

Chinese Teaching — Moral in Macanese Style

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ABSTRACT: There is a unique teaching style of Chinese as a second language that we can find, among other sinologists from Pedro Nolasco da Silva (1842–1912) and Luís Gonzaga Gomes (1907–1976). Pedro Nolasco da Silva was a Macanese and a famous Chinese–Portuguese interpreter, translator and teacher. He wrote many books for teaching. Among them, we find a grammar book and manuals of Chinese language. Nolasco da Silva taught Chinese using the method of translation that was, and still is, very important to understand, by comparison, not only the position of elements in a sentence, but also cultural influences. Much time has passed since Pedro Nolasco da Silva and the nineteenth or twentieth centuries’ sinologists of Macao, but as I will show in my contribution, fundamental ideas in teaching Chinese as a second language persisted.

KEYWORDS: Chinese teaching; Macanese style; Morality; Pedro Nolasco da Silva.

1. PEDRO NOLASCO DA SILVA BIOGRAPHY — HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION

Pedro Nolasco da Silva (1842–1912) was a Macanese Sinologist who studied philosophy with honours at Saint Joseph’s Seminary in Macao. When he was a student of Chinese Affairs Procuratorate (*Procuratura dos Negócios Sínicos*), he distinguished himself in Chinese language and culture. Thus, he started to translate Chinese classics to Portuguese, along with official documents and thereby

became an interpreter and translator in several missions headed by the Portuguese government of Macao.

It is relevant to highlight one of these missions due to its importance to understand both the historical context and the alliances of Pedro Nolasco da Silva. Such missions occurred at the time of negotiations of the Portuguese–Chinese Treaty of 1887, where Pedro Nolasco da Silva performed the task of being secretary interpreter of the Minister Plenipotentiary Tomás de Sousa Rosa. In this treaty, following the Protocol of Lisbon, China confirms the perpetual occupation and government of Macao by Portugal. Times have changed. If he took part in such negotiations nowadays, the resulting commitments would probably be completely different. The alliance between Nolasco da Silva and Portuguese forces

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Auguste Borget (1807–1877): *A-Má Temple*. <https://www.anticstore.art/70549P#gallery-1>

was undeniable in spite of never giving up his mission of defending Chinese language and culture when he assumed the post of Head of Chinese Office (*Chefe do Expediente Sínico*) from 1885 to 1892. Why? In my view, because he believed the Chinese values were the best to guide Chinese, and particularly, Macanese in Macao. Although he was faithful to the Portuguese and to the Chinese people, his first commitment was to the Macanese community. This is the reason why we find him among the founding members of the Association for the Promotion of Macanese (*Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses*, APIM), whose by-laws were approved by Governor António Sérgio de Sousa in 1871, as we read in ‘Pedro Nolasco da Silva’, *Figuras de Jade: Os Portugueses no Extremo Oriente* (*Distinct People of*

Jade: Portuguese in the Far East) (Aresta 2014, 139). This Association, as its name points out, stands for the defence of the education and instruction of the Macanese. Among the purposes of the APIM was the promotion of the study of Chinese language, written and spoken, and the publication of educational materials¹.

The new materials that were comparing Chinese and Portuguese language, were inspired by Western pedagogy. The Chinese way of teaching based on ‘home schooling’ relied exclusively on memory and teaching at ‘family house’ that was replaced by Western methodology introduced to Macao via the efforts of Father Gonçalves (1781–1834), which drew on the study of rules and analyses of textbooks in Chinese written and spoken languages.

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2. CHINESE TEACHING FOR PRAGMATIC, MORAL AND POLITICAL PURPOSES

Pedro Nolasco da Silva was for a time interpreter-secretary of Count Tomás de Sousa Rosa, who was for several years the councilor and president of the Loyal Senate (*Leal Senado*) and a paramount teacher very engaged in the instruction of Macanese people. He understood the importance of teaching Chinese for pragmatic purposes and for communication among different ethnic groups. In *Bussola do Dialecto Cantonense* (*Compass of Cantonese Dialect*) 1912, he states how useful it is to learn the Chinese language to conduct business. He draws on the example of Englishmen and German people who learnt Chinese before going to China, adding his wish that maybe one day that would apply to the Portuguese too. The day arrived one century later². Nowadays many Portuguese want to learn Chinese for business, as China has become a strong economy — the second largest economy in the world in many fields. When he proposed a bilingual Chinese–Portuguese project of teaching for Macanese community, he truly was a pioneer.

