



The Son of Macao and the Mandarin's House

CHRISTINA MIU BING CHENG*

'The Son of Macao', Zheng Guanying 郑观应 (alternative spelling in Cantonese: Cheng Kuan-ying) (1842-1921), was born in Xiangshan county (now called Zhongshan),¹ Guangdong province, near Macao, in south China. He was a comprador-merchant, reformer, philanthropist, writer, poet, and socio-political thinker/activist. Spending most of his lifetime until his death in Shanghai, Zheng Guanying (Plate 1) was largely nurtured by the hybrid Shanghai urban culture in the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911). He returned to Macao for seven years, from 1885 to 1892, after he had become involved in a lawsuit. During this time, he completed his acclaimed book *Shengshi Weiyan* 盛世危言 (*Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity*)² in his family house.

As he had a long-time sojourn in Shanghai, one may wonder why and when he was extolled as 'The Son of Macao'. He composed a collection of classical

poems on places he had visited; what then was his impression of, and concern for, Macao? Mapping onto the history of 19th-century China, this paper examines his upward mobility from a failed student to a gentry-merchant in Shanghai, and his pioneering ideas that provoked inspiration to notable Chinese personages on economic, political and social reforms in times of a turbulent China.

Zheng Guanying's family house, better known as the Mandarin's House, is in 'The Historic Centre of Macao', which is a comprehensive array of East-West architecture listed as World Heritage by UNESCO in 2005. 'The Historic Centre of Macao' is located at the heart of an area where formerly most Westerners settled, once called the 'Christian City' (*Macao World Heritage*, 2008:2). These unique patrimonial sites are woven into the original urban fabric, forming a walking trail in the historic zone.

Built around 1869, the Mandarin's House is a traditional Chinese compound with several courtyard structures mixing architectural features from different cultures. In the ebb and flow of time, the house became shabby and was compartmentalised quarters for more than 300 tenants in the late 20th century. Since 2001 when the Macao government acquired the proprietorship of the property, extensive restorations were carried out to revive its grandiose appearance. Throughout his life, Zheng Guanying remained a merchant and later an entrepreneur. Moreover, none of Zheng's family members had ever passed the imperial civil service examinations that led to

Plate 1. Water colour painting of Zheng Guanying 郑观应 by Liu Wenchang 廖文畅. Reproduced from Zheng Guanying, *Zheng Guanying shi xuan* 郑观应诗选, edited by Deng Jingbin 邓景滨 (Macao: Aomen Zhonghua shi ci xue hui, 1995), p. 1.

郑妙冰 is the author of *Macao: A Cultural Janus* (1999), *In Search of Folk Humour: The Rebellious Cult of Nezha* (2009) and *Tracing Macau through Chinese Writers and Buddhist/Daoist Temples* (2013). *Macao: A Cultural Janus* has been translated into Chinese, as 澳门—殖民沧桑中的文化双面神. She has received a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong.

Doutorada em Literatura Comparada pela Universidade de Hong Kong. Autora de *Macao: A Cultural Janus* (1999) [traduzida para chinês com o título 澳门—殖民沧桑中的文化双面], *In Search of Folk Humour: The Rebellious Cult of Nezha* (2009) e *Tracing Macau through Chinese Writers and Buddhist/Daoist Temples* (2013)

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officialdom (or mandarin status) in the Qing court. One may ask why Zheng’s ancestral mansion has been called the ‘Mandarin’s House’. Intrinsically linked, Zheng Guanying and his family house have now been translated into the pride of Macao.

A FAILED STUDENT FROM THE SOUTH

According to Zheng Guanying’s autobiography, he was sent by his father Zheng Wenrui 郑文瑞 (1812-1893) to Shanghai in 1858 at the age of sixteen (seventeen years old by traditional Chinese age reckoning) after he failed the imperial civil service examination at the county level for the elementary *xiucai* 秀才 ‘degree’³ in Xiangshan. His father asked him to ‘learn doing business’ with his uncle Zheng Xiushan 郑秀山, a comprador in the British firm Overweg and Company (*Xinde Yanghang* 新德洋行) in Shanghai, where Zheng Guanying started as a junior employee (Zheng, 1995: 8).

Zheng also learned English from his uncle and went to an evening class for English at the Anglo-Chinese School (*Yinghua Shuguan* 英华书馆) (Zheng, 1995: 8). This school was established by the Church Missionary Society in 1865, and was the first missionary school to emphasise education in the English language. Besides learning English, it could be surmised that ‘the teenager from the south’ must have exerted extra efforts to master the language skill of Shanghainese, which was different from his mother tongue Cantonese—the regional language of Guangdong province. The language of Shanghai is largely unintelligible to speakers of other varieties of Chinese languages, though the written characters are the same.

In 1859, seventeen-year-old Zheng Guanying joined the British firm Dent and Company (*Baoshun Yanghang* 宝顺洋行) where he was in charge of the silk and tea business. In 1867, he worked for the *Heshengxiang* Tea Company (和生祥茶栈) as *tongshi* 通事⁴—a linguist, translator and broker. At the same time, he made investments in the Union Steam Navigation Company (*Gongzheng Lunchuan Gongsi* 公正轮船公司) and was recommended to be a trustee. In 1873, he started to work as the general manager of the shipping branch of the Butterfield and Swire Company (*Taigu* 太古), and played a role in the management as a shareholder. In 1882, he finished a five-year contract with this British firm and joined the

China Merchants’ Steamship Navigation Company (*Lunchuan Zhaoshang Ju* 轮船招商局) (Zheng, 1995: 8). In 1884, he resigned from China Merchants’ and embarked on a tour of shuttle diplomacy to Southeast Asia. Then he retreated to Macao, staying from 1885 to 1892 after having been involved in a lawsuit. In late 1892 he returned to Shanghai as he was re-employed by the China Merchants’ as a manager (Xia, 1995: 373).

Founded in 1873, the China Merchants’ Steamship Navigation Company was under the patronage of Li Hongzhang 李鸿章 (1823-1901), an eminent politician and diplomat, and Sheng Xuanhuai 盛宣怀 (1844-1916), the Minister of Transportation. The company was a joint venture of Chinese merchants and the government to compete with foreign navigation companies. It was in this company that ‘the man from the south’ established a strong network in the business circle, and particularly he developed a trans-regional relationship and friendship with Li Hongzhang (a native of Anhui province) and Sheng Xuanhuai (a native of Jiangsu province).

Westerners thronged to Shanghai after China was forced to open the door wide for foreign trade in 1843 in the wake of China’s defeat in the first Sino-British Opium War in 1842. As a treaty port, Shanghai in the 1850s through the 1870s demonstrated a distinct cultural ambience of ‘Western learning’, and its culture was formed partly by Western influences. At the time when Zheng migrated to Shanghai, this port city on the Huangpu River had already seen a rapid development and the catalysts for new changes. It was a thriving trading depot in the lower Yangtze region and the hub for China’s inland river navigation. In the words of Wu Guo 伍国, 19th-century Shanghai ‘was a national centre of commerce and information, a city with global communication and consciousness, but also a site where people from different parts of China merged, cooperated, and contended’ (Wu, 2010: 31).

