

The Inspiration of the Fusion of Chinese and Western Cultures for the Development of Macau City

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Abstract: Macau has a unique geographical location, adjacent to Zhuhai in the west and connected to Guangzhou in the east, and it is an open city along the southeast coast of China and an international financial center. Its unique cultural heritage enhances the soft power of the city. In ancient China, the architectural style of Macau was deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture and ancient architectural styles, such as ancient temples and courtyards. During the European colonial period, Macau became an important trading center, and the architectural style of Europe inevitably influenced the urban landscape of Macau. When local culture collided with Western culture, it added exotic charm and diversity to Macau. The exchange and collision of local culture and Western culture have added exotic charm and diversity to Macau. The analysis of the architectural styles and background of different periods, as well as the cultural and folk customs of Macau, has had a profound impact on the city's development. This article summarizes and explores the integration of Chinese and Western cultures and the series of implications it has brought to the development of Macau.

1. Introduction

In the early stages of development, Macau became a highly urbanized city in the early stages of urbanization in China due to its unique geographical location. Its coexistence of historical and modern characteristics, the initial conflicting of Eastern and Western cultures, and their current fusion and coexistence have allowed Macau to accumulate precious historical and cultural heritage, showcasing a unique urban characteristic exclusive to Macau. The development of Macau can be traced back to the establishment of the port. Before its establishment, Macau was just an unknown fishing village. "Annals of Macau" records: "In the 14th year of the Jiajing era, command Huang Qing bribed officials and moved the port to Haojing, paying an annual tribute of 20,000 taels of gold. From Huang Qing onwards, Macau had a barbarian market." In 1535, the government allowed the Portuguese to trade with foreign merchant ships in the waters near Macau, gradually making Macau a trading and transshipment center for Chinese and Western trade. Macau officially opened its port in 1553, marking the beginning of the collision of Eastern and Western cultures. The Portuguese enjoyed free trade in Macau, and a large number of missionaries also poured in, bringing the doctrines and customs of Catholicism, which had a profound impact on the religious culture of Macau.

After the Portuguese settled in Macau, they began to establish churches such as Macau Saint Lao

Lenzo Church, St. Anthony's Church in Macau, Ruins of St. Paul, St. Joseph's Seminary and Church. The Portuguese used the churches as the focal point, around which they built other public spaces: squares, parks, schools, temples, and shops. At the same time, Portuguese-style architecture began to emerge, while the indigenous Chinese architecture of Macau was preserved and continued to develop. The Portuguese architectural style had a certain influence on the indigenous Chinese architecture.

2. The Changing Process of Urban Architecture

2.1 Structural Appearance

When entering Macau, the exotic atmosphere is strong, and the most obvious feature is the ancient buildings that have stood for centuries. Most of the buildings are well-preserved and still maintain their original structural functionality. From the late 1880s to the first half of the 20th century, a unified architectural style gradually emerged in Macau. During this period, there were the most significant urban construction activities, [1]with buildings such as the St. Lawrence's Church and the St. Augustine's Church adopting European architectural styles, characterized by the prominent use of Greek-style Corinthian pilasters, Ionic columns, and Doric columns as decorations. The church interiors feature stained glass windows, often depicting complex biblical themes contrasted with simple geometric patterns, adding a mysterious quality to the sacred buildings. These buildings predominantly embody European ideologies such as Western classicism and Gothic revival. Many of the modern public buildings in Macau are in the form of Western classical architecture, such as the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau building and the Post Office building. The interior walls of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau building are adorned with blue and white Portuguese tiles, representing a typical Portuguese decorative style. The surrounding buildings also belong to the typical continental architectural style, allowing residents and tourists to experience the rich Portuguese atmosphere.

2.2 Architecture-the Combination of Chinese and Western

The renowned Ruins of St. Paul's (the front wall of the original church of Mater Dei) is the most typical architectural example of the blending of Chinese and Western cultures. It has a total of 5 floors, and the enormous archway is built with granite, with walls in the Baroque style of the Renaissance period. The entrance of the archway is supported and decorated with ten Ionic columns, and the second floor walls are supported by ten Corinthian columns. The third floor features arched wall niches and exquisite reliefs. The archway also combines traditional Chinese architectural decorative elements, including a "dragon head" shaped waterspout. Retaining the architectural characteristics of the church interior, the floor plan is in the shape of a Latin cross, with a protruding cross-shaped transept and three aisles separated by wooden columns, which is a clear expression of traditional Chinese temple architecture.[2]On the third floor, there are lion sculptures in the shape of Chinese lions, serving as water droppers. At the same time, Chinese characters and chrysanthemum patterns appear on the archway. These elements with obvious oriental characteristics appear on the Baroque-style building, but unexpectedly harmonious. The coexistence of Chinese and Western cultures has been achieved on this ancient building with a history of a hundred years.

