

Clash or Harmony of Civilizations Through the Eyes of Macau ¹

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Mankind has been troubled by the clash of civilizations among different tribes, religions and nations, from ancient history until recent times, from local conflicts to world wars, bringing destruction to human and natural resources that knows no end. The question seems to remain the same: Is there any way of reducing clashes and increasing harmony among conflicting civilizations? How could our common dream of eternal peace come true?

Macau might give you the answer. Macau, almost invisible on the world map, might provide a feasible solution. Why Macau? I have to start from history.

1. Macau's unique bridging role in history

In Chinese history, Macau, a tiny fishing enclave of not more than 2.5km² ² on the West coast of the Pearl River, only became known to the world after the Portuguese settled down in mid 16th century, when the Middle Kingdom still closed its doors from developing external relations. The Portuguese navigators, taking the opposite direction of the Chinese great navigator Zheng He of his expedition to the West one century earlier, took advantage of its settlement in Macau during its discoveries and expansion to the East, to turn it into **an important trading hub of the Maritime Silk Route** in the 16th and 17th century. Macau was then linked with Korea and Japan in the North, with Mexico and the American continent through Manila in the East, with Siam, Cambodia, Malacca, Macassar, Flores, Solor and Timor in the South, and through Goa with Africa and Europe, and through Europe to the east coast of mid and South America, including Brazil. It was through all these links that a global maritime trade began to take shape, **the first step of globalization**. The Chinese navigators and traders of that period witnessed how Portuguese, and later also Spanish, became the *lingua franca* (common language) to conduct foreign trade. Chinese silk, tea, porcelain, arts and crafts became highly demanded and profitable merchandise in the world trade, while lots of agricultural products including maize from Latin America

¹ This paper was presented at the World Conference on Science, Art and Communication at Oxford, UK, August 2008, and updated in May 2009.

² Macau's area started with just a tiny enclave for the Portuguese settlement of around 2.5 square kilometers in mid 16th century, while after the Opium War in the 19th century, the Portuguese expanded its territory to the islands of Taipa and Coloane, as well as further north to the present border with China, and after continuous reclamation in the 20th century, the total area has grown to 27 km², with an increased population of over half a million.

were introduced to China. *Nao de China* and *Galeón de Manila* were the main carriers of trade between Fujian/Macau, Manila, and Acapulco to Peru for more than two centuries. Silver brought in from Japan and the Americas, especially Mexico through Manila, was the main hard ware to pay for China's exported goods. That's why the Mexican *pataca*, symbolizing the silver trade, became Macau's currency name until today.

It was a key regional role that Macau was playing during the first 3 centuries as China's main gate to the outside world. Macau was opened to European traders as the only place for foreign residence before going to or coming from Canton (Guangzhou). Foreign ships had to be examined by Chinese custom officers in Macau before they were allowed to sail into Canton. That's why by the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, long before the establishment of Hong Kong, Macau had a significant European community, with their consulates well established in this small territory, as described by the British writer Austin Coates: **"Macau became the outpost of all Europe in China."**³ under a joint control of the Portuguese and Chinese, as a special free zone on Chinese territory. It was in this free zone, where things between East and West were handled basically with **mutual respect and mutual benefit**, so that the increasing trade could bring a **widespread and intensive cultural exchange between the two civilizations**.