He also defended translation as a method of teaching, particularly literal translation, on one hand, for the understanding of Chinese grammar, analysing word by word and comparing; on the other hand, for general comprehension of the meaning of the texts and dialogues and the perception of the distance between written and spoken languages.

The teaching of Chinese language, by means of translation, was also regarded by Nolasco da Silva as an excellent method of conveying cultural and civilised values.

As Li Changsen refers in “Estilo de Macau” — Formação, Características e Impacto na Tradução para o Idioma Sínico (‘Macao Style’ — Formation, Characteristics and Impact on the Translation into Chinese Language), the Macao style developed from the nineteenth century onwards presents three characteristics: 1) building of School of Chinese



Pedro Nolasco da Silva. <http://macauantigo.blogspot.com/2013/01/pedro-nolasco-da-silva-1842-1912.html>

Language (*Escola da Língua Sínica*) in 1905³; 2) gathering of educational materials such as manuals of language and translation; 3) introduction of a new teaching strategy inspired by Western pedagogy⁴. I must add a fourth feature: the search for morality via teaching of Chinese language and culture, the reason why the first part of a manual of Chinese language is a translation of a theoretical treaty on Neo-Confucian values. The theoretical treaty on Neo-Confucian values was written by two emperors of the Manchu dynasty, Emperor Kangxi (r. 1662–1722) wrote the *Holy Decree*, promulgated in the ninth year of his reign in 1671 and the amplification was written by the following emperor, Yongzheng (r. 1722–1735). In the year after his ascension to the throne, the Emperor commented on the maxims. The maxims of the *Holy Decree* were to be studied and memorised by the people and by the students with the purpose of elevating the ethic-moral education of the people. The *Holy Decree* became a mandatory reading to be memorised by all Chinese children in order to pass the official examinations. *A Tradução da Amplificação do Santo Decreto* (*The Translation of the Amplification of the Holy Decree*) by Nolasco

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da Silva, published in 1903, was included in the fundamental material of the Chinese School of Macao, not only to learn Chinese language, but, even more importantly, to integrate Chinese moral values, through an elegant style:

This is the book we have chosen for translation exercises, not only because it is written in a modern, elegant and clear style, but also it contains an interesting and instructive sketch of Chinese moral principles.⁵

What Neo-Confucian moral principles were considered valuable in the education of the Macanese community and its students? First, this kind of philosophical Confucianism borrows principles and elements from Buddhism and later on, in the year 1000, adds another stream of thought, religious Taoism as Fung Yu-lan (馮友蘭) points out⁶.

In the *Holy Decree*, what matters most is the close relation to classical Confucianism and its reliance on political, moral and ethical thought. In the following table, we can see the principles at stake:

Maxims	Neo-Confucian Principles
Maxim 1 敦孝弟以重人倫 夫孝者，天之經， 地之義，民之行也。	Filial piety and brotherly love in social relations ‘Filial Piety is the immutable law of Heaven, principle of Justice on earth and the obligation of the people.’
Maxim 2 篤宗族以昭雍睦	Social harmony begins in the family ‘Honour your parents for the sake of union and concord.’
Maxim 3 和鄉黨以息爭訟	Living in peace with neighbours ‘Live in peace with neighbours to avoid disputes and litigation.’
Maxim 4 重農桑以足衣食	Work is the basis of life ‘Cherish farming and the mulberry tree in order to have something to wear and eat.’
Maxim 5 尚節儉以惜財用	Advocacy of economical and frugal living ‘Esteem frugality in order to be sober in the use of wealth.’
Maxim 6 孟子曰：“謹庠序之 教，申之孝悌之義。”	Promotion of Neo-Confucian philosophy, namely Confucian Virtues such as filial piety and brotherly love in teaching institutions and academies. ‘Be vigilant on teaching in schools,’ says Mencius, ‘inculcate filial piety and brotherly love.’