The architecture that coexists with both Eastern and Western cultural elements is also found in Lou Lim Ieoc Garden. It is very surprising to find such a building in Macau. Inside Lou Lim Ieoc Garden, there are pavilions, towers, and winding corridors, making it the only garden in Macau with the charm of a Suzhou-style garden. The garden features typical Chinese architecture but with a light yellow exterior paint, which is more in line with Western aesthetics. The veranda columns are

designed in a Gothic style, a rarity among famous gardens on the mainland. In addition, the Nine-Bend Bridge in the garden adopts a Western arched shape, giving the bridge a meandering rhythmic feel. Through this combination of Eastern and Western architecture, we can see the mutual respect between Eastern and Western cultures. Such architecture and layout in the entire city of Macau are not conventional, but rather irregular and disorderly. You can see European city features in Chinese architecture and Chinese elements in Western architecture. This kind of development actually reveals that the different architectures in Macau were not systematically planned in the historical development process. In fact, some were just preserved, while others vanished in the course of history. The preserved buildings carry deep imprints of the times, reflecting the inclusiveness and symbiosis of Macau's urban culture, which is interdependent with social life.

As the city continues to develop, the urban vitality injects new life into these ancient buildings. Temples are still filled with incense, and churches are not only places for worshipers to pray, but also venues for cultural and entertainment displays. They also become the hosts for music festivals during annual fixed holidays and for parades and other activities. These buildings have already integrated into the daily lives of the citizens.

3. Human-cultural Coexistence

The cultural heritage of a city is not only reflected in its architectural structures, but also in the local customs, way of life, language, cuisine, and diverse traditional cultural practices. Although these have been influenced by Western culture, people's thinking still remains grounded in the inheritance of the ancient Chinese culture that dates back 5000 years.

3.1 Traditional Customs

With the presence of the Portuguese in Macau, religious beliefs were introduced by missionaries. The rise and impact of foreign ideas did not obliterate the indigenous folk cultural beliefs, deeply rooted in ancient Chinese culture, which continues to thrive. Wherever there are people, the culture of the nation constitutes world culture, and despite the changes over time, it has been well preserved, leading to the unique urban culture of present-day Macau. Additionally, due to its coastal location, the inhabitants of the island gradually developed an island culture, such as the belief in Mazu culture, where those venturing out to sea seek protection and smooth sailing. Thus, the generationally transmitted Mazu faith emerged. Furthermore, Macau's folk customs include eight national intangible cultural heritages such as "Macau idol carving", "Macau Nezha faith project", "Taoist ritual music in Macau", "Cantonese opera", "Nanyin storytelling and singing", "Fishermen's Feast of the Drunken Dragon Festival", and "liang cha" making techniques. These intangible heritages are important evidence of Macau's inheritance and promotion of traditional Chinese culture. The faith of the common people is closely linked to the architecture. They build religious buildings as a spiritual support and a manifestation of their thoughts and culture. For example, the belief of the common people in Macau in Nezha combines the traditional cultures of Buddhism and Taoism. There are two Nezha temples in Macau: Shishan Nezha Temple and Dasanba Nezha Temple. People believe that Nezha Prince can protect them and eliminate illnesses and disasters. In 1888, people spontaneously built the Shishan Nezha Temple and the Dasanba Nezha Temple and began to worship there. It has a history of more than a hundred years. On Nezha's birthday which is on the 18th day of the fifth lunar month, people pray for peace, good health, and the elimination of disasters. The Nezha Temple holds birth seal ceremonies, temple fairs for blessings, processions of the deity's statue, performances of divine skills, and the seeking of Nezha's talisman to celebrate the birthday. The architecture of the Nezha Temple also includes the Mazu belief of the Mazu Temple and the Guan Di culture presented by the Sanjac Halls. The folk beliefs may seem different, but they

contain similarities, namely the people's prayers for a happy and fulfilling life. The island culture integrates with the mainland culture, and coexists peacefully with other religious cultures and diverse cultures.