After Quanzhou, the Chinese port in Fujian Province, was closed by the Ming Emperor, the Arabs, Persians and Jews, the most active traders in the 15-16th century, were using Macau and its neighbour Xiangzhou as their trading post, leaving traces of their religion, mosques and altars in this region. When the Portuguese settled down in Macau, a church presence was established, Macau became the center of the first Diocese of the Catholic church in East Asia in 1575, strongly linked to churches in the whole region, inspite of the rivalries between the Portuguese and the Spanish for regional dominance. In 1594, the **S. Paul College, the first college of a western style in the Far East**, was established in Macau, to train the Jesuits in the Chinese and Japanese languages, culture and customs, before starting their missionary work into those countries. The Jesuits coming from different nations in Europe, especially from Latin Europe, like Matteo Ricci, Nicolaus Trigault, Thomas Pereira and others, became the first generation of outstanding Sinologists. The Jesuits together with their Chinese counterparts, like Xu Guangqi, Li Zichao, Wu Li and others, trained in Latin languages, brought about a two-way exchange of culture, by translating and introducing Western mathematics, astronomy, physics, architecture, medicine, weaponry, art of printing, music, fine arts, among other things, to the East, and introducing Chinese philosophy, literature, medicine, tea, porcelain, art and craft, architecture and painting to to the West. **The significant cultural interchange was one of Macau's greatest contribution to world history. It was made possible because of mutual respect and mutual tolerance.** It was expressed in the attitude of learning from each other by Liebknecht and Voltaire during the Enlightenment Movement in the West, and the Qing Emperor Kang Xi towards the Jesuits in the East. When the Holy See in Rome turned to a tougher line against the Chinese rites and customs, and came into violent conflicts with the conservatives in the Qing court, the Jesuits in Macau persisted in the moderate line, preserving the social harmony until today. The remaining ruins and façade of S. Paul's Cathedral with its occidental and

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

oriental design elements, is a symbol of Macau's cultural identity, implying East-West **coexistence, interaction and blending** in folkloric customs, architecture, literature, painting, music and gastronomy.

The Japan-China trade via Macau to Nagasaki handled by the Portuguese blackships was flourishing, with a strong impact on Japanese culture, scaring the Shoguns, who later banned the trade and persecuted the Japanese Christians. They used Macau as their perfect shelter. But trade and cultural exchange continued to flourish in other parts of the region until the Portuguese and Spanish were overtaken by the Dutch, French, British and Americans. The rivalry between these maritime empires from the West to dominate the East was vividly expressed in the history of South-East and South Asia, including the kingdom of Ayutthaya (Siam) and its vassal states, as well as CochinChina (Indo-China) and Indonesia throughout the 16th till the 18th century. The cross cultural interaction in those parts of the region, however, never ceased to exist. A lot of Portuguese words were absorbed in the Indonesian language. Philipinos still retain their Spanish names, and the Ceylonese (Sri Langkans) their Portuguese names. The Japanese still celebrate some of the Portuguese festivities, as part of their cultural heritage. Pockets of old Portuguese communities with their religion, customs and festivities could still be seen in Myanmar, Malacca and Goa. **Their commercial, religious and cultural links with Macau could still be traced in our historical archives.** The colonization of the East by the West in the Asia Pacific went almost parallel with the colonization of the Americas. The study of Macau history can give evidence and comparison of this parallel process.

When the gate of one of the strongest bastion of the East—the Middle Kingdom, was **kicked open by force** by Western powers after the Opium War in 1840, Macau saw the **equilibrium between East and West completely destroyed**, resulting in the ever increasing humiliation of China until the end of World War II and the conclusion of the civil war in 1949. Macau suffered from colonialization, but not so bad as in Hong Kong, in a sense that the Chinese sovereignty over Macau was never ceded to the Portuguese. In 1978, when bilateral negotiations restarted over the status of Macau, the Portuguese admitted that Macau remained a “Chinese territory under Portuguese administration”, until 20 December 1999, when it was reverted to the Chinese Government as a result of the Sino-Luso Joint Declaration in 1986. It was this **special status** that kept Macau as the **earliest and longest Western settlement on Chinese soil**, benefiting the whole region.

For a long time in the 20th century, Macau maintained its special status as a **neutral free port during the two world wars**, never occupied by the Japanese, and became a shelter of refugees from the whole region, even during the social turmoil after the war, when many overseas Chinese from the region, as well as East Timorese fled as refugees to this tiny enclave⁴. At the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, many **Chinese influential thinkers, reformers and revolutionaries**, such as Zheng Guanying, Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei, Sun Yat Sen etc. had access to Western

⁴ After World War II, during the anti-Chinese turmoils in the former colonies of the Western powers in Asia and Africa, many overseas Chinese were forced to leave those countries, and around 100,000 stranded in Macau, the majority were from Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia, Madagascar and Moçambique. Many among the second generation remigrated to Europe, America, Canada and Australia.

learning through Macau and Japan, making **Macau a platform of their activities, bringing about great social and political changes in modern China.**