Coming from south China, Zheng Guanying started as a minor staff member in foreign companies, and later became an investor and entrepreneur. The failed student was nurtured in a new urban cultural space that was characterised by the Westernised environment, and he was a hybrid product *par excellence* of Shanghai’s treaty port culture. From his working experience, he acquired expertise in shipping, cotton, and telegraph industries. The business knowhow laid a sound foundation for his social upward mobility, and

for his career as a gentry-merchant⁵ in the circle of the rising urban elite in Shanghai.⁶

SHANGHAI EXPOSURE

Shanghai provided Zheng Guanying with a variety of opportunities, information, and channels of expression by means of print media. In 1872, two British tea merchant brothers, Frederick and Ernest Major, founded the *Shenbao* 申报 in Shanghai, known in English as the *Shanghai News*. Being one of the first modern Chinese-language newspapers, the *Shenbao* played a pivotal role in the formation of public opinion and in the dissemination of information in China until its closure in 1949. Although the *Shenbao* was owned and managed by the British, the editorial affairs were left to the Chinese editors.

The goal of this commercial newspaper was to report on public and local affairs, national politics, commerce and trade, as well as to cover global affairs. The *Shenbao* advocated reformist ideas for the revival of China, and addressed national strengthening as a main theme. It soon became a popular reading material for the Shanghai urban elite, and helped forge a network of reformers. By reading the *Shenbao*, Zheng Guanying learned about international affairs and acquired a worldview to re-evaluate China’s position in the world. He was not only an avid reader, but he also published his commentaries on various issues. The *Shenbao* was a conduit for him to express critical social concerns.

In 1873 Zheng Guanying’s first book *Jiushi Jieyao* 救时揭要 (*Important Suggestions for Social Salvation*) was published. It was mainly a collection of his writings already published in the *Shenbao*. He was a prolific writer and soon started to work on *Yiyan* 易言 (*Easy Remarks*, also translated as *On Change*), which was a compilation of 36 essays. First appearing in 1880, *Easy Remarks* obviously surpassed his former book as it had a broader cosmopolitan perspective and contained an embryonic reform agenda.

Shanghai was also an arena where Zheng could be involved in politics. In 1884, Zheng was appointed as an unofficial envoy by General Peng Yulin 彭玉麟 (1816-1890) to visit Vietnam and Siam (renamed Thailand in 1949) for the sake of soliciting their alliance with the Qing court against the intrusion of France. The diplomatic mission to Southeast Asia opened up his vision in political thinking. He was aware of the plight of the overseas Chinese, who suffered harsh treatment

without protections from any Chinese diplomatic organisation. Through the print media, he expressed his concerns by urging the government to take active measures to protect the Chinese nationals, and set up consulates in these countries (Zheng, 2013: 21-22).

Apart from the expansion of opportunities for trade and commerce in Shanghai, mission education was booming after the 1860s, concomitant with the proselytisation of Protestantism to the unwilling host (Biggerstaff, 1961: 127). Among numerous educational institutions, the Shanghai Polytechnic Institution and Reading Room (*Gezhi Shuyuan he Yuedu Shi* 上海格致书院和阅读室)) was jointly founded in 1875 by Western diplomats, missionaries, and progressive-minded Chinese gentry-merchants. Its aims were to preach Christianity and to introduce Western science and technology. Zheng Guanying acted as a trustee, and in 1893 became a part-time instructor of this institution (Wu, 2010: 24, 66).

Zheng Guanying also participated in meetings and social gatherings at the Zhang Garden (Zhang Yuan 张园). Opened in 1885 and located in the foreign concession, this famous public garden developed into an urban space for political speeches and organisational activities. The Zhang Garden remained the largest public recreation and entertainment centre in Shanghai until 1905. It was in this public space that Zheng could move into a larger social domain and form a network to interact with activists, reformers, and intellectuals. He was *de facto* an exemplary member of the urban elite in the treaty port.

Another well-known social organisation in which Zheng Guanying was active in Shanghai was the Asiatic Society (*Yaxiya Xiehui* 亚细亚协会), where he was vice-president (Wu, 2010: 80). Coinciding with the 1898 Hundred Days Reform Movement (which will be discussed below), the Asiatic Society was founded in June 1898. It was a Sino-Japanese joint venture, and the first non-governmental formal alliance between the Chinese and Japanese activists. Given China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Zheng realised the significance of Japan’s industrial, social, and geo-political progress after the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912). Though having ambiguous attitudes (a mixture of admiration and caution) towards Japan, he suggested that China should pursue an alliance with Japan and that China and Japan should help each other to resist Western powers.

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In the intellectual world of Shanghai, Zheng Guanying was exposed to various domains of activities. He was energetic in the media sphere (the *Shenbao*), the political spectrum (diplomatic shuttle mission), the literary realm (the Shanghai Polytechnic Institution and Reading Room), public space (the Zhang Garden), and trans-national urban space (the Asiatic Society). A new horizon of his perspectives was shaped in Shanghai’s melting-pot environment and he came of age as an influential reformer.

MACAO SENTIMENT

Shanghai was Zheng Guanying’s long-time abode, but he stated in a poem that his residence was actually in the Land of the Lotus Flower (*Nong jia zhengzhu lian huadi* 依家正住莲花地) (Zheng, 1995: 183).⁸ He was greatly concerned for Macao even though he was in Shanghai. Through his writing, he voiced his disquiet and called for social consciousness about the coolie-slave trade⁹ that flourished in Macao. His first piece published in *Important Suggestions for Social Salvation* was ‘On Saving the Piggy of Macao’ (*Aomen Zhuzailun* 澳门猪仔论) (Zheng, 2013: 6-7). The coolie-slave trade, or human trafficking, was dubbed the ‘pig trade’ locally. It was because like pigs, the slave recruits were stamped with a mark for identification. He flagellated the inhumane ‘pig trade’ in the subsequent five pieces, and urged prohibition in Macao.

Political disorders and economic setbacks during the late Qing dynasty drove many wretched Chinese to seek job opportunities abroad and China proved to be a good source of labour for the outside world. Foreigners began to tap the Chinese labourers through the establishment of the coolie-slave trade. In the 1850s Macao became the coolie-slave trade centre to meet the world demand for cheap labourers.¹⁰ Between 1850 and 1875 some 1,280,000 ‘contracted workers’ were recruited and shipped overseas (Yee, 1992: 71-73). The two major destinations were Cuba and Peru. Since its rise in 1848, the rampant coolie-slave trade was the only real business in Macao for twenty-five years (William, 1966: 430).

Zheng Guanying retreated to Macao in 1885 when he reached the nadir of his sorrow in Hong Kong (which will be discussed in the following section). He composed the following classical poem:¹¹

归田官
致仕归来好著书，借将利弊告宸居。
如何但作擣菹戏，满道荆榛竟不除。
(Zheng, 1995: 126)

A Returned Mandarin
Returning home from an official life, it is time
to write a book,
reporting to the highest authority the benefits
and drawbacks of the present situation.
With no intention to indulge in the game of
gambling,
leaving the prevailing crises unsolved.
(my translation)

Zheng stated that he was an official in the title of the poem, as he had already been bestowed the rank of an honorary mandarin in 1879 for of his philanthropic contribution to famine relief work in Shanxi province (which will be discussed below). However, the title of the poem can be interpreted differently. His original name in Chinese was 郑官应, and in the *pinyin* Romanisation, the two names 郑官应 and 郑观应 are the same in pronunciation as Zheng Guanying. The middle word, *guan* 官, means an official. Hence, the title is riddled with double meanings: a returned mandarin, or Guan (himself) returning to hometown.

The poem indicates that he would start writing his celebrated book, *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity*. He also yearns for a chance that his work would reach the Emperor. Given the menacing banditry and legalised gambling business in Macao, he calls for social awareness of these ‘prevailing crises’ through writing.

