



Façade of Saint Paul's Church, Macau - photo by Mr. Chan Hin Io / 澳门大三巴-陳顯耀先生

THE MACAU RICCI INSTITUTE JOURNAL:
CONNECTING SOCIAL INNOVATION, MORAL LEADERSHIP
AND COMPARATIVE SPIRITUALITY

澳门利氏学社社刊：
联结道德领导力、社会创新和精神世界的相互对照

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The logo of the Macau Ricci Institute in Macau, as it is shared with its founding institution the Taipei Ricci Institute is a provocative one, a symbol with deep and multiple resonances in traditional Chinese culture. It shows a man standing on the back of a tiger, trying to ride the tiger, which is moving forward, apparently in the direction indicated by the rider. While we may be concerned about the folly of trying to ride a tiger, the website of the Ricci Institute has this to say about its meaning: “The image taken from a flat wine vessel in bronze dating from the time of the Han Dynasty, is of a Taoist Immortal riding a tiger. The Tiger, prince of the wild beasts of the mountain, is the animal in which resides the ‘Yin,’ the vital principle of Earth. The Tiger signifies the ‘Yin’ that calls forth the action of the ‘Yang.’” If the tiger symbolises “Yin” then the rider symbolises “Yang” (MRI, 2017). Riding the tiger, according to the MRI website, symbolises mastering the forces of the earth.

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) left a deep mark in China as he shared Western knowledge with his Chinese counterparts through his outstanding mastery of oral and written Chinese. Even to this day, Li Madou, as he is known in China, is revered as one foreigner who really understood Chinese culture. His success in modelling the proper missionary spirit may best be understood by examining the classic that he wrote in 1595 in Chinese characters, *On Friendship*. Ricci’s aphorisms challenged Chinese readers to recognise a new depth of spiritual dimension in friendship couched in wisdom sayings derived from Stoic philosophy. His opening words convey an insight that may have been surprising to them: “My friend is not another, but half of myself, and thus a second me—I must therefore regard my friend as myself” (Ricci, 2009, 91).

Matteo Ricci’s legacy has inspired us to found *The Journal of the Macau Ricci Institute*, as we as Non-Chinese are challenged to enter into dialogue with Chinese and discover in them so to speak “our other self”. This process of mutual appreciation may equip us in a special way to work together to solve our common problems today. Friendship is indeed the main entry point

to all three broad areas of concern embraced by the Macau Ricci Institute. The MRI Journal will highlight research and reflection on these concerns, namely, Moral Leadership, Social Innovation and Comparative Spirituality. Ricci was regarded as a highly respected moral leader who deeply impressed everyone who had the chance to meet him, not just for his knowledge of different sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, geography, and cartography but also for his humanity and the sincerity of friendship expressed in his encounters with Chinese people, mastering their language and showing openness to those with whom he interacted.

Ricci’s life in China had its own painful periods of rejection and conflict. However, the complex of interactions between the different Chinese cultures and the “wise man from the West” opened a whole field of genuine social innovation. When attempting to explain his own cultural roots and faith, Ricci went out of his way to refer to symbols and meanings commonplace among Chinese cultures. In so doing Ricci himself was profoundly transformed in his whole being. Coming from a Catholic background in Italy he must have found the encounter with different wisdom traditions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and Islam particularly challenging.

Even today, making comparisons among different spiritual perspectives requires much discernment. When we compare the wealth of wisdom from these traditions we are amazed just how profoundly they have evolved over the centuries. While they may have had a powerful constructive impact at various points in Chinese history, we also should recognise their considerable potential for promoting destructive attitudes and behaviours especially with regard to abuses of power. The commitment to comparative spirituality reminds us of the benefits of mutual respect and reciprocal learning, especially in present times when dialogue seems to pale in face of violence and inherited prejudices.