For the Chinese, Macau has been a **springboard to go overseas**, and has become a **city of migrants**, including the poor peasants from nearby regions who were sold as “piglets”, slaves or coolies to virgin lands abroad, as far as the Americas – Peru, Cuba and the Caribbeans. Chinese tea planters were sent to Brazil through Macau in the early 19th century. The earliest Chinese migrants were the seafarers and fishermen from Fujian, and later also from Guangdong, who brought with them the culture of Ah Ma, the goddess of seafarers who protected them all the way to *Nan Yang* (South East Asia), where they settled and brought back with them the *Nan Yang* Culture – the Overseas Chinese Culture, which has absorbed some native and western elements, making a **significant contribution to the modernization and diversification in the economy and culture of the Pearl River Delta, which became the cradle of Chinese capitalism.**

When the People’s Republic suffered from Western embargo during Mao’s era, Macau, next to Hong Kong, remained open for a limited flow of capital, goods and migrants, acting as the **only “nostrils”** for China to keep contacts with their neighbours in the region and the West. When Deng Xiaoping regained power in 1978, the barrier was lifted, Macau and Hong Kong became China’s **most important gates** to bring in investment, technology, information and management know-how from the region to the mainland, which embarked on the road of reform from a closed and centralized economy to a more open and free market economy.

Compared to Hong Kong, Macau has a **longer history** of exposure to the West, in which Chinese culture had to **coexist, interact, clash and blend** with culture from the West. This process of coexistence and interaction seems to produce different results compared to Hong Kong and other cities in China. In this small territory, there was **no way for the Europeans to assimilate the millenia-old Chinese civilization, and no way for the Chinese to reject Western culture with its superiority in science and technology. 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 Portugugese cultures, has contributed a lot to this equilibrium. Macau has become a **multi-racial and multi-cultural** society, a **melting pot** of East and West. The interaction and blending of them is based on **mutual respect and tolerance, implying more harmony than conflict, more check-and-balances than confrontation, more reconciliation than alienation, and maintaining a stability in plurality.** This can be called the **Macau model**, different from the Hong Kong model, which is Anglo-Saxon, with more conflicts and confrontations.

The cultural blending resulted in the creation of a **hybrid community**, the Eurasian Macanese⁵, which never came into existence in the parallel process of cultural

⁵ When the Portuguese first settled in Macau, they did not bring their own women, only slaves from Africa, India and Malacca, whom they encountered along their route to the East. The earliest generation of Macanese were descendants from these intermarriages, followed by those with the Japanese, and only later with the Chinese. Traditionally, most Macanese would have a Portuguese name, baptized in the Catholic church, receive a Portuguese education from the father’s side, but speak Chinese as their mother tongue and adopt a lot of Chinese customs. Their language called Patua, adopted many words from Malay, Indian, African and Cantonese, and has a slightly different

interaction in neighboring Hong Kong. This community of Macanese, with **bilingual or multilingual** cultural characteristics, has played an important role in the history of Macau. The Macanese are the ones that have been **bridging the cultural gap** between the Portuguese and the Chinese. As a matter of fact, the establishment of Hong Kong and Shanghai in the early days had to rely upon the assistance and expertise provided by the Macanese. 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 *encontros*, regular gatherings in Macau of those who already left Macau, settling in Brazil, Canada, Portugal, the US and Australia.

Macau's **special status** has helped to **preseve its cultural identity**, both Chinese and Latin. The very old traditions of Chinese folklore and customs, which have already been destroyed in mainland China due to civil wars and continuous social upheavals, are still intact and well preserved in Macau. The old temples and shrines of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, as well as the Catholic and Protestant churches, monuments, cemeteries etc. remain intact, providing a solid basis for **listing Macau in UNESCO's world heritage**, officially approved in 2005, and for developing cultural tourism in the whole region. Macau received more than 20 million tourists in 2007, more than 40 times of its present population, thanks to its unique attraction. What we need at this moment, is to attract more tourists from the West, to increase people-to-people contacts.

