in Macau was swiftly recovered to normal.

²⁸ Macau was called a “half liberated area” of the underground communists who called themselves “leftists” when they came to power as a “shadow government” after the “1.2.3” (December 3) incident -- a violent clash between the Portuguese police and the Chinese-- took place in the midst of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, controlling the civic organizations, schools and media under strong Maoist doctrines. According to them, everything Portuguese is “colonial” in nature and should be thrown overboard.

²⁹ Zhuhai, China’s second Special Economic Zone created from scratch in 1980, is catching up swiftly with Macau in terms of foreign investment and economic growth, and has become a modern city 50 times larger in area and two times bigger in population than Macau, creating a misleading notion of “Great Zhuhai, small Macau”.

³⁰ As a result of a strong decline in the manufacturing and construction industries in the 1990s, 60-70% of government revenues have been coming from the gaming and tourist industry, which for decades has remained the mainstay of Macau’s economy.

international convention, if the promised investment of the new licence holders could all be materialized in time. This will maintain and upgrade Macau as a unique tourist destination in the region, to support the development of Macau's identity in other areas.

The top priority in maintaining and upgrading Macau's second system is the reform in the administrative and judicial system, which the SAR government is now taking seriously as a long term strategy. It involves 3 crucial issues: 1) the intensification of professional training; 2) the preservation of the Portuguese language and the implementation of the trilingual policy; 3) the reform of the legal system.

Due to the slow pace of localization by the previous government and the departure of the majority of experienced expatriates after the handover, the bulk of the present SAR public service is young and inexperienced. That's why professional training must be intensified. The problem is where and how to train them. They have been sent to Lisbon, Beijing and Singapore. There is a third alternative: to get the training from continental Europe, which has a public service quite identical to that of Macau. It is not difficult to do so, as the EU has already an official agreement with Macau, signed in 1992 and extended beyond the handover, to provide such training with less expenses and better results.

The language policy is important, not only to preserve the Portuguese language as an official language stipulated in the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration and the Macau Basic Law, but also to turn Macau into an international city, where English and Mandarin must be popularized.³¹ Different from Hong Kong, Macau must be trilingual, in order to be competitive. Portuguese, though losing its position as a language of social communication,³² is still indispensable in maintaining the quality of administration and judiciary, as many legal documents are still written in Portuguese, and one cannot just rely upon the Chinese translation, which was not well done.³³ It would be disastrous in interpreting the law without understanding and referring to the original text in Portuguese, and it would be equally disastrous to teach Macau law only in Chinese. Portuguese should

³¹ The most commonly spoken language in Macau is Cantonese, not Mandarin. English is taught in primary and secondary schools, but often at a much lower level than that of Hong Kong. The majority of the population, new immigrants from China, don't speak English. Most of the old residents of Macau don't speak Mandarin.

³² Due to lack of promotion and resistance of teaching and learning Portuguese among local Chinese, only less than 3% of the population can understand or speak Portuguese at different levels, less than the percentage in any other Portuguese speaking communities of the world.

³³ Due to lack of bilingual legal professionals, the translation of Portuguese laws into Chinese was done by a combination of 3 types of persons – Portuguese legal experts who did not know Chinese, Chinese legal experts who did not know Portuguese and translators who were not trained in the legal profession. The gap of knowledge, which could only be bridged by bilingual legal professionals, resulted in the low quality of translation.

become an elective foreign language, next to English, in local Chinese high schools, in order to broaden the pool for training multi-lingual interpreters, and opening a chance for high school graduates to enter Portuguese or other Latin speaking universities. At the same time, Chinese should be taught as a more effective obligatory or elective subject in Portuguese speaking schools. It is, however, encouraging to see that Beijing keeps sending students to Macau to learn Portuguese, and that the yearly summer camp to learn Portuguese language and culture in Macau has an increasing participation of students from the Asia-Pacific region.

Maintaining and upgrading Macau's legal system based on the European continental law (not just the Portuguese law) is crucial to preserve Macau's identity.³⁴ Of course there is still plenty of space in modernizing Macau's law by absorbing some useful points from the law in other European countries, as well as from the common law (especially in the commercial law) without encroaching the spirit of the continental law. For doing so, the training of bilingual or trilingual legal professionals is extremely important. Comparative law studies have to be promoted.

If all these 3 points of reform could be achieved in the long run, the second system of Macau could become stronger and more effective in serving China's best interest on the road of its modernization, in a sense that:

- 1) It can have a smaller but more effective and transparent government, with a stronger civic society capable of helping the government to perform more duties and tasks inside and outside Macau, continuing to play a better bridging role in the future;
- 2) It can enhance the rule of law, not only to attract more investors and maintain the political stability, but also to serve as a laboratory for China to establish its own rule of law, as mapped out by the 15th congress of the CPC, by taking advantage of the similarities between the two legal systems;³⁵
- 3) It can maintain and strengthen its ties or "umbilical cord" with the rest of the world, based on its own language and legal characteristics, without duplicating what Hong Kong is doing.

These are the three potentials that have to be unremittingly tapped. Of course it can only be done with vision, courage, creativity and perseverance.

³⁴ To maintain the original legal system is clearly stipulated in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. The problem is that before the handover, the Portuguese did not have enough time to modernize the existing Macau laws, lacking behind that of Portugal and the rest of continental Europe, and often not quite accommodated to Macau's own local conditions. That's why the reform is crucial.