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Maxim 7 黜異端以崇正學	Defence of orthodox principles ‘To repel the heterodox principles in order to exalt the true doctrine.’
Maxim 8 講法律以儆愚頑	Explain the necessity of the laws created for the commonwealth ‘Explain the laws to put the ignorant and the wicked on their guard.’
Maxim 9 明禮讓以厚風俗	‘Rites are above the law for showing respect and perfecting habits.’
Maxim 10 務本業以定民志	Defence of the work for protecting people and the community ‘Each one devotes himself to the exercise of his profession, so that the will of the people may be stable.’
Maxim 11 訓子弟以禁非爲	Against evil by education ‘Instruct children and brothers to repress the practice of evil.’
Maxim 12 息誣告以全善良	Promotion of safety to protect morality ‘Stop slanderous accusations so that good and honest may have complete security.’
Maxim 13 誠匿逃以免株連	‘Defending military order and the empire against deserters.’
Maxim 14 完錢糧以省催科	Promotion of tax payments ‘Pay your taxes to avoid enforced collection.’
Maxim 15 聯保甲以弭盜賊	Organisation of Militias: law of centurions (保) and decuries (甲) ‘Organise centurions and decuries to root out robbers and thieves.’
Maxim 16 解讐忿以重身命	The containment and mastery of feelings, particularly negative ones. ‘Control hatred and anger to give due importance to life.’

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In the first maxim, we see love for parents linked to respect for superiors, thereby laying the foundations of a strong patriarchal and hierarchical world, built politically on moral virtues, such as the Five Constant Virtues (Benevolence, Justice, Rites, Trust and Wisdom). In the second maxim, we learn that family is a model to the Empire. Justice and knowledge begin at home. In the third maxim, we understand that peace and harmony among neighbours lead to virtuous habits in a village, making it beautiful. The fourth maxim warns that an empire is built on hard work and the leaders are the models for the people. The fifth maxim defends the goodness of an economically frugal form of life. Frugality is the best guarantee for public esteem. The sixth maxim tells us to watch out for teaching in schools, the values taught in family institutions must be defended and inspected; orthodox teachers praised. The seventh maxim states that the heart can be changed and purified by the orthodox principles received through the right way of teaching. The eighth maxim states the need for laws that are deeply rooted in human feelings and reason to avoid punishments and perhaps, via understanding, the government can get rid of punishment for the benefit of the entire community. The ninth maxim shows how important rites are for perfecting human customs. The rites derive from the immutable law of Heaven and Earth, and they assist in the organisation of the world. The essence of the rites is respect, they generate harmony. In the tenth maxim, we learn the importance of work for building the character of the people. A good result in the profession depends on firmness of will and the diligence of scholars, farmers, artists, traders and military. The eleventh maxim addresses the promotion of wisdom and knowledge, including laws, to protect against wrongdoing and evil. The teaching must be in order to preserve Confucian virtues: love between father and son; justice between ruler and subject; distinction between husband and wife; hierarchy of

young and old, finally sincerity among friends are to be valued. The twelfth maxim teaches that laws and punishments are made to prevent bad people from harming the community. The thirteenth maxim warns against the protection of deserters, traitors and tramps, therefore defends the imperial order. The fourteenth maxim declares the payment of taxes for the maintenance of the reigning order, the key argument is what is taken from the people must be for their benefit. The fifteenth maxim states cities should be divided into neighbourhoods and villages into settlements. Ten families form a decury (甲) and ten decuries form a centurion (保), in order to protect the villages and cities. Decuries have a dean and a centurion receives a chief, which implies the establishment of militias in order to protect public order. The last maxim defends the control of feelings with the purpose of having a good life, warning against the vices, especially that of wine.