The **religious freedom** in Macau is also **well preserved**. Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam and the Bahai 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, Thailand, Ireland, Middle East, the Balkans and many more territories, where religious bloodshed could not be avoided. It has become a **unique** phenomena in Macau, when the Bishop or priests and the Buddhist monks appeared together at major ceremonies of our local community, bestowing their blessing on our major events in their own rituals and tradition. Such religious tolerance is certainly **scarce** in the region and in the modern world.

That's why it could **attract** more people from the **region**—Korean, Philipinos, Tailanese, Indonesians, etc. to come to Macau, not just to earn a better living, but also to do business and to develop their own communal traditions. The Philipino and Burmese cultural or religious **festivities** were celebrated with equal fervour and entusiasm as the Buddhist and Christian festivities among the local population of this tiny enclave.

2. Prospects of Macau's multifaceted bridging role

Macau's special status as China's free zone in history, later formulated by Deng Xiaoping as the "**one country two systems**" formula, is an effective tool for Macau to continue playing its bridging role, linking China with the rest of the world by

grammar compared to the original Portuguese on which it was based. During the last decades, an increasing number of local Chinese men married Portuguese women.

preserving Macau's cultural identity. The successful implementation and efficient operation of the second system is an important condition in preserving Macau's identity and enabling Macau to continue playing its bridging role after it becomes a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China since 20 December 1999.

The **Portuguese language**, as an official language stipulated in the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration and the Macau Basic Law, and as a tool to communicate with the Portuguese and Latin speaking communities of the world, should be maintained and improved. It is indispensable to maintain the **political and legal culture** of Macau, just as English is necessary in Hong Kong to maintain the Rule of Law, which is the cornerstone of the "one country two systems" formula. There is still a strong need to maintain the bilingual nature in the present administrative and judicial system. Macau has been turning into a **regional language training center**, to teach Portuguese to students from China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region.⁶ It is encouraging to note that the enthusiasm of learning Portuguese among the local Chinese population, has **increased** and not decreased after the handover. It is also interesting to note that Chinese students in Macau are now eager to learn **Spanish**, given its similarity to Portuguese, becoming a better option than French, German or even Japanese.

Different from Hong Kong and other Chinese cities, Macau with its strong Latin identity and its long tradition of links with the Latin world, is playing a **specific bridging role with the Portuguese and Latin speaking community of the world**. From China's side, there is a will to strengthen and broaden Macau's role as a second bridge next to Hong Kong, towards countries and regions that belong to the Latin speaking community, as Macau has the common **language, law and culture** that could facilitate the communication with this category of developing countries and regions in 3 continents--Europe, America and Africa, comprising 1/6 of the world population. As a matter of fact, Macau is the only place in China, next to East Timor in the Western part of the Asia Pacific region, that has a Latin language (Portuguese) as an official language. It is completely in line with China's international **multi-polar strategy** to increase its ties with Europe and the rest of the Latin speaking world,⁷ in order to achieve a balance with the US and the Anglo-Saxon world. Stronger ties between the EU, China/Asia and Latin America, could change the world balance of power, in favour of a more balanced trade and stronger means to safeguard world peace. This is where Macau could play a **modest but ever growing intermediary role**.

The existing Macau trade links with over 100 countries and regions, and Macau's participation in 120 international and regional organizations and agreements (including the WTO), is an important basis for further developing Macau's external links. Under strong recommendation and participation of Beijing, the first important step has been taken after the handover, when Macau hosted the first official business

⁶ The University of Macau (UMAC) is providing facilities to train people from China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, India etc. from the region, to improve their knowledge of Portuguese, by frequenting the summer language courses. It also gives access and sponsorship to students coming from Portuguese speaking African countries to take degree courses at UMAC.

⁷ Due to the language barrier and other factors, China's trade with and investment from Latin speaking countries stagnated for a long time from the 1950s till 1970s at a low level of around 8% and 2% of its total foreign trade and foreign investment, allowing a huge space for improvement.

meeting between the **PRC and seven Portuguese speaking countries** in October 2003, using Macau as a **permanent platform or forum of service**, to promote **two-way trade, investment and training** between these two large markets of the world, already producing remarkable results in the first 5 years of the forum's operation, showing an average of 44% annual increase in trade volume. Some workshops have been organized to train public servants from those countries on business planning, tourism and management, and a special website has been set up in Macau to promote exchange of information. East Timor is China's closest Portuguese speaking "neighbour" in the region, which gives Macau the advantage of channeling China's aid to the reconstruction of this war ridden country, in close cooperation with Portugal, Brazil and Australia.