The complexity of the early encounters between China and the West will continue to inspire us to seek historic truth and present it in an unbiased manner. We are constantly reminded

not to jump to foregone conclusions. The MRI Journal is thus exploring how Ricci's paradigm of friendship can be understood and implemented here and now. The bottom line is that there is no true friendship without coming to grips continually with complex historic realities. The founding of the Taipei Ricci Institute coincided with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Born in the shadow of such a critical event, the Ricci Institutes will be always address the challenge of exploring the different dimensions of the meaning of "culture".

the evolving concept reflects the paradigm shift in economic models and responds to opportunities opened up, as well as foreclosed, by it. Thompson's analysis will no doubt shape the approach to social innovation that the MRI Journal will pursue in future issues. A concrete example of social innovation is explored in Dennis McCann's interview with Ana Correia discussing her research on "Women's Leadership in Macau Education." Correia's concern remains concrete and practical, focusing on the prospects for making Macau's educational institutions more

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As it develops, the MRI Journal hopes to publish significant articles exploring the paradigm shift from conventional models that offer only a one sided view on economic development ultimately benefitting very few towards sustainable models which benefit society as a whole and foster a greater sense of the common good. In this issue we start this series with a case study, Gerhold Becker's "Paying the Price: Lessons from the Volkswagen Emissions Scandal for Moral Leadership." His reflections not only reveal how a corporate culture apparently full of rhetoric about sustainability and corporate social responsibility may become pervasively corrupt, but also explores how a company can turn itself around following such a crisis. Henri-Claude de Bettignies' essay on "The Failing Economic Model and the Opportunity for Responsible Leadership to Shape Change in China for a Better Future" carries the analysis forward into the situation facing China where the paradigm shift may mark a particularly important opportunity to exercise moral leadership.

Social innovation is another important dimension in the MRI Journal's agenda. In this issue, Mike Thompson's article, "What is Social Innovation?" offers a conceptual clarification of social innovation, showing how

inclusive in welcoming students with learning disabilities, whose needs currently are little understood and rarely well served. Her studies suggest that if women leadership were better represented in top levels of school administration, Macau's educational policies might change for the better. Helen Xu's contribution provides another example of social innovation, from Beijing. "Educational Social Innovation – Responsible Leadership MOOC in China," explores the challenge of lack of access to quality education in a country undergoing rapid economic and social development. Advances in digital technology, including the global expansion of the internet, have enabled the development of innovative educational delivery systems, such as MOOCs—Massive Open Online Courses—that can provide quality instruction to students and adult learners otherwise barred from universities in China. Xu reports on how our sister institution, Rothlin Ltd, a management consultancy firm promoting corporate social responsibility in China, has produced and distributed a MOOC on "Responsible Entrepreneurship" that makes a concern for good business ethics central to the strategies ensuring entrepreneurial success in China.

The MRI Journal's third dimension,

Comparative Spirituality, is well represented in this issue with articles by Roderick O'Brien and Christian Wagner and Su Chi Li. O'Brien's "Moral Leadership using the Method of Francis de Sales" construes Francis' 16th century spiritual discipline of "exchanging places" as a means of achieving a genuine sense of reciprocity in the context of today's discussions of moral leadership in business. Francis, highly regarded among spiritual writers of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, is in O'Brien's reconstruction, pictured as actively involved in mentoring leaders in business and the professions. His method of exchanging places resonates very deeply with the Way (Dao) of virtue espoused in various Chinese wisdom traditions. Christian Wagner and Su Chi Lin offer "The Facade of St. Paul's in Macau reflects Christian, Confucian and Buddhist Spirituality" which helps to convey the MRI's distinctive approach to spirituality, demonstrating an inclusiveness that is eager to learn from all wisdom traditions evident in our common life in China. From various perspectives the famous Façade of the Saint Paul's ruins in Macau reflects the complex interplay between different cultures, religions and wisdom traditions where especially the harmonious interaction between Christianity with Confucian and Buddhist elements are highlighted. It also strongly resonates the humanist movement in Europe in the period of the Renaissance which is closely related to advancement of trade between the different continents. The Façade features four bronze statues of prominent Jesuits of the sixteenth century: Francis Borja, Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier and Aloysius Gonzaga, Catholic missionaries who were credited to be exceptional leaders and examples of moral leadership going well beyond the boundaries of their religious affiliation. Without the advances of trade and social innovation it would have been impossible for those gentlemen to reach out to overseas cultures. In fact, an often overlooked aspect of their itinerary is that they were by no means just confined to their distinctive European cultures and faith, but were constantly challenged to deal with other wisdom traditions and to share their know-how of hard sciences.