The best translation practice and the starting point of a good translation today depends on commitment to ethical principles. Following the etymological meaning of being a translation professional, he or she ‘professes’, engaging not in a ‘Hippocratic Oath’, as the Greek doctor did, but in a ‘Hieronymic Oath’, paying tribute to Jerome, the patron saint of translators. According to English translator Andrew Chesterman (1946–), also a contemporary thinker engaged in translation studies, among the requirements of a good translation and of teaching a language are: 1) inner requirements, such as: belief; self-confidence; creativity and skills of transformation; 2) scientific requirements, for example, proficiency in the source language and also in the target language, both at a general and specialised level, depending on the field of translation/teaching and cultural knowledge; 3) other requirements, comprehension and attention to the other (particularly students’ environment), as well as the translator, teacher or instructor trying to put himself in the place of the other. In my view, Nolasco

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The family of Pedro Nolasco da Silva. <http://macauantigo.blogspot.com/2013/01/pedro-nolasco-da-silva-1842-1912.html>

da Silva fulfilled all these conditions. Moreover, as a Macanese, he fully identified with the community, believing he knew what best suited the students from an ethical and moral point of view, based on Chinese traditional philosophy.

In this respect, Mencius (372–289 B.C.), the Confucian philosopher, is quoted for instance in the Maxim 6 of the *Holy Decree* to show how concerned he was about teaching students and cared for schools, due to a lesson learnt from his mother, a poor widow who never gave up educating her son. When he was a child, he and his mother lived close to a cemetery. Mencius often staged the rites performed in funeral processions and burial services, so his mother decided to move to a marketplace. There he began to imitate merchants doing business; again, they moved next to a school and the boy started to follow the study habits of the students, ‘Observing this, his mother happily said, this is where we live from now on. (Lee 1985, 1)’

Mencius incorporated this existential lesson into his philosophy and Pedro Nolasco da Silva received it from his Neo-Confucian spiritual friends, trying to transmit it to his students. Another lesson from Mencius, received by all Neo-Confucian philosophers, was about human nature, which is worth cultivating because it is good, as can be seen from the following story about Mount Niu, or in English ‘Ugly Ox Mountain’. As the story goes, outside the capital of Qi, there was a high mountain with lovely trees, including grass and flowers, everything grew amazingly, until its fame spread around; many cowboys, shepherd boys and woodsmen went there to cut firewood, and no one preserved the Ox Mountain. Gradually, the vegetation withered away and the space became ugly. Mencius compares the heart with no benevolence to the action of emptying the mountain, stressing that education is needed to return to benevolence and to the right path:

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Some people indulge in reflection, with the intention of restoring the good of their hearts. But once they return to society, their newly sprouted intention of restoring the good of their hearts is abandoned. In this respect, they are not far from birds and beasts. Other people, seeing their evil behaviour as the same as that of birds and beasts, take their nature as bad. But is their nature really bad? With the right nutrition, there is nothing cannot grow under necessary conditions; without it, there is nothing that will not perish.⁷

(Mencius 1999, 361)

Education is the real nourishment both for Mencius and Wang Yinglin (王應麟, 1223–1296), the compiler of *Three Character Classic* (《三字經》) during the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), presented here in a translation of the original text and its annotations by Wang Jinsheng, a Qing dynasty scholar during the reign of Kangxi (1662–1722). The *Three Character Classic* manifests the basic principles of Confucian philosophy embodied in Neo-Confucian times, which were used in Chinese society for a long time, as a primer for children until the elimination of imperial examinations in the twentieth century. The language is classical Chinese that is written in a literary style with rhymes and rhythms. The first sentence opening the classic well illustrates the philosophy defended by this school. We can read — ‘Man by nature is good’ (‘人之初 性本善’) (Phen 1990, 2) and ‘People’s inborn characters are similar, but learning makes them different’ (‘性相近 習相遠’) (Phen 1990, 2), or ‘If man is not taught in the right way, nature will be corrupted’ (‘苟不教 性乃遷’) (Phen 1990, 4).