China's relation with **Latin America** is nowadays still underdeveloped, due to the distance, the language barrier and the lack of mutual understanding. But with the fast progress of information technology, distance is no longer an obstacle. The distance could be shortened, the gap could be narrowed, either through direct contacts as provided by modern IT, or indirectly through traditional links with Europe, especially Portugal and Spain. It could also take advantage of the South-South connection to increase contacts with South America by using Australia or the Pacific islands as a springboard. Here is where Macau could come in as a "**middleman**", providing **good quality services in training, translations and consultants in general orientation, law and business**.

In 2004-05, the visits of the Chinese President and Vice President to Latin America and the Caribbean has paved the way for closer contacts between China and Latin America, resulting in lots of **multifaceted** agreements signed to develop trade, investment, technology, education, tourism and culture on both sides.⁸ In 2006, the Chief Executive of Macau SAR, Dr. Edmund Ho, visited Brazil, which is China's largest trading partner in Latin America, while China, overtaking the US, has now become Brazil's top trading partner. Chile is the first country in Latin America that established Free Trade Agreement with China, to be followed and extended to others, especially those belonging to Mercosul. The **free port status** of Macau under the "one country two systems", could be used as a **facilitator**. The Brazilian authorities acknowledged that Brazil could serve as an excellent springboard for Macau to extend its bridging role to other countries in Latin America.

The people in Macau have been working hard to build this bridge across the oceans. The first NGO in this direction was the creation of the **Macau Sino-Latin Foundation** in 1996, followed by a second one, the creation of **MAPEAL** (Macau Association to Promote Exchange between Asia-Pacific and Latin America) in 2005, an NGO with government support. MAPEAL, with founding members in China, Latin America and Macau, organized a Workshop in September 2005, attended by scholars from the 3 places, to discuss the possibilities and perspectives of building this

⁸ Since Deng opened the door wider for foreign trade in 1978, the trade volume between China and Latin America increased 10 times in 2 decades till the year 2000, and in the last 5 years till 2005, it has grown much faster, from US\$ 15 billion to more than US\$ 50 billion, surpassing Japan's total trade with Latin America in 2004. China is investing more in Latin America than any region outside Asia. But China's US 8 billion investment in Latin America is still very small compared to the US\$ 300 billion of the US in the region. China has pledged to double its two way trade with Latin America by the year 2010.

bridge to facilitate **research, publication, information, training, business, tourism and culture** on both sides, with the aim of enhancing mutual understanding mainly through **non-governmental** channels, **avoiding the political conflicts** that might eventually pop up.

The results of MAPEAL's September Workshop was edited in a book titled "*Macau, Puente Entre China Y America Latina*", coming out in the Spanish/Portuguese and Chinese versions in 2006, with the blessing of the Macau Government Chief Executive and GRULAC (the Group of Latin American Consuls for Hong Kong and Macau). Much attention was given by scholars to the possibility of creating a regional cooperation to link up **Mercosul** with the **Pan Pearl River Delta Area (which covers 9 provinces** in South and South West China, plus Hong Kong and Macau) by maximizing Macau's bridging role, which is now called the "**Macau hub**", officially institutionalized in the annually running **Macau International Fair** for Trade and Investment (MIF), promoting business matching between the Pan Pearl River Delta and the international community, especially with the Latin Speaking community. The 2008 13th IMF, with MAPEAL's initiative, set up its first Latin American Pavilion and a China-Latin America Business & Tourism Forum. It was followed by establishing another forum, also initiated by MAPEAL, on Biofuel and Renewable energy R&D in the 2009 Macau International Environmental Cooperation Forum & Exhibition (MIECF). The MIECF organizers are planning to make it an annual running event, an international platform to discuss and promote one of the **most pressing issues for the world's sustainable development**.

