



# MACAO 2000

EDITED BY

**J. A. BERLIE**

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## Foreword



Editor J. A. Berlie has described this collection as a ‘snapshot’ of Macao on the historic eve of reversion to China. In striking this metaphor Berlie is accurate, as no other collection or single-authored work on Macao offers such a comprehensive picture of the Portuguese overseas territory turned Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. But to hold to the photographic metaphor, it would have been more accurate to say of this collection that it represents a series of snapshots of Macao’s society and economy, some shots in close-up, some panoramic, and some fine-grained and overlapping, like the digitalized images that symbolize the age.

It is not that sociology has no antecedents in Macao; from an earlier age we look back in admiration at such Portuguese-language writings on Macao society as the polemical *Abelha da China*, appearing in 1822, or the scholarly *Ta-Ssi-Yang-Kuo* (*Da Xi Yang Guo*) edited by Marques Pereira in 1902, not to mention the rise of the modern Chinese language press, as symbolized by the *Jiang Hai Hong Bao*, to which Dr. Sun Yat-sen (Sun Yixian) contributed. Still, as one contributor to this volume insists, the historic failure of the colonial government to communicate, as much the practice of self-censorship, the co-optation of elites, and the persistence of patron-client relations, long stymied real openness.

With the emergence in the 1980s of a university in Macao, trilingual Portuguese, Chinese, and English sociological studies reached a new maturity. No less, as we observe from the end notes of *Macao 2000*, the expanding database on Macao made available by various government departments and agencies, matches—even if imperfectly—the requirements of the sociologically-inclined analyst to apply his or her skills. Or, to state the matter somewhat differently, the trend to modernization of the Macao civil service from the mid-1980s onwards was matched only by the demands of the new middle classes for more transparency in government. Today’s Internet ‘presence’ of all Macao government departments is exemplary in this sense. Nevertheless, such a degree of openness, along with official patronage of the arts and social sciences in Macao, could not always be taken for granted and, in large degree, the study of Macao’s complex hybrid society by

international scholars lagged behind that of Hong Kong under British rule. There was also the sense that the international scholarly community failed to take Macao seriously, more the pity as the boom years of the 1980s irredeemably transformed Macao, including Taipa and Coloane islands, not only demographically and socially, but also spatially and physically, although such rapid change is not unique to Macao.

As a compilation of essays by an international group of scholars writing in English, a language that commands only a limited domain inside Macao, we may well ask to what audience this book is addressed. I believe that *Macao 2000* merits the attention of a broad readership, not only in Macao and Hong Kong, but among concerned policy-makers, educators, businesspeople, scholars, and students of social and political change. With respect to a Macao audience, the prescriptive as much as descriptive and analytical tone of certain contributions simply commands attention. The authors all share a sense of Macao's fragility, even vulnerability, and therefore wish the enclave all the best, but in so doing they have not held back from conveying some blunt truths for policy-makers and others. For the Hong Kong and overseas Chinese reader, affinities and engagements with this Chinese city with special characteristics should be obvious. For the Macanese, or Macao's 'creole ecumene', as described by one contributor, the attention paid by *Macao 2000* to this unique community should in itself be redeeming, as such an understanding goes to the heart of questions touching on Macao's future legal and cultural identity as underwritten in the Basic Law, Macao's mini-constitution for the next half century. For the rest of us, not the least English readers in East and South-East Asia, no other text offers such context or insights into the political, social, and economic possibilities—and risks in the new SAR. Macao's becoming an SAR will live only a short moment in world history, yet it will be momentous. The lowering of the Portuguese flag at the first point of globalization will mark the end of the last European colonial outpost in Asia.

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January 1999

## Contributors



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Toyojiro Maruya is a senior researcher in economics at the Institute of Developing Economies in Tokyo. He is the author of numerous books on the economy of the Pearl River Delta and the Hong Kong SAR, including *Hong Kong Economy and Society: Challenges in the New Era*.

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## Introduction



In early 1938 the poet W.H. Auden travelled to Asia to write a book about the Far East. On his way to China, he stopped in Macao to record his impressions. ‘Rococo images of Saint and Savior promise its gamblers fortunes when they die’, he wrote. In a few lines, Auden captured the unique paradox that was Macao; its mix of past history and present desire:

A town of such indulgence need not fear  
Those mortal sins by which the strong are killed  
And limbs and governments are torn to pieces:  
Religious clocks will strike, the childish vices  
Will safeguard the low virtues of the child.<sup>1</sup>

Why a new book about Macao? The answer lies perhaps in the work of Auden’s contemporary, the Chinese poet Wen Yiduo (1899–1946), who in 1925 also produced a poem on Macao:

You must know that ‘Macao’ is not my real name? . . .  
I have left your swaddling clothes for too long, Mother!