In other poems on Macao, not only does he deplore the gambling business as a plunder; and the cause for the disintegration of families and bankruptcies, but he also denounces the unscrupulous merchants who lure people to gamble (Zheng, 1995: 126-127). In a poem on opium, he likens opium to poisonous wine and aspires to awaken people through his pen from becoming addicted to the ‘poison’ (Zheng, 1995: 128-129). By the end of the 19th century, one in every ten Chinese was thought to have become an addict (Wolf, 1982: 258). Zheng’s poetry also expresses humanitarian concern for women in the feudal system. The distorting habit of foot binding¹² and the mal-treatment of slave servants are repeated themes in

his poetry (Zheng, 1995: 130-131) and in his narrative (Zheng, 2013: 166, 185).

In 1893, Zheng came back to Macao for his father’s funeral and stayed there for more than three months. He left his impressions of Macao in a poem, and here are two stanzas:

澳门感事
华人神诞喜燃炮，葡人礼拜例敲钟。
华葡杂处无贵贱，有财无德亦敬恭。

外埠俱谓逋逃藪，各街频闻卖菜佣。
商务鱼栏与鸦片，餉源以赌为大宗。
(Zheng, 1995: 183)

Impressions of Macao
The Chinese explode firecrackers to celebrate
divine feasts,
the Portuguese strike bells to call for Sunday
worshippers.
The Chinese and Portuguese can coexist
harmoniously,
the rich, though without virtue, are respected.

In foreign ports Macao is known as a haven for
fugitives,
every street is filled with the voices of vegetable
peddlers.
Commercial activities, fish wholesale, and
opium-trafficking are the livelihood,
gambling, however, contributes the main
revenue.
(my translation)

In the first stanza, Macao is lauded as a harmonious rendezvous for the East and West, and a city of religious toleration and compromise between the polytheistic Chinese and the monotheistic Portuguese. Zheng nevertheless laments that mercenary gains are more valued than lofty virtues. The second stanza offers a rural scenario of Macao, but opium-trading¹³ and the gambling business are booming under Portuguese rule.¹⁴ Zheng trenchantly points out that Macao is a receptacle for fugitives. One well-known person who fled to Macao seeking refuge was the English painter George Chinnery (1774-1852). He arrived in Macao in 1825 and stayed there until his death in order to escape from his estranged wife and financial problems.

WORDS OF WARNING IN TIMES
OF PROSPERITY

After Zheng Guanying left his hometown in his youthful days, he almost stayed in Shanghai until his death, and only travelled occasionally between Shanghai and Xiangshan/Macao. But he returned to Macao in mid-1885 and stayed there until late 1892. Why did he come back to Macao for seven years? He was caught in the vortex of a fraud. Yang Guixuan 杨桂轩, the chief comprador of the Butterfield and Swire Company, defaulted on the company’s fund for more than 40,000 silver dollars. In January 1885 when Zheng passed through British Hong Kong, he was held in custody because he was Yang’s guarantor. He had been detained for five months and was set free after he managed to settle the lawsuit by paying a fine of 5,000 taels for the debt (Xia, 1995: 370). Overwhelmed by indignation, embarrassment, and despair, the detainee took refuge in Macao for a break from Shanghai.

Perhaps this twist of fate was a blessing in disguise. During his less than all-consuming daily life in Macao, he had more time to think and write about the economic and socio-political reforms for national salvation and strengthening. In his family house, he expanded and revised *Easy Remarks* to a five-juan 卷 (chapter) version, and renamed it as *Shengshi Weiyan* (*Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity*), which was completed in 1892 and first published in early 1894. For Zheng, the family house was a sanctuary for regeneration and reinvigoration, where he found spiritual solace for collecting his thoughts. Portuguese Macao was indeed a haven for retreat.

The title of the book, *Shengshi Weiyan*, is perhaps a misnomer in the historical context of national humiliation at the hands of foreign powers. The first two words of the title, *Shengshi* 盛世 (a prosperous or an affluent age),¹⁵ constitute a sheer irony to a China, which was on the brink of collapse. But *Weiyan* 危言 (words of warning) appropriately embrace pioneering treatises for national salvation.

Since 1842, the year when Zheng Guanying was born, the Qing Empire was far from prosperity and affluence. China had been defeated in the first Sino-British Opium War (1839-1842) and the Treaty of Nanjing was signed in 1842, resulting in the surrender of Hong Kong to the Union Jack. The Treaty of

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Nanjing was the first in a series of unequal treaties that forcibly opened treaty ports to the West. China soon suffered another defeat by the Anglo-French invasion in the second Opium War (1856-1860).¹⁶ In 1858, when the teenager Zheng first arrived in Shanghai, the Treaty of Tianjin was signed. China was forced to accept European control of its coastal cities, to permit foreign legations in Beijing, to allow Protestant missionary activities and to legalise the import of opium. And southern Kowloon (near Hong Kong) was ceded to Britain as well.

Internally, China was confronted with a tumultuous civil war against the ineffective Qing government—the Taiping 太平 Rebellion (1850-1864). It was headed by a Chinese Protestant convert, Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814-1864), who claimed that he was the new messiah and the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Espoused a revolutionary aim at bringing in a new era, Hong and his followers set up a new regime *Taiping Tianguo* 太平天国 (the Heavenly Kingdom of Peace) with its capital in Nanjing. At first, members maintained Christian disciplines and adopted new progressive reforms by forbidding opium sale and use, and advocating equality for women.

Yet, the millenarian project soon crumbled chiefly due to the followers’ unruly discipline, internal corruption, and their extreme anti-foreign feelings. The insurrection erupted into an uncontrollable force that stormed over sixteen provinces and destroyed more than 600 cities in fourteen years (Yee, 1992: 76), thus shaking the Manchu throne of the Qing dynasty. The Taiping Rebellion was one of the largest, if not the deadliest, civil war in world history. It was at long last suppressed by the army of Zeng Guofan 曾国藩 (1811-1872) along with other loyalists. Zeng Guofan was an influential statesman and military general at that time.

By the time the first version of *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity* came into being in 1894, late Qing China was further aggravated by the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), which propelled the signing of yet another humiliating treaty, the Treaty of Shimonoseki (known in Chinese as *Maguan Tiaoyue* 马关条约) in April 1895, and Taiwan was ceded to Japan. China was already plagued by turbulent impacts internally and externally. It was a weak and poor China. Zheng was obviously haunted by anxiety about the loss of the nation (*wangguo* 亡国) at the hands of the crippling Qing court.

In 1895 Zheng expanded the book from the first five-*juan* version to a fourteen-*juan* version in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War. *Words of Warning* had ever since attracted a wide acceptance and some personalities of note were contributors to the preface. His reformist ideas won support from civil administrators, military leaders and intellectuals, including Deng Huaxi 邓华熙 (1826-1917), the Governor of Jiangsu province; Sheng Xuanhuai 盛宣怀 (1844-1916), a leading entrepreneur-bureaucrat; Peng Yulin, a reform-minded general; and Chen Chi 陈炽 (1855-1900), an intellectual reformist-thinker.

In particular, Deng Huaxi officially submitted an imperial memorandum to the Guangxu Emperor (1871-1908) in early 1895 and recommended Zheng’s *Words of Warning* as ‘a thorough study of the advantages and disadvantages of China and the West, and all his suggestions were feasible’ (Deng, 2014: 4). Through Deng’s recommendation, Zheng Guanying’s avant-garde ideas on reforms and self-strengthening reached the highest authority. The yearning in Zheng’s poem ‘A Returned Mandarin’, as discussed above, was realised. In May 1895 Emperor Guangxu decreed publishing 2,000 copies of his book for distribution to civil officials (Zheng, 2014: 337). Since 1895, *Words of Warning* had been printed more than 20 times, and became the book with the most editions in Chinese publishing history (Xia, 1995: 88).