The wide overseas human network as a result of the Chinese and Macanese diaspora from Macau during the last 2 centuries, could be utilized to build up the bridge. More than 10 thousand Macau residents, one fifth of its population, including Chinese and Macanese, are **Portuguese passport holders** with right of abode in the EU, and easy access to other countries of the Latin world, as well as ASEAN. Out of this human asset, much has to be done to train good translators, researchers, tour guides, consultants, lawyers and other professionals, who are well versed in the languages and knowledge of both sides, in order to become good "**brokers**" to facilitate the flow of information and business on both sides. It requires a closer cooperation between universities and institutions from Macau, China, Latin and non-Latin countries to create **special training programs**.

It is quite exciting to note, that MAPEAL , after its short existence, received a mandate from **FIEALC** (*Federacion Internacional de Estudios Sobre America Latina y el Caribe*), which is affiliated to UNESCO with headquarters in Mexico, to host its 13th world conference in Macau in September 2007, with full support from the Macau Government. The general title of the conference was " Latin America and Asia Pacific in the 21st Century", inviting Latin Americanists from the 5 continents to participate. Macau's bridging role is one of the 10 subthemes discussed at the conference. 411 participants from 34 countries and regions participated in this conference, **the first of its kind in Macau's history**.

More regional and international activities and conferences in research, training, business and exhibitions are being held by using Macau as a venue. Macau possessed the capability to do so, as the flourishing gaming industry, which is the main source of

its public revenues, can help to finance the costs⁹. The promotion of Macau's bridging role in terms of business, culture, training and information, is an important way in diversifying Macau's overdependence on the gaming industry. In 2007 Macau already surpassed Las Vegas in terms of total revenues from the gaming industry, but it will only become a **Las Vegas of the Orient** if revenues from entertainment, exhibitions and other non-gaming activities can surpass revenues from the gaming sector.

Diversification from gaming is still at the top of Macau's agenda. A Sino-Latin Film Festival-- a Cannes of the Orient, and a permanent World Peace Forum for the interaction of different civilizations, are being planned for the future.

The Macau model has been applied to **improve Cross Strait relations** between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland. In the 1980s and 90s, Macau facilitated the Taiwanese to use Macau as a transit to go to the mainland without special visa requirements, much simpler and easier than through Hong Kong. As early as 1996, Air Macau initiated Cross Strait **indirect** flights through Macau without changing planes. The Cross Strait limited **direct** chartered flights in the beginning of the 21st century was also negotiated in Macau. Mainland scholars love to have their meetings in Macau with their counterparts from Taiwan and overseas, because of Macau's **freer, open and friendly** atmosphere.

One of the priorities at the moment is to conduct an in-depth, systematic interdisciplinary research, with **emphasis on humanities**, to reach a scientific definition and clearer understanding about the Macau identity and Macau model, to get a deeper knowledge about the interaction between East and West, between Chinese and Latin cultures. Thousands of articles, reports, travelogues, poems or even scholarly works in East and West have been written about Macau. But due to the language barrier, not many authors who were/are well versed in both languages could produce cross cultural works, leaving lots of misunderstandings or misconcepts on both sides. In the last two decades, however, there has been a growing interest from both sides to do more cross cultural research and dialogue, by using Macau as a base, in order to minimize the existing gap of misconcepts between different cultures.¹⁰

⁹ The Macau gaming industry, with a history of over 100 years, has terminated its franchise in 2002, splitting it in 3 license holders, who promised to inject billions of new investments to turn Macau gradually into a regional center of family entertainment and international convention. The sudden explosion of new emerging casinos in 2004 and the influx of tourists from mainland China, has caused a jump in Macau's GDP double-digit annual increase from 2004 till 2007, overtaking Hong Kong in terms of GDP per capita in 2007, but at the same time also raising Macau's dependency upon the gaming industry to over 80% of public revenues, creating serious imbalances in the socio-economic growth of the territory, which gives rise to the urgent need of balancing and diversification.

¹⁰ In 2004, the Macau Ricci Institute initiated a bilingual Chinese-English quarterly *Chinese Cross Currents*, to stimulate cross cultural debates with emphasis on humanities, reflecting contrasting views in East and West, with the aim of achieving an "interdependent harmony".

