



Zhidong Hao, *Macau: History and Society*

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In *Macau History and Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), Zhidong Hao considers the study of the history and society of Macao to be also a study of China's confrontation with the west in the past 450 years, as well as possible confrontations in the future (p. 2). In his effort to achieve this aim, the author puts the former Portuguese enclave at the southern part of China in the context of Greater China and uses the past as a method to explore Macao's own personality, culture, and identity.

The book consists of an introduction, eight individual chapters, a brief chronicle of major events in Macao's history and a bibliography. In the initial chapter Hao gives a succinct history of how Macao came into being through a discussion on the Portuguese maritime expansion in Asia and the imperial Chinese government's defensive and passive strategies coping with merchant capitalism. Conventional Chinese historiography records that Portuguese traders succeeded in establishing settlement in Macao through bribery. However, Hao makes reference to K.C. Fok's term 'Macao formula' and suggests that there were

actually hidden political, military and economic considerations (pp. 16-17).

Chapter 2 concentrates primarily on the development of Macao's political system in the long history span. Hao examines first Macao and China in international conflicts which include not only conflict between the Portuguese and the Dutch (pp. 20-21), but also clashes among the Portuguese, British, and Chinese (pp. 21-23), which culminated in the First and Second Opium Wars (pp. 23-27). Then the author takes a careful look at the contested dual jurisdiction system and the new form of joint sovereignty that were developed and implemented by the colonial and Chinese governments. Hao addresses the term sovereignty and argues that the Portuguese did not have full control over the land; nor does the Chinese central government now (p. 53).

The focus of the next chapter is the economic development and the livelihood of people from all walks of life in Macao in the past, present and future. Macao's earlier economic history is surveyed in terms of arsenal, opium and the coolie trade, whilst most of the contemporary discussion talks almost exclusively of the gambling industry (pp. 74-82). Hao tries to divide the economic history of Macao into several periods which are characterised by some dominant sectors. However, this division is somewhat artificial as many activities, such as fishing and gambling, transcend periods.

The following three chapters, chapter 4 to 6, are the best well-written parts of the book which deal

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with Macao's culture, social interaction, faiths and religions, and literature and arts. Emphasising the significance of a Macanese community, Hao examines the Macao model of clash and cooperation of cultures and civilisations, although not really much is new that cannot be found in existing literature. It is noteworthy that his discussion of Chinese views of the West goes well beyond the Chinese in Macao. Nonetheless, this is not unreasonable if we take into consideration that the Chinese population grew proportionately over the century and Macao has been constantly receiving new Chinese immigrants from the mainland. In his examination of religious lives of people in Macao, Hao reflects on the various religions represented in Macao, including Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism and Protestantism. His primary focus is on the architectural and intellectual legacy of both Chinese and Western religions, noting the interaction and mixture of elements of different origins. The theme of clash and integration continues in Hao's investigation of literature and arts. After studying Chinese literature of Macao from the Ming and Qing, contemporary Chinese literature and arts in Macao, and Westerners' paintings and poems in and about Macao, Hao finds that artistic skills have not been interchanged much between Chinese and the West in Macao.

Chapter 7 deals with social issues and problems in contemporary Macao, covering a wide range of topics such as race, gender, class stratification, traffic, pollution, crime, gambling addiction, as well as problems in education—all with a considerable history. In the concluding chapter, the author raises several thought-provoking questions concerning the political, economic, cultural and social identities of Macao in the future (pp. 197-205). As possible solutions to these questions, Hao suggests that the Macao SAR could promote itself as a place where different cultures exchange and mingle. He further adopts the example of the facade of the São Paulo church to represent the vision he is advocating for Macao's future. Although the facade of the São Paulo is conventionally described as a typical merging of Chinese and Portuguese cultures, we should never forget that it was in fact designed by an Italian with much of the labour undertaken by Japanese, so that the facade is indeed a mixture of Italian, Portuguese, Japanese and Chinese imagery. Therefore, Hao argues that, rather than building its own culture, Macao will

continue to act as a junction of all the powers and cultures surrounding it (p. 207).

Macao History and Society is doubtlessly an inspirational and ground-breaking piece on Macao's society and culture in historical, cultural, and sociological perspectives. Three major themes run through the book: first, to appreciate Macao's history in the greater context of China's history and to further promote Macao's unique role in China's development; second, to consider how Macao is an illustrative example of the clash and integration of different civilisations and cultures; and third, to suggest improvement to the existing Macao model by promoting a more active civil society and public sphere. Hao provides readers with rich details of and insightful ideas on Macao's history, society, politics, and culture that current scholarship has not yet systematically studied. On the basis of that, he also puts forward grounded recommendations about making strategic use of its unique historical, cultural and geographical capital to develop Macao into a city of culture and a world-class destination for tourism and recreation.

Hao's book offers comprehensive studies on the historical aspects of Macao and indicates the links between history and current situations. However, readers might expect more in-depth information on other topics or issues which could help enhance their understanding of Macao's contemporary society and its future prospects. For instance, various organisations and religious groups in Macao hold collective religious festivals or events which contribute to a considerable extent to a new process shaping and reinforcing the cultural identity of Macanese in modern times. The author makes use of Chinese historical material along with the ever-growing body of Chinese language literature since the 1990s, but does not consult Portuguese language scholarship which is helpful for appreciating Portuguese views about Macao, in particular before the handover. Earlier works such as C.R. Boxer's *Fidalgos in the Far East, 1550-1770: Fact and Fancy in the History of Macao* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948) and Christina Miu Bing Cheng's *Macao: A Cultural Janus* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1999) are also relevant. Still, Hao has been able to put together a valuable work which is a book that everyone who is interested in Macao's culture and society should have on his or her shelf to consult frequently. **RC**