The book had a large readership and provided inspiration to the famous reformist-officials, such as Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858-1927), Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873-1929), as well as the revolutionary Sun Yat Sen 孙逸仙 (1866-1925). Zheng’s work also influenced Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893-1976), who told Edgar Snow in an interview in Yan’an in 1936 that he had read *Words of Warning* in his youthful days and liked it (Snow, 1968: 134).

The year 1895 became a major turning point in modern Chinese history after the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. The political humiliation and social turmoil paved way for the Hundred Days Reform Movement (*bairi weixin* 百日维新, also known as *wuxu bianfa* 戊戌变法) in 1898, initiated by Emperor Guangxu and led by the scholar-thinkers, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. The short-lived political reform movement (between 11 June and 21 September 1898) only lasted for 103 days and ended in a coup d’état by powerful conservative opponents led by Empress

Dowager Cixi (1835-1908). The two leading reformists took exile in Japan.

Despite his skepticism of the Kang-Liang radical clique, Zheng Guanying sent 100 silver dollars to Kang Youwei’s father, who had fled to Macao (Zheng, 2013: 646). Macao again proved to be a sanctuary for the desperate, and Zheng’s charitable gesture might perhaps rescind the stereotype that merchants were merely profiteers. Disillusioned with the rashness of the Hundred Days Reform Movement, Zheng remained a merchant and reformist-writer.

In 1899, China met with yet another internal unrest, the Boxer Movement (*Yihetuan* 义和团, Society of Righteousness and Harmony).¹⁷ Also labelled as the Boxer Rebellion, it began as a peasant revolt in Shandong province, northern China, in a backdrop of severe drought and enmity towards German dominance and Japanese penetration. It was motivated by anti-imperialism sentiments and soon erupted into an uprising against foreigners and Christians. Consequently, the uprising triggered the

Plate 2. Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi Weiyan* 盛世危言 (*Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity*), 8 volumes in ‘thread-binding’ edition (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2008).



storming of Beijing in the summer of 1900 by the Eight-Nation Alliance (*baguo lianjun* 八国联军).¹⁸ The eight-power allied forces proceeded to loot and pillage in Beijing, which became a battered city after the siege.

Unlike members of the Society of Jesus who had once successfully gained favour in the Qing court by introducing Western scientific knowledge, Protestant missionaries gained their foothold from the defeats of China in the two Opium Wars. These missionaries might come with good intentions to enlighten the ‘heathens’, but they were regarded as the appurtenance of the hegemonic imperialists, and the introduction of Christianity was seen as the by-product of colonialism.¹⁹ It was natural for the Chinese to feel that Western traders and missionaries came to offer them opium with one hand and the Bible with the other, and both were backed up by formidable guns, cannons, and warships.

The conflation of opium and the Bible is reminiscent of Karl Marx’s atheistic aphorism—‘religion is the opium of the people’ (Marx and Engels, 1957: 38). In China, opium and the Bible were put side by side to impart intoxicating effects. The symbiotic and incongruous relationship between offering opium to devastate the bodies and preaching Christianity to save the souls was one of the main factors that led to the ensuing xenophobia. The Boxer Movement’s animosity towards foreigners, missionaries, and Christian followers could be understood against this background. Concomitant with the shocking military defeats and concessions to Western powers and Japan, 58-year-old Zheng Guanying came up with the final consolidated eight-*juan* version of *Words of Warning* in late 1900²⁰ (Plate 2).

AVANT-GARDE SUGGESTIONS

The main concerns of *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity* can be summarised as *fuqiang jiuguo* 富强救国 (national salvation through wealth and strength). That is, a country must create wealth in order to become strong; and wealth comes from reviving commercial and industrial developments. For Zheng Guanying, wealth and military strength were interrelated, and the implementation of a system leading to commercial prosperity and national wealth was of pivotal urgency. He was a pioneer of his time embracing a set of avant-garde concepts, through which

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he pinned his hopes on strengthening a withered China through political, economic, and social reforms.

Zheng had never travelled to the West, but he drew upon Western sources to support his reform arguments and suggestions in the book. His understanding of the Western systems and his reform agenda were largely based on missionary publications and translations of newspaper articles. Inspired by Western nationalist ideas and nurtured as a member of the urban elite in Shanghai, he was concerned with modern Chinese nationalism and China’s national identity. Wu Guo was of the opinion that Zheng was the earliest spokesperson for modern Chinese nationalism (Wu, 2010: 148) and one of the earliest thinkers to envision such new concepts of nationhood (Wu, 2010: 158).

On political reform, he recommended the establishment of the parliament.²¹ He was regarded as the first person in modern Chinese history to openly advocate a representative and participatory political system in the 1870s (Wu, 2010: 177). On economic reform, Zheng showed his entrepreneurial foresight and stated that China was weak mainly due to its poor economic condition and foreign exploitation. As a member of the commercial class, he proposed practising *shangzhan* 商战 (commercial war), that is, market competition against Western economic imperialism. He also called for the opening of free-trade special zones in China’s border regions to revive commerce and trade. His vision for opening the multinational public business zones foresaw the special economic regions established by mainland China from 1980 onwards.

He urged the self-manufacture of cloth and woollen fabric by machines, and challenged the contemporary antagonism against Western machinery. He suggested that China should adopt the Western concept of patents to encourage invention. He also proposed the abolishment of the heavy *lijin* 厘金 tax²² levied on domestic goods, but instead increased tariffs.

Traditionally, the mercantile class in China has been put behind other social classes, because growing rich by trade was considered ethically incompatible with the Confucian teachings of virtues (which will be discussed in the following section). As a merchant by profession, Zheng pushed for a change of official attitude towards merchants, and reiterated that merchants should be given an equal legal status and seen

as equal to official-scholars. He stressed the necessity of business training and argued that the future bureau of commerce should train the younger generation in commercial knowledge. With his experience as an employee in foreign companies for many years, Zheng was aware of the importance of legislation. He proposed implementing international law and analysed its relevance to China’s position in the world. He was one of the earliest reformers to seriously study international law (Wu, 2010: 153-154).

Zheng failed the imperial examination at the start and knew its drawbacks, which mainly focused on memorisation without proper comprehension. On education reform, he was eager to promote popular school education in provincial capitals and broaden the existing curriculum. He put emphasis on extensive translations of foreign publications, so that students could understand international affairs. Not only did he suggest sending youngsters to study abroad, but he also pointed out the importance of women’s education. Zheng was innovative enough to have developed one of the earliest modern, rationalist educational theories in China and became one of the few Chinese who challenged the validity of the traditional teaching philosophy (Wu, 2010: 196).

On social issues, Zheng provided suggestions for more effective governance of the society. He was worried about the rapid population growth and the increasing number of vagrants. He called for state welfare activities for the needed, and the establishment of charity institutions. On ethics, he touched upon the issue of the decline of moral exhortation among the general folks. Although Zheng benefited a lot from missionary activities, he was nevertheless skeptical about Christianity as a teaching. He stressed the cultivation of morality through Confucianism, which he defended as a cultural stronghold. In fact, Zheng’s advocacy for popularising Confucianism preceded Kang Youwei’s petition to the Qing government to make Confucianism the state religion of China (Wu, 2010: 207). From a humanitarian perspective, he suggested replacing the brutal corporal punishment on criminals and suspects with the Western approach of forced labour, and recommended the establishment of a modern, Western-style attorney system to provide legal service to the ordinary people.