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Interflow and debate between scholars from East and West on historical and contemporary subjects through symposiums and workshops, which at the moment is still very weak, should be strongly promoted. The results of these studies could be of some **positive contribution to the world**, in terms of **promoting harmony, mutual respect and mutual tolerance, as well as learning from each other on equal footing**, especially at this stage when the world is still ravaged by violence, terrorism and hatred after the September 11 incident, the Iraqi war and the never ending conflict between Israel and the Arab world.

3. Enlightenment and conclusion

By the turn of this century, Macau is experiencing its own **renaissance**, from a forgotten glory of the past, degrading into a city of gambling, of exotic and erotic adventures, nothing but a backyard of Hong Kong for over a century, into a new era in which it can play the role of a **proactive hub** between the rising Dragon of the East and the economically or politically more advanced West, and a **special hub** with the Latin speaking community of the world.

Macau has survived for over 4 centuries, braving many storms and hurricanes, with flexibility of a bamboo, that would not easily break. We have managed to **preserve our social harmony** through mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual tolerance, mutual concession and mutual trust, **maintaining a unity in diversity**. This is what we in Macau call the **Macau Spirit**. We could easily fall into conflict, antagonism, retrogression and social disasters, once we deviate from this spirit, already happening in some tragic events of our own history, and the history of our neighbours. We are keeping ourselves aware of our own weaknesses and mistakes in the process of learning from the rest of the world.

This spirit, experienced and extracted from our own history, could be traced elsewhere in the world. It has a **universal value** for the survival and sustainable development of human society, in relation to nature and in dealing with human beings of different races, different background and different ideas.

As a matter of fact, this spirit has been derived from the teachings of our “Sage of Teachers”—Confucius, over 2,500 years ago, still being respected by many Chinese and non-Chinese in the contemporary world. In his *Doctrine of the Golden Mean*, he teaches us that we may persist in what we think is right, enter into debate, but please listen to others, who may have better ideas. You may always agree to disagree, never impose to others who are still not prepared to agree. Be modest and patient, not stubborn and arrogant, be rational and not emotional, be moderate and never go to extremes, gentlemen only use words, never violence to solve controversies. That’s why we hate extremism and fundamentalism, which can easily lead to conflicts and wars. In a modern world, where soft power is playing an increasing role over hard power, it’s extremely important to be more modest in **learning from our own failures** in solving our controversies and reaching a more harmonized world.

In this time of globalization, in which cross border competition and modern technology could easily “assimilate” the weaker ones, it is extremely important to **protect and preserve** one’s own identity or cultural specificity. Macau, such a small

entity, could easily lose its own identity and autonomy in the Greater China operation, if it is not protected by the “one country two systems” provision, and if we ourselves in Macau are not working hard to preserve our own identity and enhance our own bridging role, for the benefit of Greater China and the rest of the world. All the ethnic groups in China, big and small of over 50, are facing similar problems, in which the majority should respect and help the minority, while the minority should do its best to improve and preserve harmony and unity.

The **Tibetan issue**, which erupted into **violent clashes** during the Olympic torch relay overseas, leading to hot debates on the media and diplomatic levels, was a continuation of a long standing debate between East and West concerning human rights, national unity and the peaceful rise of China, among others. We believe that the controversies on the issue could and should be bridged in the long term based on the Macau spirit, through mutual respect and mutual tolerance, finding the truth through exploring and clarifying the facts. We are extremely happy to see that controversies could be bridged if we show and practise the basic nature and **basic value** of human beings –**love for each other**, or **benevolence** as the **core value** of Confucianism. This was clearly expressed and demonstrated by the cross border deep sympathy and solidarity, swift and selfless aid and actions in the disaster relief campaign throughout the country and the world, to reach the earth quake ridden area of Sichuan in South West China, in May 2008, much more efficient and transparent than in 1976, when the nation was shocked by the Tangshan earthquake. This was also a good occasion when the world could learn from China. Macau at that critical moment, donated more humanitarian aid per capita than their neighbouring cities, as it always did in the past.