³⁵ According to legal experts, the Macau law has common roots in the Roman Law as the Chinese law, but less commonalities with the common law in Hong Kong.

As far as Macau's external relation is concerned, the existing historical ties, which is still weak, should be further developed. The huge potentials in the EU-Macau Agreement on Trade and Cooperation signed in 1992,³⁶ are far from being fully tapped. European investment as well as their offices in Macau for their China business, are still very scarce.³⁷ Macau's relation with the Lusophone world, under strong recommendation from Beijing, is being developed,³⁸ but still far from reaching an ideal stage. The historical ties with Portugal as a facilitator to the EU and Lusophone world, should not be dropped.

Seen from a broader perspective, the Lusophone world with Brazil at its center, lies within the Latin (Romance) speaking world, which also include the Spanish, French, Italian and Romanian speaking countries, comprising 1/6 of the world population.³⁹

Due to the language barrier, socio-economic backwardness and chaos, as well as lack of initiatives, China's relations with these countries remain at a low level. But with the quick pace of globalization, there is a growing need to increase these contacts. The economic block of Mercosur, with Brazil, Argentine, Uruguay, Paraguay and likely to be joined later by Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela, need to improve their relation and cooperation with the East Asian block (China plus ASEAN Free Trade Area to be joined later by Japan and Korea) in the common fight for multilateralism against unilateralism, in line with China's world strategy of promoting multipolarism. In this strategic set up, Macau can play a modest role as a free port and facilitator with all its multilingual human resources to bring the two blocks closer together.

By capitalizing on its cultural and historical ties, Macau can also play a positive role in the post war reconstruction of East Timor, to which China, Portugal and Australia have a common obligation of extending their aid.

By extending Macau's external relation, the western part of the Pearl River Delta, which is still underdeveloped compared to its eastern part where Hong Kong is situated, can draw immediate and direct benefits from it, especially

³⁶ It is a multifaceted agreement in favour of Macau, covering investment, trade, information, science and technology, financial service, telecommunication, statistics, seminars, and training.

³⁷ The majority of foreign investment and foreign offices are coming from Hong Kong and mainland China, although the scenario might change if the two new license holders in the gaming industry could bring in the money they promised. As a matter of fact, the cost of operation for foreign offices in Macau is much cheaper than in Hong Kong.

³⁸ The Macau SAR Government has recently set up an office to conduct this kind of activities.

³⁹ Their language and culture are quite similar to each other and they could understand each other, often with no need for translation. Most of them belong to the third world countries in Latin America and Africa.

after the integration process between Macau and the western part of the PRD in terms of infrastructure, human and cargo flow is being accelerated.

It is high time to take concrete steps in training qualified professionals to promote Macau's external relations, and give the related institutions⁴⁰ substantial support to coordinate their efforts in carrying out the projects. Macau can also act as an intermediary promoter between mainland Chinese institutions and foreign institutions in terms of research and training.⁴¹

The wide overseas human network as a result of the Chinese and Macanese diaspora along history could be utilized to build up Macau's external links. More than 100,000 Macau residents, Chinese and Macanese, comprising around one fourth of the population, are Portuguese passport holders with right of abode in the EU and with easy access to other countries. This is a great human asset still unexplored.

Conclusion

History has shown and proved that a tiny place like Macau, no matter how small and irrelevant it may look, can play an important role in promoting the modernization of such a huge country like China, because of its special status and uniqueness as a free zone, well protected albeit some unavoidable set backs on its track of evolution. The rich experience and lessons in this bridging role and the interaction of different cultures at this crossing point, is still an untapped subject for historians, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, and experts from various disciplines to carry out their specific, interdisciplinary or comparative research, which hopefully can contribute to a better knowledge in humanities.

When we talk about Macau's success story, the underlying factor of this success, which we should never forget, is the Macau spirit of mutual respect and mutual tolerance to promote harmony in plurality. With this spirit and flexibility, it could survive and prosper after braving many storms and hurricanes. It is this spirit in times of adversity that could minimize and avoid extremism, fanaticism, hatred, violence and terror, and bring back peace and harmony.

⁴⁰ There are several private or semi-official institutions that are engaged in extending Macau's external contacts, such as the Macau Sino-Latin Foundation, the Macau International Institute, the Institute of European Studies, the Portuguese Institute of the Orient, the Macau Euro-China Entrepreneurs Club, etc.

⁴¹ The recently established Macau Millennium College, a private institution, is starting to do this job, complementing what other institutions have not yet been doing.

Macau has traversed four and a half centuries in the interaction of East and West, as an integral part of the world longer history of interface and interaction, in which mutual understanding between different races and cultures is still limited. There is still a long way ahead to promote this kind of mutual understanding based on equality and tolerance. With the Macau model that we have shown, we strongly believe that peace can prevail over violence, harmony can prevail over conflict. That's why we could never agree with Samuel Huntington's prediction of the unavoidable "clash of civilizations" in the 21st century⁴².

With this spirit we also believe that Macau can contribute more to the modernization of China, to the making of a prosperous, united, harmonious and peace-loving China that could play a bigger role in creating and maintaining a new world order, free of war, terror, hatred and discrimination, no matter how long it will take.

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⁴² Samuel Huntington is a Harvard professor, who published his famous book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" in 1997, much endorsed by hardliners in the US.