Given that Zheng had widely read printed materials and also published his commentaries on social

issues, he proposed founding Chinese newspapers, which served as a means of spreading information and providing knowledge and inspiration to the reader. For him, newspapers were an indispensable instrument for social enlightenment. As for medicinal purposes, he was one of the earliest Chinese to emphasise the combination of Western and traditional Chinese medicine, as both had advantages and disadvantages. His idea of establishing madhouses for the lunatics was also an original one. With regard to modern infrastructure, he realised the urgent need for modern transportation and was an enthusiast pressing for railroad building in China. He was of the opinion that railroad construction was a foremost means to achieve a strong nation-state. The introduction of telegraph for military and commercial purposes, and the establishment of a modern postal service were Zheng’s other major concerns.

The ‘man from the south’ earnestly advocated national strengthening and formulated avant-garde theories, which were fermented by diligence, experience, knowledge, insight, and vision. Zheng Guanying was viewed as the only noted merchant-reformer in the turbulent years of late Qing China (Hao, 1969: 15).

THE MANDARIN’S HOUSE

In the ‘Description of the Historic Centre of Macao’, Zheng Guanying’s family house is presented as the Mandarin’s House (*Macao World Heritage*, 2008: 2), which is alternatively called *Zhengjia dawu* 郑家大屋 (the Zheng Mansion) by the local Chinese (Plate 3). First built by his father Zheng Wenrui around 1869, the house had been expanded by Zheng Guanying and his brothers, and became an impressively large

Plate 3. The entrance of the Mandarin’s House. Photograph by the author.



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compound occupying an area of 4,000 square meters with more than 60 rooms in total. Located on Travessa de António da Silva 龙头左巷 and adjacent to Lilau Square, a Portuguese-style piazza, this rare residential complex once enjoyed a picturesque scenery and good *feng shui* 风水 (geomantic qualities). Before massive reclamation on the waterfront, the house had an unobstructed view facing the Inner Harbour and the verdant hills across the sea.

In 1893 Zheng Guanying composed the following poem commemorating the beautiful landscape and seascape where the new grandiose house was situated. It was also in remembrance of his late father:

题澳门新居
群山环抱水朝宗，云影波光满目浓。
楼阁新营临海镜，记曾梦里一相逢。
(Zheng, 1995:183)

On the New House in Macao
With hills surrounding and waters gathering,
eyes are captured by the shades of clouds and
shimmering ripples.
The newly completed house is adjacent to the
Mirror Sea,²³
recalling an encounter with an immortal in a
dream.
(my translation)

In the Chinese version of the poem, Zheng Guanying annotated in the last line that his father dreamt of an immortal who had told him of the auspicious location for the construction of a house in Portuguese Macao. The poem hence explains why a house was not erected in their rural home village on Chinese soil.

The nomenclature of the Mandarin’s House tells of a family story. Despite Zheng Guanying’s failure in classical education (he would have scant chances to move upward in his rural home village unless he kept on sitting for the imperial examination), he was nevertheless very industrious in learning since his arrival in Shanghai in 1858, and later strove for success as a gentry-merchant. Apart from social upward mobility through imperial examinations, there were other ways of acquiring official titles, or mandarin ranks. According to Wu Guo, it was not unusual for the purchase of official titles, and he points out, ‘There has been ways for merchants to act in such a manner

since the early Qing, when the Kangxi Emperor opened the door for purchasing official ranks in 1674’ (Wu, 2010: 63).

During the late Qing dynasty, donating to the government was another way to acquire mandarin ranks. Wu Guo goes on to say, ‘Merchants paid money to obtain a membership badge, while the government won both financial support from and political subordination of the urban elite’ (Wu, 2010: 64). In this way, the purchasers/donors acquired honour and prestige while the Qing court received revenues for the much-needed treasury.

In Confucian teachings, becoming rich by doing business was stigmatised, and there was always tension between Confucianism and mercantilism, that is, virtue and wealth. Four occupations had been developed into a hierarchic class structure since ancient China. In descending order, these were *shi, nong, gong, shang* 士农工商 (gentry-scholars, peasants, artisans, and merchants). The mercantile class was the last in the pecking order, and merchants/traders were traditionally disdained by the other classes. In this respect, C.K. Yang has said:

Both the Confucian doctrine and the traditional social and political order deprecated the mercantile acquisition of wealth as a profession and merchants as a social class. Growing rich by trade was considered ethically incompatible with virtue and benevolence. The mercantile class was morally despised, socially degraded, and, in many historical periods, politically suppressed or discriminated against. It is possible that the combination of ethical, social, and political condemnations of money-making put such a crippling stigma on this profession (Yang, 1970: 79-80)

As time went by, there was no rigid social hierarchy between merchants and gentry in China during the second half of the 19th century. In some places, it turned out to be a fashion for a scholar to become a merchant (Wu, 2010:15). Regardless of the blurry demarcation, Zeng Jize 曾纪泽 (1839-1890),²⁴ a diplomat and minister, refused to bring compradors and linguists as his entourage when he visited Europe in 1879. He believed that most of them were profiteers having no fidelity at all (Zeng, 1998: 775). The belief that merchants had low ethical standards and were socially unequal to scholar-officials was deep-rooted in Chinese tradition.



Plate 4. The hallway through the Moongate. Photograph by the author.

When Zheng Guanying became a successful entrepreneur in Shanghai, he aspired to an official rank, which might perhaps help exorcise the social prejudice and also ensure his political status. According to the Qing system, there were altogether *jiupin* 九品 (nine official ranks). In 1869, Zheng first acquired an official title *yuanwailang* 员外郎 (associate second-class secretary), which was an associate fifth rank, by donation. In 1870, he gained a title *langzhong* 郎中 (second-class secretary), which was the fifth and highest purchasable rank in Beijing. In 1879, he was awarded the title of expectant *daotai* 道台 (intendant of circuit) because of his charitable contribution to famine relief activities in Shanxi in 1878. By 1895 Zheng was described as having an alternate fourth-rank *daotai* in the imperial nine official ranks (Wu, 2010: 64-65). All these ranks not

only brought him a sense of political affiliation, social prestige, and dignity, but also an official recognition of his status as a mandarin, let alone a merchant, social activist, and philanthropist. However, Zheng’s background as a comprador-merchant and linguist impeded him from being appointed as a high official (Wu, 2010: 78).

A HISTORIC TABLET

There is an important memento in Zheng Guanying’s ancestral house. In the hallway leading to the main compound are two gateways (Plate 4). A wooden tablet, bearing four Chinese words *chongde houshi* 崇德厚施 (Lofty Virtue and Magnanimous Charity), is hung from the roof eaves of the second gateway (Plate 5). There are two lines in vertical Chinese

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Plate 5. The wooden tablet of *chongde houshi* 崇德厚施 (Lofty Virtue and Magnanimous Charity). Photograph by the author.

characters flanking these four words of praise. On the right, the line tells that the Governor of Shanxi province, Zeng Guoquan 曾国荃 (1824-1890),²⁵ is the giver. On the left, *ronglu dafu* Zheng Wenrui 荣禄大夫郑文瑞 is the recipient.

The tablet was given to Zheng Wenrui in 1881, and hung ever since in the Zheng Mansion (Deng and Zhang, 2013:92). What is special about the tablet is that it announced Zheng Wenrui’s official title *ronglu dafu* (Glory and Prosperity Official), even though he had neither passed the imperial examination nor ever held any civil office. The rank *dafu* 大夫 was the title of *wenguan* 文官, a literary official in the Qing court (*Ci Hai*, 1977: 342). While Zheng Wenrui was a comprador-merchant in Shanghai in the early 1850s, he had already donated money to the government to help suppress the Taiping Rebellion. He later returned

to Xiangshan county, taking up the role of a local gentryman by teaching in the village school, and became an activist in local charities (Wu, 2010: 13). Both father and son had never met the eminent official Zeng Guoquan personally (*Aomen ribao* 澳门日报 (*Macao Daily News*), 3 August, 1997: 19). Why did Zeng Guoquan pen the Chinese words *chongde houshi* himself and bestow upon such an honourable tablet to the Zheng family?