For three hundred years I have not forgotten my real  
Mother in my dreams!  
Please, call me by my milk name, call me ‘Ao-men!’  
Mother, I will come back, Mother!<sup>2</sup>

After four and a half centuries, China will reclaim Macao on 20 December 1999. At the 15th Chinese Communist Party Congress in the autumn of 1997, President Jiang Zemin anticipated the handover of Macao as a ‘great event’ (*shengshi*).<sup>3</sup> Yet, apart from the rhetoric of politicians, the return of Macao does indeed mark a momentous rite of passage. In the two poems above, we see the clash between a ‘town of such indulgence’ and the deep passionate nationalism with which China regards her long-lost child, Macao. Precisely because ‘nothing serious can happen here’, the fate of Macao under Chinese rule will reveal the strength and flexibility of Chinese society and its leadership’s ability to meet with change and modernity. Much attention has been

paid to the transition of Macao's close neighbour Hong Kong back to Chinese rule in 1997. The dynamism of the former British colony's economic infrastructure, its adherence to the rule of law, and a strong civil service have all been seen as challenges to the People's Republic of China (PRC) system of government. Macao, on the other hand, under Portuguese rule since the sixteenth century, also has its own traditions. With an economy based on tourism and entertainment, a socio-economic system based on a particular cultural mix, and a colonial history marked by personal relations, the future SAR represents a totally different kind of challenge. It may be said that Hong Kong and Macao represent two sides of the same capitalist coin. How Macao fares under Chinese rule will be important for Hong Kong, Taiwan, and, indeed, Asia as a whole. To answer the question, we must look past the tropes of literature and try to see the real Macao, a place that lives on its own terms, a unique and dynamic city.

The purpose of *Macao 2000* is to give a last social and economic snapshot before the end of the century and before the colony's return to China. There has been no recent study of the territory's modern and dynamic society and economy. In part, this is because Macao is a transit point for academics as well as other travellers. Many residents and local scholars have left its quiet harbour on the East Pearl River Delta for Europe, America, and Australia. A case in point is Rolf Cremer, author of *Macao: City of Commerce and Culture* (1st ed. 1987), who has since left for New Zealand. Since Cremer's book, no other serious and systematic team research has been conducted on the ground until *Macao 2000*. The information is all first hand. As a resident in Macao, the editor, funded by the Cultural Institute of Macao, conducted socio-anthropological fieldwork between October 1995 and the publication of this volume. All of the contributors either lived in the territory or travelled there especially to collect data, cooperating in the task and elaborating their ideas in a critical analysis approach to the study of Macao's society and economy in transition. This book may be the last study based on fieldwork prior to the handover. It is hoped that its mix of articles on politics, society, economics and culture will appeal to the scholar, businessperson, and general reader alike.

Macao's fascinating identity is reflected in its historical specificity. Formerly named *Haojing* or *Haijing* 'Mirror of the Sea',<sup>4</sup> the earliest maritime entrepôt linking East and West was built around an eponymous Fujianese temple. This carefully chosen and well-protected port of the East Pearl River Delta has long fascinated navy masters,

painters, poets, and curious scholars. Chinese and Portuguese seamen and merchants, as well as Fujianese, Japanese, Malay, Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, and Arab pilots were important in navigating from Nagasaki to Malacca, and then from South-East Asia to Europe. Along this seasonal trade route, Chinese silk and porcelain, gold, Japanese silver, and even pedigreed Arabian horses were the most precious freight.<sup>5</sup> Silver was the main currency for the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, and the demand for Chinese silk in Europe boosted the trade. In its earlier historical period Macao was a key international harbour, its trade winds essential in the movement of the great sailing ships of the time. Junks and Portuguese *naus*, the giant galleons built from Indian teak, helped to launch huge economic development, creating a richly diverse city populated with peoples from Asia, Europe, and Africa, and including Jesuits, soldiers, adventurers, administrators, merchants, and even a few women. These vessels traced the vectors of the golden age of Macao, which lasted from 1580 to 1640.<sup>6</sup>

The mid-seventeenth century brought decline to the prosperous city-harbour. But slowly, Macao's silver trade revived along the Mexico–Manila and Macao–China routes—the first instance of Macao's ability to rejuvenate itself through the centuries.<sup>7</sup> So Macao is one of the first harbours from which global trade and 'globalization' initiated. Silk was traded from Asia to Europe, along the coast of Africa, and silver came from America through the Pacific Ocean. Other products from America were also traded to Europe and Asia, but Macao's silk and silver contributed largely to the building of the initial concept of 'globalization'. The nineteenth century was blighted by the coolie trade and opium commerce. Up through the mid-1800s, Macao was important mainly because China's trading regulations required foreign incoming ships to employ a Chinese pilot, a translator, and a comprador before arriving in Canton. When the boats left Canton, they either returned home or spent the winter in Macao waiting for the north-eastern monsoon.<sup>8</sup> Opium, tea, fireworks, and gaming were the main sources of revenue of the colony.