3.2 Language Forms

Due to its geographical location and historical influences, Macau has a high degree of international openness. The language spoken in Macau is diverse; besides the local population, there are also immigrants from nearby cities such as Zhuhai, Zhongshan, and Chaoshan. The majority of people use Cantonese as their primary language, while there are also Hakka dialects and Min dialects. Traditionally, the people of Macau lived by the sea and gradually formed a unique maritime dialect. Many native Macanese can speak Portuguese, which is a compulsory subject in public schools. After the return of Macau to China, the government has promoted the strengthening of Portuguese language education, allowing the traditional education of Portuguese to continue and develop.[3] One such language derived from the Portuguese residents living in Macao who have developed a language called "Macanese Portuguese" which is a fusion of Chinese and Portuguese, with a distinctive style, aimed at cultivating bilingual talents for the society. After the handover, the use of Mandarin has been further promoted, and both simplified and traditional Chinese characters are used in writing. The official languages of the Macao Special Administrative Region are Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin) and Portuguese. In terms of language, Macao also presents a colorful form, showing the inclusive and harmonious social development and cultural heritage of Macao.

4. The Impact of Culture on Urban Development

4.1 Tourism

Macao's economic development is mainly centered around tourism, gambling, and hotel industry. Through cultural experiences, one can perceive the city's atmosphere and level of development. Macao's rich cultural landscapes, religious architecture, and traditional Chinese architecture are the city's primary tourist attractions. The appearance, architectural structure, layout, and decoration of these temples reflect the architectural art of that time, embodying profound humanistic thoughts and cultural expression. Influenced by religious culture, these ancient buildings are well-preserved, often containing historical artifacts such as painting, religious music, sculpture, and calligraphy. They enable visitors to understand the splendid history of art development. As the saying goes, "One flower, one world," "One moon reflects upon a thousand rivers." [4] The multicultural culture can also burst forth with brilliant colors here. The historical and cultural city area, famous historical sites, as an important support of Macao's tourism economy, the historical education significance and humanistic thoughts contained in the religious and humanistic landscapes are immortal treasures in the history of human civilization.

4.2 Gambling

The development of Macau's gambling industry has promoted the economic growth of the tourism industry, promoting the city's economic growth and creating a unique gambling culture. Casinos are often integrated with leisure and entertainment. Some of the most famous ones include: The Venetian Macao, the Galaxy Macau, and Sands Macao, distributed in the Macau Peninsula and Taipa. The appearance of these casinos often adopts Western European architectural techniques, using a predominantly golden color scheme to appear magnificent and luxurious. Although the exterior of the casinos is in a Western architectural style, the design incorporates Chinese cultural

symbolism. For example, the logo of Galaxy Macau (see Figure 1): it symbolizes the phoenix, which represents auspiciousness in ancient Chinese culture. In addition, the design of the logo also incorporates the principles of the Five Elements in traditional Chinese thought. The combination of ancient Chinese philosophy with Western appearance cleverly integrates into Macau's gambling culture.



Figure 1: The logo of Galaxy Macau

5. Conclusions

Based on the aforementioned observations of Macau's tourism, culture, and architecture, it can be seen that the architectural development in Macau bears significant historical imprints. It deeply reflects the historical traces of Macau over the past hundreds of years. It inherits Lingnan culture, combines its island culture, and Western religious culture, resulting in the integration of diverse cultures manifested in architecture, language, and folk customs. It is the support of the native people's beliefs and the government's protective policies that enable these ethnic cultures to continue to exist and to be better developed. In the future, Macau can fully develop by integrating elements of Chinese and Portuguese cultures, reflecting the unique architectural characteristics of Macau.

The opening of the Hengqin Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in 2021 provides Macao with a new platform and opportunity for development. Through this cooperation, we can accelerate the city's cultural construction, not only by bringing forth new ideas and innovative development, but also by building "Cultural Macao".[5] We should also actively integrate into the development of the Greater Bay Area, relying on inheritance while keeping pace with the development of the times, and finding ways to align with the rapid development of the mainland while also reflecting Macao's cultural and architectural characteristics. This is worthy of our in-depth research and continuous summarization.

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