In 1877 Shanxi, Henan, and Hebei provinces in northern China were struck by a severe drought, followed by a devastating famine in 1878. Crossing beyond the ethnic boundaries of his Guangdong origins, Zheng Guanying was one of the active participants in fund-raising and distribution. He collaborated with other Shanghai merchants with different ethnic origins to help famine victims in the

afflicted places. He showed his trans-regional concern and appealed for donations through the *Shenbao*. In addition, with the establishment of the Shanghai Relief Fund Raising Office, over 142,800 taels were raised and Zheng himself donated 1,000 taels for the calamity-relieving work (Wu, 2010: 55-56).

Combined mercantilism with Confucian moral pursuit of ‘nourishing the people’, Zheng Wenrui and Zheng Guanying embodied the spirit of gentry-merchants and were engaged in the famine relief activities. Both father’s and son’s contribution was appreciated by the Qing court. As mentioned above, Zheng Guanying was awarded the title of expectant *daotai* in 1879, and his father was granted an official title *ronglu dafu* as evidenced in the tablet dated 1881. Given the effective measures to relieve the calamities in Shanxi, Zeng Guoquan, the famine-era Governor, was particularly grateful

to the father and son for their involvement. Zeng Guoquan would have been impeached and lost his officialdom, like his predecessor, had the disastrous situation not been conveniently averted (*Macao Daily News*, 3 August 1997: 19; Deng and Zhang, 2013: 92). That this tablet had been inscribed with the words ‘Lofty Virtue and Magnanimous Charity’ was an official recognition of their dedication in social responsibility.

The original tablet was badly damaged when the Macao government took over the proprietorship of the house in 2001. It was repaired and sent to the Macao Museum for display, while a replica was installed instead. The tablet is a historic artefact testifying to the mercantile southerners’ cross-provincial participation in relief work in north China.

There is another wooden tablet, which is hung on the roof eaves of the first gateway (Plate 6). It

Plate 6. The wooden tablet of *ronglu di* 荣禄第 (Glory and Prosperity Mansion). Photograph by the author.



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is horizontally inscribed with three Chinese words *ronglu di* 荣禄第 (Glory and Prosperity Mansion). The name of *ronglu di* for the Zheng Mansion is after Zheng Wenrui's official title *ronglu dafu*. *Ronglu di* denotes the residence of an official, and is translated into English as the Mandarin's House. In a word, *Ronglu di*, or the Mandarin's House, is laden with meanings. It metonymically points to the father's and son's success in climbing the socio-political ladder. It also implicitly suggests subversion to the imperial examination system through which only successful candidates would be given mandarin ranks when entering officialdom.

REVIVAL FROM TIME

In the ebb and flow of the historical currents, the Zheng Mansion failed to stand the test of time and lost its glamorous appearance. Perhaps the excellent *feng shui* had gone. Descendants of the Zheng's family gradually deserted the old house and lived in other places. During the Second World War, it became a school, and later a factory for preserved fruits (Tang, 1994: 133). It was finally sub-divided into small units and rented out to more than 300 tenants during the 1960s. Given the lack of appropriate maintenance and occasional fire attacks, the whole complex became crumbling.

After a lapse of more than 100 years since its completion, and on the occasion marking the 155th anniversary of the birth of Zheng Guanying in July 1997, there were voices calling for the restoration and preservation of Zheng's family house as a historical and cultural legacy (*Macao Daily News*, 25 July 1997: 11). The terribly deteriorated house was at long last noted for its architectural importance. In 2001, when the government managed to acquire the proprietorship of the house, nearly 80% of the architecture was damaged (Deng and Zhang, 2013: 94), not to mention that alterations made by tenants greatly aggregated the already poor conditions.

It was not until in July 2002 on the commemorative occasion of the 160th anniversary of Zheng's birth that the significance of the mansion was reinstated. In a government-sponsored meeting, the Macao government announced that the Cultural Institute would carry out a conservation program, and extensive restoration work would be undertaken (*Macao Travel Talk*, August 2002: 4). Eventually, it took around eight years of concerted efforts to transform this decrepit structure back to its basic original appearance. In 2010, the revitalised Mandarin's House was open to the public. (A comparison of the past and the present of the Mandarin's House: Plates 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

Plate 7. The decrepit window with the Chinese characters *liu yue* 留月 (poetically meaning holding back the moon). Image reproduced from Laurence Aberhart, *Espaço Sereno: Fotografias sobre Macau* (Macao: Câmara Municipal de Macau Provisória / Museu de Arte de Macau, 2001), p. 6.



Plate 8. The restored window of *liu yue* 留月. Photograph by the author.



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Retrieved from crowded compartmentalised quarters, the Mandarin’s House has now regained its grandiosity. The revived compound displays a gatehouse, a shrine of the Earth God, a walled garden, a moon gate, spacious courtyards, the main building, and masters’ quarters with two adjoining courtyard houses of symmetrical arrangement. While it illustrates the characteristics of a traditional Chinese residence, it also features a collage of architectural elements from other cultures. Western and other foreign influences are expressed on plasterwork with arched ornamentation over doorways and the use of mother-of-pearl window panels, making it a unique piece of architecture that demonstrates the encounter and interchange between Chinese and Western cultures (Leaflet of the ‘Mandarin’s House’, ca. 2010). Immersed in the wavy currents of modern Chinese history, Zheng Guanying’s decayed family

house has been translated into an architectural gem. It has been groomed for a shining example of a 19th-century Chinese dwelling in Macao, and now enjoys the limelight as a UNESCO heritage site amid a mélange of outstanding East-West architecture in ‘The Historic Centre of Macao’.

A POETIC RENDITION

Since the 1980s, Zheng Guanying’s reformist thoughts have attracted attention for scholarly studies and for presentations in symposiums. Leung Ping-kwan 梁秉鈞 (1949-2013), a man of letters from Hong Kong and popularly known by his pen-name Yesi 也斯, evoked Zheng Guanying and his family mansion in a different literary format. He composed the following poem (in Chinese language) in the genre of *xinshi* 新诗 (free verse new poetry) in 1998:



Plate 9. The courtyard before restoration. Image reproduced from Tian Jun 田军 (ed.), *Aomen Mantan* 澳门漫谈 (*Macao Informal Talk*) (Shenzhen: Dongfanghong Shushe, c. 2000), p. 37.

Plate 10. The revitalised courtyard. Photograph by the author.



Plate 11. The renovated interior. Image reproduced from Lei U Weng 李汝荣, *Aomen Fengcai* 澳门风采 (*The Elegance of Macao*) (Macao: The Photography Salon Society of Macau, 2013), p. 81.