Now let us move to what is happening in China today, as Wang Keping (王柯平) points out the Chinese government is trying to regain the traditional sense of ruling by virtue that has been very influential in Chinese history (Wang 2007, 80). He refers to Confucians such as the founder Confucius (孔子), Mencius (孟子), Xunzi (荀子) and so on, referring to them as champions of

government by virtue (Wang 2007, 81). Which means ruling by rites, instead of governing by law, as moral order is above the rigid rule of law. He adds Chinese modernisation upholds rule by law, but never forgets rule by virtue in a complementary position, safeguarding of course the present-day condition of Chinese society that cannot repeat its tradition:

It is undeniable that the stress of rule by virtue reflects to some extent the idealistic component of the Confucianist tradition of governing the people. However, it must be perceived that the Chinese social system, in his pursuit of the rule by law or democratic politics, is so restricted by present-day conditions that is almost impossible to render the policy of rule by virtue repeat its old past.

(Wang 2007, 83)

The truth is a complementary position in government, and is needed, but the moral education in Chinese society is more than welcome, bringing forward the interaction between the two paradigms of law and morality. Today, as in the olden days of Pedro Nolasco da Silva, relating not only to the *Tao of Governance*, but also to the *Tao of Education*, the rule by law, which concerns the development of a legal system, is useless without the rule by virtue that entails a public morality (Wang 2007, 77) based on ethical principles.



Marciano Baptista (1826–1896): *The Ancient Macao*. <http://macauantigo.blogspot.com/2017/11/vida-e-arte-de-marciano-baptista.html>

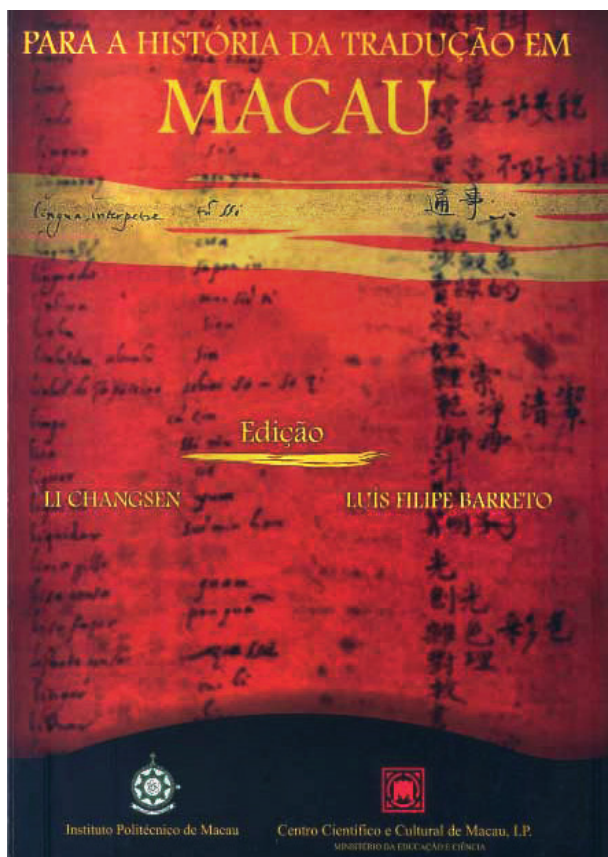
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3. CONCLUSION