In Confucianism, benevolence is coupled with respect to the **rites**, which the legalist and the rulers of China afterwards institutionalized it into the rules of governance, and which in our modern times, is being further developed into **respecting the Rule of Law**, although it is still far from reaching the check-and-balances that we have in the Rule of Law of the Western world. In Macau, we inherited the Rule of Law from the Portuguese, which is still far from perfect, but still much ahead compared to our counterparts in mainland China. However, we are pleased to note that the present Chinese leaders have gradually been moving away from ideological stereotypes and reverting to our traditional values and endorsing universal values, taking Human Consideration, Social Justice, Transparency, Sustainable Development, etc. as the criteria for **good governance** to achieve and preserve **Social Harmony**. We in Macau are watching and participating in the process of searching China’s own way of social progress in combining traditional values with universal values.

As a conclusion of this paper, I would like to quote and review a few passages from Confucius’ *Analects*:

*In regard to the aged, to give them rest;
In regard to friends, to show them sincerity;
In regard to the young, to treat them tenderly;*

*Give peace to all people.
All within the Four Seas are brothers.
Do not do to others what you do not wish to be done to yourself.*

*To regulate oneself and follow the rites is to be benevolent.
If it does not conform to the rites, do not listen;
If it does not conform to the rites, do not look;
If it does not conform to the rites, do not speak;
If it does not conform to the rites, do not take action.*

He stressed that the state of Great Harmony would be realized when the great *Tao* (good conduct, benevolence, righteousness, faithfulness) prevails, reaching the highest stage of social evolution. From the history of our small community Macau, and looking into the rest of the world, apart from the differences that keep us apart, we could still see some ethical and philosophical commonalities between East and West. If the East has been learning a lot from West in Science and Democracy since the last 2 centuries, it's now high time that the West should learn more from the Wisdom of the East in our common endeavor to achieve a World of Harmony, no matter how many more generations it will take. It depends on the will of each to continue to learn from each other in the long process of promoting mutual understanding. Macau is just a tiny showcase to show the world that it can be done.

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Note: *Administração* is a Portuguese-Chinese official bilingual local quarterly.

Gary NGAI Mei Cheong was born in Indonesia where he received primary and secondary Dutch education in Jakarta before going to Beijing in 1950 where he graduated from the People's University in 1956, majoring in Chinese modern history, philosophy, economics and international relations. He knows eight languages and received a diploma on international management from the "Institut Européen d'Administration" (INSEAD), France, in 1983. Doing translation and research in Beijing, he has been interpreter for Chinese top leaders until 1978. After emigrating to Macau for family reunion, he was engaged as assistant director of Radio Macau, participated in the creation of Macau TV, became senior advisor to the Macau Government on China affairs, Vice-President of the Macau Institute of Culture, advisor to the Cultural Center. After retirement in July 1997, he became Chairman of the Executive Committee for the Macau Sino-Latin Foundation, a private foundation which he helped to establish in 1996, with the objectives of preserving Macau's cultural identity, especially its Latinity, in order to build Macau into a strong link between China and the countries of Latin America. Awarded a medal for cultural merits by the Macau Government in June 1999, he has been working hard in promoting a better understanding of Macau's cultural identity in numerous seminars inside and outside of Macau and China. He published many articles on the subject in English, Chinese and Portuguese, and was nominated member of the world Latin Council based in Brazil, as well as member of the board of the Brazil-China Chamber of Commerce. He is also an advisor of the Macau Overseas Chinese Association and of the South East Asian Study Center of the Jinan University in Guangzhou, China; Secretary General of the Association to promote Trade, Tourism and Culture between Macau and Taiwan; Vice-President of the Yan Huang Traditional Chinese Culture Association of Guangdong Province. In 2002 he was granted the "Twenty first Century Award for Outstanding Intellectual Achievement" by the International Biographical Centre of Cambridge, UK, and the American Biographical Institute, North Carolina, USA, and received a Lifetime Award for Social Sciences from both Biographical Institutes in 2007-08. He was a visiting scholar to do research on comparative cultures at the universities of La Trobe, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and Australia National University during his two-year stay in Australia. After his return to Macau in 2005, he became one of the founders of the Macau Association to Promote Exchange between Asia Pacific and Latin America (MAPEAL) and elected President of its Executive Board, President of the Organizing Committee for the *Federación Internacional De Estudios Sobre América Latina Y El Caribe* (FIEALC) Thirteenth Congress held in September 2007 in Macau and elected President of FIEALC for the period 2007-2009.