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Zheng Guanying in his mansion writing
Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity

watching from the reflections of the sea near the
newly completed mansion
there are the shades of clouds and shimmering
ripples at a far distance²⁶
near the hill-wall are sounds of exploding
firecrackers and striking bells
up in the house, peddling voices of fishmongers
and greengrocers can still be heard²⁷
you're writing against the baneful custom until
midnight
you don't believe civilization turns to ignorance

being competent in shipping and commerce
couldn't guard you against
rumours like ravaging worms and ants; frame-ups
and conflicts like puncture vines
released from detention and retreating to your
father's house
like a recluse, you are absorbed in writing and
ignore honour and contempt
you perceive through your house the world
outside
enraged by man's cruelty to impair the harmony
of heaven and earth

travelling to many countries and befriending
celebrities from East and West
at cocktail parties, you are touched by sagacious
discussions
scribbling down renowned scholars' thoughts,
and engaging in questions during the trips
concerning education, commerce, agriculture
and mining—bringing all ideas back
home
discussing how to tackle obstinate crises for
nourishing people?
wondering if anyone would listen to the
information from abroad?

neither powerful cannons nor warships are
people's hope
you try to whisk away the surrounding miasma
with your pen
just like mentioning exotic animals, you speak
of parliaments, newspapers, and schools

you remember how astonished you were to see
a great collection of books in a museum
and repeatedly argued the shipping agendas at
the pier and train station
in this island on the edge, you portray unnoticed
spaces with a new language

on the roof of the big green two-storey house
*luofu daihe shanren*²⁸ sweeps away dust
with a flywhisk
behind the granite walls *qiyousheng*²⁹ is absorbed
in writing
facing the Mirror Sea and leaning against the
Lotus Peak,³⁰ one should beware of the
bleak winds at night
the couplet on the elegant bamboo window
always strives against mediocre thought
the words '*liuyue*'³¹ on the west window couldn't
hold back the moon – how could it hold
back
your thought of the splendid cosmos in a new
order

today the tablet of 'Lofty Virtue and Magnani-
mous Charity' has been wrecked by rain
where is the man of vision?
what holy pills and magic sword could save the
suffering folks?
who would establish Daoist institutions to
nourish genuine experts
and seek world-redeeming alchemy to save the
country?
in a rotten haystack—how can we save ourselves
and others?

each day this grand mansion becomes more
desolate
land developers and bureaucrats' arguments
wouldn't help solving problems
is history just a pile of broken bricks and damaged
tiles?
outside the high wall green shades seem dancing
on the senescent eaves
tearing apart the cobwebs and the weeds
striding into the deadly empty courtyard
(Leung, 2009: 130-135, my translation)

Plate 12. The bronze statue of Zheng Guanying in the Art Garden on the
Avenida da Amizade. Photograph by the author.



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As one of the characteristics in his poetry, Leung Ping-kwan is inclined to engage in a dialogic style, and to use the second person ‘you’ to delineate the subject person. The poet interacts with the personage he pens and also invites the reader to enter into his world. In the poem, Leung does not only encapsulate Zheng Guanying’s life, career, and thoughts in times of a tumultuous China, but also mourns for the bygone glory of the house in the last stanza.

It is perhaps out of the poet’s conjecture when he composed the poem at the *fin de siècle* that the ‘pile of broken bricks and damaged tiles’ would have been resurrected and become a World Heritage site, let alone that ‘the deadly empty courtyard’ would have been alive with admiring tourists. Also, the poet could not project that the former culprit from British Hong Kong would have been hailed as *Aomen zhizi* 澳门之子 (The Son of Macao).

THE SON OF MACAO

In Macao, Zheng Guanying’s surging popularity was unprecedentedly exemplified in the celebration of the 160th anniversary of his birth in July 2002. Numerous celebrations in his honour were organised on the commemorative occasion of the ‘Zheng Guanying Week’. An academic symposium on Zheng Guanying was held,³² memorial stamps were issued by the Macao Post Office, a Zheng Guanying website was launched, and Zheng’s literature and photos of the Mandarin’s House were exhibited (*Macao Travel Talk*, August 2002: 4).

Above all, on 24 July 2002, a bronze statue of Zheng Guanying was unveiled by Edmond Ho, the first Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (*Macao Daily News*, 25 July 2002: B3). The statue was by the famous Chinese sculptor Yu Chang 俞畅 (b. 1957), Dean of the Guangzhou Sculpture Academy. Located at the Art Garden on the Avenida da Amizade, the statue is dressed in traditional Chinese outfit and depicted as scholarly and assertive with his hands crossed in front holding a book (Plate 12). Near the statue there is a large stone tablet, in the form of an open book, inscribing his outstanding achievements in Chinese language (Plate 13). Below is the English version quoted from the ‘Handbook of the Academic Symposium on Commemorating the 160th Birthday Anniversary of



Plate 13. The stone tablet inscribing Zheng Guanying’s outstanding achievements in Chinese language. Photograph by the author.

Zheng Guangying’ (*Zheng Guanying danshen yibailiushi zhounian xueshu yantaohui huiyisouche* 郑观应诞辰一百六十周年学术研讨会会议手册):

Zheng Guanying (1842-1921) was one of China’s well-known thinkers; an entrepreneur, an educationalist, a literati and an altruist during the early decades of the last century. Based in Macao, Zheng wrote *Shengshi Weiyan* in the Zheng Mansion and this has become one of the most influential and powerful literary pieces of recent Chinese society. It has awakened thousands of millions of people, influenced generations with its depth, and has remained a landmark in Chinese history, ensuring Zheng a reputation as the highest spirit, as ‘The Son of Macao’.

By The Macao Historical and Cultural Heritage Protection Association
24 July 2002 (2002: II)

At the turn of the third millennium, Zheng Guanying gained his fame as ‘The Son of Macao’. He was the first person in Macao crowned with such a halo of prestige. Zheng was immortalised in Macao because he had authored *Shengshi Weiyan*. And his dilapidated family house was revitalised because he had completed the book there.

In the Art Garden, Zheng’s bronze statue stands not far away from the bronze statue of José dos Santos Ferreira (1919-1993), a Macanese³³ poet and writer (Plate 14). The sculptor was also Yu Chang. Unveiled by the last Governor of Macao, Vasco Rocha Vieira,

on 5 October 1999, the statue sits on a stone pedestal and is portrayed in a pensive mood with folded arms and crossed legs. Besides him are three books, which apparently allude to his literary achievements. Santos Ferreira was perhaps the last poet of distinction to write in the Portuguese creole dialect, *Patois*³⁴ (or *Makista*), and he left behind eighteen books of poetry, prose, plays, and operettas in *Patois*. He enjoyed high esteem in the Macanese community and was affectionately known as Adé.³⁵

The inauguration of the statues of these two writers/poets may speak for some specific cultural connotations. Macao’s flourishing gambling business earns its eponyms as the ‘Eastern Monte Carlo’ and ‘Far East Las Vegas’, and it is dubbed a city of gambling. However, Macao has tried to construct itself as a city of culture and extols literary endeavours. Zheng

Plate 14. The bronze statue of José dos Santos Ferreira in the Art Garden on the Avenida da Amizade. Photograph by the author.

Guanying and José dos Santos Ferreira thus serve to remove some negative colonial images of Macao being at the boundary of civilisation,³⁶ as well as to help erase Macao’s infamous image as a city of sin.³⁷ All in all, they brought glory to Macao; and Macao can pride itself on begetting literary immortals.

CONCLUSION

Zheng Guanying lived in a shocking period of the scramble for China. It was the high age of European global imperialism and colonialism, and Western powers gathered like wolves preying on the weakening Qing Empire.³⁸ Nurtured by Shanghai’s cosmopolitan urban culture and exposed to the hegemonic Western impacts, he had developed a strong sense of national reform. What is unusual about the merchant-thinker Zheng Guanying was his passion for formulating pioneering treatises on ‘saving the nation by enriching and empowering the nation’. His vision was different from the scholar-thinkers, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who were limited by their own ideological inflexibility and lacked the spirit of entrepreneurship. Zheng paid attention to foreign relations, popular education, social progress, legislation, commerce and industry, and economic nationalism against the West.

The ever-industrious Zheng Guanying was a man of vision. Regardless of his failure in the imperial civil service examination in his youth, he strove for upward mobility from a junior employee to a gentry-merchant, reformist-thinker, socio-political activist, and philanthropist, not least a writer/poet. His various roles are all intertwined to transform into an aura of glamour shining on Macao. ‘The Son of Macao’ and the Mandarin’s House have now represented Macao’s indigenous cultural meanings, and they are translated into the pride of Macao. On the world stage, they are the tangible and intangible cultural heritages, which help foster cultural cohesion and nourish the collective cultural identity of Macao. **RC**

Author’s note: This paper was presented at the International Symposium on “China/Macau: Translation and Interpretation – Past and Present”, Lisbon 12-14 October 2015.