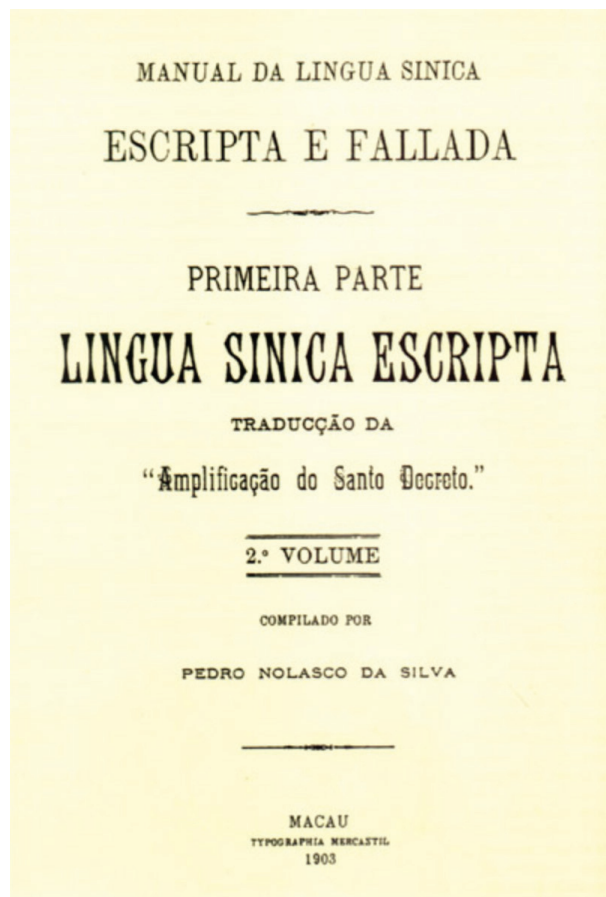
Pedro Nolasco da Silva, of Portuguese origin, whose parents were Pedro and Severina Angélica Nolasco da Silva, became a model guided by the philosophy in which he believed. He, of Portuguese descendant, educated by Western thought (in Saint Joseph's Seminary) was able, via his willpower and diligence, to master Chinese language. He married an Englishwoman and they had 10 children and died poor. He was an interpreter and translator, a professor, a civil servant, a writer and a journalist. He was the president of the Loyal Senate (*Leal Senado*) and the Holy House of Mercy (*Santa Casa da Misericórdia*), two of the most prestigious institutions of Macao. He died at the age of 70, proclaimed an Honorary Citizen of Macao. Before he died, he

received the honorary title of 'Knight of the Order of Christ' (*Cavaleiro da Ordem de Cristo*).

He was professor of Chinese at Saint Joseph's Seminary (*Seminário de São José*), where he taught Cantonese and Mandarin, he created many educational materials for his students; he also translated Portuguese materials to Chinese, such as an elementary History of Portugal. He was an interpreter at the service of the Portuguese government in uncertain times, shortly after the Opium Wars. But above all, he believed in the principles of Chinese Neo-Confucian philosophy, such as filial piety and brotherly love, as republican times approached and began to spread their new values and philosophy of life (the Chinese Republic was founded on 1 January 1912, and the Portuguese Republic was founded on 5



"Estilo de Macau" — Formação, Características e Impacto na Tradução para o Idioma Sínico' was published in 2013 in *Para a História da Tradução em Macau* edited by Li Changsen and Luís Filipe Barreto.



Amplificação do Santo Decreto was first published in 1903.

October 1910). He died on 12 October 1912. He was conservative-minded and fully respected the order he served. He honoured his rulers and his ideals. The truth is that his principles were conservative but he knew how to fight for them. Besides, his behaviour showed a remarkable consistency and great coherence between theory and practice, which he exemplified in his teaching methods. For him, language was not simply a tool of communication, but a precious treasure containing a philosophy of life — language was a way of learning a new life. I suppose if he had had a progressive mind, he would have translated a thinker of the Taoist School for the Macanese community. That was not the case, and the most important message is the example of life he left us for. He believed in the moral value of education, as

a good Neo-Confucian did. He taught the children of his generation, adding to materials organised by him, a specific moral philosophy through language, as we can see in *The Amplification of Holy Decree*, and the practical teaching of Chinese. In his life, nothing happened by chance and his work involved a huge effort. That is why he became a model to the following generations who named a street after him and, at that time, two schools: Commercial School Pedro Nolasco da Silva (*Escola Comercial Pedro Nolasco da Silva*), of which he was the first director, and Official Primary School Pedro Nolasco da Silva (*Escola Primária Oficial Pedro Nolasco da Silva*). Pedro Nolasco da Silva was one of the sinologists who contributed the most to the creation of the Macanese-style moral in teaching and must be remembered with respect. **RC**