In the early twentieth century the territory was revived again as a breezy tourist spot, an agreeable Monaco for a rising and prosperous colonial Hong Kong. Electricity for private consumers was introduced in 1912, and drinking water at the end of the 1920s. In 1926 the first omnibuses appeared, upgrading transport and communication. Peace, as Auden described it, characterized most of the twentieth century. However, the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and the Joint Declaration

between China and Portugal in 1987 have amply demonstrated the important influence of China on the city. The 1990s have heightened this relationship as Macao anticipates its reunification with the Mainland. Although Macao will become China's smallest SAR in 1999, it deserves similar attention to Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang, Ningxia, and Guangxi because of its geopolitical uniqueness and historical specificity.

*Macao 2000* is divided into two parts. The first provides a general overview of the SAR's society and economy, its political and educational system, and its particular culture. The second is comprised of a more detailed economic study of the future SAR's macroeconomic settings, its real estate and financial sectors, and its relationship with South-East Asia.

Christina Cheng's prelude introduces Macao's complex history, describing a dynamic union of two cultures, Cathay and Lusitânia, which has resulted in the unique hybrid that is Macao's culture. The editor has contributed two articles. The first is an immediate, on-the-ground look at Macao's economy and society, in which the author considers the cultural practices of the Chinese community and the importance of this group in the future of Macao. The second is one of the first anthropological studies of Macao's educational system, resulting in an investigation of the importance of Chinese, Portuguese, and English curricula, and the unique character of this system. Conclusions as to the new importance of the Mainland for Macao's tertiary education will be especially enlightening. Lo Shiu-hing has updated, summarized, and complemented his earlier work on Macao's political development. By focusing on the phenomenon of personal rule and how this feature has developed along both Chinese and Portuguese lines, Lo arrives at new and important assessments of Macao's political future. Louis Augustin-Jean has conducted a study of Macanese food and identity which looks at the importance of food in culture, and at the problems of keeping a unique hybrid culture both visible and viable in a globalizing and modern society. In this section, Macao emerges as a fascinating museum-city in transition. The lifestyle, culture, and city environment in this part of Guangdong Province will continue to play a part in shaping a particular Chinese identity, even as the Chinese culture of Macao and other parts of China becomes more homogenized. *Bendiren*, local-born Chinese who make up less than 50 per cent of the population in Macao, and *Turen*, or Macanese, who are fluent in both Cantonese and Portuguese, are the two local communities changing at a rapid pace. The question of

their 'Chineseness' is crucial. The social, political, and economic roles of migrant Chinese from Guangdong, Fujian, and other Chinese provinces are also growing. These articles conclude that Macao will adjust its expectations after the last stage of the transition in 1999 and its elites will adapt their way of life to the various possibilities of development available for China in the next century.

In Part II, Toyojiro Maruya's work on Macao's macroeconomy hopes to counter recent economic studies that have insisted on focusing analyses at the microeconomic level. Maruya's extensive experience in Hong Kong and South China demonstrates the continuous importance of a macroeconomic analysis in an era of globalization. Raymond Tse's work on the state of the Macao real estate sector is one of the first works in English to tackle academically the complex problem of real estate and the Macao housing market. Robert Haney Scott offers a consideration of Macao's banking and forecasts a positive future for the new SAR's financial system. His discussion of the SAR's currency board and peg system is especially timely in the midst of current Asian currency problems. To end on a more positive note, the chapter on Macao's relations with South-East Asia, by Cao Yunhua, reveals the latent power of Macao's economic and cultural links to this complex and important region after it solves the present economic crisis.

It is hoped that *Macao 2000* will offer new and meaningful insights to its readers on the development and prospects of the future SAR before and after the turn of the century.

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## Notes

- 1 See bibliography: Auden 1939, p. 14.
- 2 Wen Yiduo 1925.
- 3 *Aomen Ribao* (ARB) 14 September 1997, p. 28. See also *Nanfang Ribao*, Guangzhou, 3 February 1999, p. 14.
- 4 The Annals of Ming Dynasty mention the name Haojing (The City's Mirror). Cf. 'Spain and Portugal', in *Mingshilu Leizuan* (A Classified Collection of the Ming Annals), Wuhan: The Xinhua Press, 1991, pp. 1096–1101. Three old temples in Macao still preserve inscriptions of the other name of Macao, *Haijing* (Mirror of the Sea). *Haojing* is another well-known ancient name of China's new SAR.

- 5 Boxer 1968, p. 12.
- 6 Fei 1996, p. 41.
- 7 Montalto 1990, p. 114; Huang Qichen 1995, p. 70–88.
- 8 Hsü 1990, p. 147.

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