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NOTES

1 Xiangshan county is famous for being the hometown of Sun Yat Sen (1866-1925), the first president and founding father of the Republic of China. Xiangshan was renamed as Zhongshan in 1925 after Sun's death.

2 *Shengshi Weiyan* 盛世危言 has also been translated as *Words of Warning in a Flourishing Age*, or *Words of Warning to an Affluent Age*.

3 Passing the examination at the county level was the pre-requisite qualification for candidates to sit for the provincial level for the *juren* 举人 degree, then the national level for the highest *jinshi* 进士 degree, or Advanced Scholar, in order to acquire the legitimate right to hold civil office. Established in the Sui dynasty (581-618), the civil service examination system was eventually abolished in 1905.

4 In Shanghai, *tongshi* 通事 was often distained as shallow, knowing nothing but making money.

5 The status of being gentry (士 *shi*) depended not only on one's wealth and official title, but also on one's charitable contribution to society and practice of Confucian moral ideals.

6 A new urban elite community came of age after Shanghai had become a treaty port. This community was a group of mostly merchants, compradors, journalists, and political activists, who possessed knowledge of foreign languages and experience with foreign-related affairs. Not only did they interact with reform-minded officials, but also literati-reformers and Western missionaries for issues concerning national strengthening.

7 The word '*shen*' 申 refers to Shenjiang 申江 (the Shen River), which is a short form of Chunshen Jiang 春申江 (the Chunshen River). The Shen River is the old name for the Huangpu River 黄浦江 in Shanghai. The river was first excavated and created by Lord Chunshen 春申君, one of the Four Lords of the Warring States Period (475 BC-221 BC). '*Shen*' is an eponym of Shanghai.

8 Macao has various poetic literary names associated with the lotus flower, because of its cartographic resemblance.

9 Originated in Guzerat, India, the word 'coolie' (denoting a degenerate race) means day labourer.

10 In 1873 there were three hundred coolie *barracoons*, or coolie-slave recruiting offices, operating in Macao, and as many as eight hundred broker-procurers. The dehumanising yet lucrative trafficking of human cargo was finally outlawed in Macao on 27 March 1874.

11 The popular patterns of classical poetry are rhymed, composed of lines of *wuyan* 五言 (five-character) or *qiyán* 七言 (seven-character).

12 In 1883, Kang Youwei 康有为 founded the first Anti-Foot Binding Society to challenge the practice. In 1912, the new Republic of China government banned foot binding, but it still continued to be practised until the 1930s.

13 In the 1850s, opium turned out to be the most valuable commercial crop in the world, and was the basis of almost all commerce with China. The British export of opium into China ceased in 1917 and opium-smoking was only outlawed in Hong Kong in 1946.

14 The Governor of Macao, João Maria Ferreira do Amaral (1805-1849), made gambling legalized and the first gambling house licences were granted in 1847. Since then, the gambling tax has been the principal income of Macao.

15 The early dynastic era of the Qing dynasty was generally considered a period of prosperity (*shengshi* 盛世) under the reigns of Emperor Kangxi (r. 1661-1722); Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1722-1735); and Emperor Qianlong (r. 1735-1795). Since the death of Qianlong in 1799 and during the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796-1820), the Qing Empire began to decline. Zheng Guanying 郑观应 might have yearned for the former era of prosperity by using the words *shengshi* for the title of his book.

16 In Beijing, the Summer Palace (Yihe Yuan 颐和园) was looted and seriously vandalised, while the Old Summer Palace (Yuan Ming Yuan

圆明园) was destroyed by arson after being looted by the British and French troops in 1860.

17 Alternatively known as *Yihequan* 义和拳 (literally, Righteous and Harmonious Fists), the Boxer Movement was a secret society and its members practised certain boxing and callisthenic rituals, which they believed would make them impervious to bullets. They were hence referred to as Boxers in Western press.

18 The Eight-Nation Alliance was an alliance of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

19 In the 19th century, Protestant missionary activities in China (and India) were a prominent feature of British relations with Asia. The British political supremacy in the East synchronised with Protestantism. The most active and the largest Protestant missionary organisation in China was the China Inland Mission, founded by James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) in England in 1865. Taylor set sail to China in 1866 and the mission's headquarters was based in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

20 See Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi Weiyan*.

21 On the establishment of the parliament, see Fung Yiu-shing, 'Zheng Guanying's Ideas of Parliamentary Reform as expounded in his *Shengshi Weiyan*'. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, the University of Hong Kong, 1999.

22 The *lijin* 厘金 tax was a form of internal tariff, which was first introduced in 1853 as a means of financing the largely locally-recruited armies to suppress the Taiping Rebellion. After the Taiping Rebellion, it became one of the major sources of government revenue. In 1931 China abolished the *lijin* in return for the restoration of tariff autonomy.

23 The Mirror Sea is one of Macao's poetic names.

24 Zeng Jize 曾纪泽 was the son of the eminent military general Zeng Guofan 曾国藩, who put an end to the Taiping Rebellion.

25 Zeng Guoquan 曾国荃 was the brother of Zeng Guofan.

26 The first two lines are in fact predicated on Zheng Guanying's poem 'On the New House in Macao'.

27 The third and fourth lines resonate with Zheng's poem 'Impressions of Macao'.

28 *Luofu daihe shanren* 罗浮待鹤山人 is one of Zheng Guanying's sobriquets. Literally, it means Awaiting Crane Recluse of Luofu Mountains. This sobriquet alludes that Zheng is a believer and practitioner of Daoism. Luo and Fu are two mountains in Zeng city, Guangdong province.

29 *Qiyousheng* 杞忧生 is Zheng Guanying's pen-name. It derives from an idiom meaning a person who was worried about the sky's falling, thus alluding to Zheng's deep concern for the state affairs.

30 This line refers to a couplet hung in front of the main building: *qianying jinghai* 前迎镜海 (facing the Mirror Sea)/*houzhen lianfeng* 后枕莲峰 (leaning against the Lotus Peak). The couplet reflects the good *feng shui* of the location of the mansion.

31 The Chinese characters *liuyue* 留月 (poetically meaning holding back the moon) are put horizontally above a window.

32 On the collection of theses from the symposium, see Wang Jie 王杰 and Deng Kaisong 邓开颂 (ed.), *Proceedings of the Conference Celebrating the 160th Birthday of Zheng Guanying*.

33 Under the Portuguese ideological pan-racial vision and toleration of mixed unions, Macao has procreated an 'emergent' minority—the Macanese. They are a creole group of Portuguese-Asian ancestry.

34 During the 18th and 19th centuries, *Patois* was widely used in Macao. After the introduction of the teaching of both Portuguese and Chinese languages in schools around the 1850s, *Patois* gradually disappeared, except in songs and jokes.

35 For a photographic biography of Adé, see Carlos Marreiros, *Adé dos Santos Ferreira: Fotogbiografia*.

36 Colonialist literature often assumes the West's self-legitimizing superiority in depicting the East as culturally and morally inferior—a world at the boundary of civilization. See Christina Miu Bing Cheng, *Macao: A Cultural Janus*, p. 158.

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37 The challenge of Macao was, and still is, to transform a 'city of sin' into a 'city of culture'. See Hao Zhidong, *Macao: History and Society*, p. 207.

38 Here one might consider the work of Robert A. Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914*.

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