NOTES

- 1 The works of Pedro Nolasco da Silva, including those were written when he was a teacher of Saint Joseph's Seminary and at the Industrial Institute, are: *Circulo de Conhecimentos em Português e China Para Uso dos que Principiam a Aprender a Lingua Chinesa*, Hongkong: Typographia Guedes, 1884; *Fabulas*, Macau: Typografia Mercantil, 1884; *Phrases Usuaes dos Dialectos de Cantão e Peking*, Macau: Typografia Popular, 1884; *Grammatica Pratica da Lingua Chinesa*, Macau: Typographia do Correio Macaense, 1886; *Vocabulario e Phrases dos Dialectos de Peking para Uso dos Alunos da Escola Central de Macau*, Macau: Typographia Noronha, 1895; *Manual de Lingua Sinica Escripita e Fallada, Segunda Parte, Lingua Sinica Fallada: Primeira Parte, Lingua Sinica Escrita, Noções Preliminares e Lições Progressivas*, Macau: Typographia Mercantil, 1902; *Lingua Sinica Escripita, Tradução da Amplificação do Santo Decreto*, Macau: Typographia Mercantil, 1903; *Manual de Lingua Sinica Escripita e Fallada, Segunda Parte, Lingua Sinica e fallada, Phrases Usuais, Dialogos e Formulas de Conversação*, Macau: Typographia Mercantil, 1903; "Ao Público: 'Em Defesa da Associação Promotora dos Macaenses,'" *Boletim do Governo Ecclesiastico da Diocese de Macau*, Macau: Typographia N. T. Fernandes & Filhos, 1908; *Bussola do Dialecto Macaense*, Macau, 1911; *Texto Chinês da Bussola do Dialecto Macaense. Adaptado para as Escolas Portuguesas de Macau*, Macau, 1912; *Livro para o Ensino da Literatura Nacional*, translated to Portuguese, 2 vols., Macau: Typographia Mercantil, 1912.
- 2 Pedro Nolasco da Silva, *Bussola do Dialecto Macaense* (Macau, 1912), 5. With excerpt in Portuguese, 'Para avaliar o grau de utilidade d'esta língua (chinesa), basta dizer que muitos empregados do commercio, tanto inglezes como allemães, estudam actualmente esta língua, seja antes de virem para a China ou depois de aqui estarem, a fim de poderem entender-se directamente com os negociantes chinezes, sem a intervenção
- 3 Chinese School, the first institution instructing Chinese — Portuguese translators and interpreters in China, was created by Royal Decree on 22 July 1905.
- 4 Li Changsen, "Estilo de Macau" — Formação, Características e Impacto na Tradução para o Idioma Sínico, in *Para a História da Tradução em Macau* (Lisbon: Macao Polytechnic Institute and Macao Scientific and Cultural Centre, 2013), 104. With excerpt in Portuguese, "O estilo de Macau", criado no século XIX, está directamente ligado ao mecanismo da formação de intérpretes-tradutores, apresentando três aspectos principais: a criação da Escola da Língua Sínica; a compilação sistemática e científica de compêndios de língua e de tradução; a introdução de um novo método de ensino da língua chinesa beneficiando da pedagogia ocidental.'
- 5 Yongzheng, *Amplificação do Santo Decreto* (Macao: Fundação Macau, 1995), 3. With excerpt in Portuguese, 'É este o livro que escolhemos para exercício de tradução, não só porque está escripto em estylo moderno, elegante e claro, mas também porque n'ella se contém um esboço interessante e instructivo dos princípios da moral chineza'.
- 6 Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy. The Period of Classical Learning from the Second Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 424.
- 7 This excerpt comes from 《孟子·告子上篇》, hereby is the original script, "其日夜之所息, 平旦之氣, 其好惡與人相近也者幾希, 則其旦晝之所爲, 有梏亡之矣。梏之反覆, 則其夜氣不足以存; 夜氣不足以存, 則其違禽獸不遠矣。人見其禽獸也, 而以為未嘗有才焉者, 是豈人之情也哉? 故苟得其養, 無物不長; 苟失其養, 無物不消。" (Mencius, *Mencius*, 356).

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