The glimpse of the rich symbols of St. Paul's Façade, as offered to us by Wagner and Su, may reveal a deeper insight into a contemplative dimension that united these moral leaders: they were all well-grounded in a tradition of contemplative prayer that allowed them to connect to their own cultural and spiritual roots and at the same time achieve an openness of mind and spirit that would allow them not only to share their knowledge and conviction but also to allow themselves to be profoundly transformed by the encounter with new cultures and ways of thinking. They witnessed social transformation and contributed to it.

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The founder of the Ricci Institute in Taipei, Fr. Yves Raguin S.J. (1912-1998), envisioned contemplation as an "apophatic" or "kenotic"¹ way of meditation which goes beyond words and as providing a privileged place for interreligious dialogue, thus advancing it beyond Ricci who had serious reservations concerning Buddhism. Like Buddhist meditation, Christian practices of contemplation also emphasise the importance of letting go, becoming truly relaxed and going beyond words. Under Fr. Raguin's leadership the Ricci Institutes took up the path that Ricci had opened, by cultivating dialogue and friendship with Chinese people of other faiths, creating an

1 "Mandala are drawn on cloth, as murals on temple walls, made into 3 dimensional gilded bronze, with statues representing the sacred figures, and in sand. Whether in sand or in mental image, the mandala is always "destroyed" or emptied out of mind and body, as a third, "apophatic" or "kenotic" step before realizing "union." Thus, in the Tantric Buddhist, ritual Daoist, and Ignatian contemplative systems, the process of realizing "mystic" union must be done in 4 stages, ie, purification, "illumination" by means of sacred image, the emptying out of all images (kenosis), and then absolute union without image. The Daoist classic Zhuangzi calls this step "heart fasting, sitting in forgetfulness." Only after all images, even the most sacred, and all desires, even for "perfection" or "illumination" are emptied, can absolute presence be realized." (Saso, 2012)

encounter of the Christian faith with Buddhism, Daoism, and Islam. Incidentally, it was Fr. Raguin who proposed the adoption of the Daoist symbol of the man riding a tiger which appears as an icon for a challenging mission.

The approach to interreligious dialogue, renewed as it is in the efforts of Pope Francis who never ceases to emphasise it, remains emphatically practical and oriented to the benefit of the common good. The aim of the MRI Journal is also to strengthen moral education by exploring the sustainability and effectiveness of various Chinese approaches to ethics. Strengthening moral education is a commitment shared with people of goodwill following all the religious and spiritual traditions of China. Thus, in addition to its inherited focus on comparative spirituality, the Macau Ricci Institute programs will include a number of topics promoting applied ethics, entrepreneurial responsibility and environmental stewardship.

The MRI Journal will try to highlight how different wisdom traditions not only enrich each other but also shape the values of leadership oriented to the common good in an ever-changing world. However, good leaders do not simply fall from heaven; they depend on institutional

frameworks that make social innovation possible. “Truthfulness” describes a key ingredient of different wisdom traditions including Confucianism. The good leader is recognised as truthful and trustworthy. The MRI Journal will pursue truthfulness in order, wherever possible, to help improve the moral, spiritual, and physical health in dialogue with the Chinese.

Going back to the image of riding a tiger we understand that wherever such a risky ride may take us, we need to recreate an ongoing sense of balance, for the sake of harmonious relationships to the benefit of all who walk the path with us. The Façade of St. Paul is a powerful reminder that even the most brilliant and artistic approaches to wisdom may collapse into ruins at some point and their rich messages become unrecognisable. Whatever the tiger may have meant to us when we started, our learning to ride it safely and even gracefully will enable us to befriend it, to the point where no one will tell anymore who is master and who is servant. With the launching of this new Journal, I hope that it may make a modest but significant contribution to the demanding journey of friendship with China that Matteo Ricci has opened with his companions.

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