

Recollections With Leading World Figures by Daisaku Ikeda
Jorge A. H. Rangel—Striving for the Creation of a Macau
for the Coming Century

THE trip from Hong Kong to the Portuguese territory of Macau takes an hour by boat. The day I made my visit on January 30, 1991, the breeze was warm and the island cast a soft shadow on the blue sea as we approached.

In days long past, brave adventurers set sail from distant shores, crossing the seas to link two worlds—East and West—together. These were the Portuguese sailors of the Age of Great Voyages (from the late fifteenth through seventeenth centuries). Dr. Jorge A. H. Rangel, Secretary for Public Administration, Education and Youth Affairs of the Government of Macau and chairman of the Standing Committee of the University of Macau (formerly the University of East Asia, Macau), has described the Portuguese spirit as a combination of love, adventure and challenge.

Before the Age of Great Voyages, the Europeans feared the sea. All oceans except the familiar Mediterranean were thought to be populated by monsters. But the Portuguese were not afraid; they boldly sailed off into the unknown. My beloved teacher, Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, too, remarked on the extraordinary courage of the Portuguese.

The Silk Road's land route had become increasingly inaccessible owing to warfare and local disturbances. With an indomitable will, the Portuguese went ahead and forged a new, ocean-faring Silk Road. The great Portuguese poet Luís Vaz de Camões (1524–80) writes: "Count nothing impossible: he who willed always found a way."¹ With this passionate spirit—which also pulses in Dr. Rangel's veins—the Portuguese opened up vast new horizons and changed the world. Macau was the base that the first Portuguese navigators established in Asia; and from Macau, they brought the latest developments of Western culture to the East, including Japan.

The culture introduced by the Portuguese stimulated a renaissance in Japan during its warring period in the sixteenth century. Western science, art and technology—medicine, printing, music, painting, shipbuilding, navigation and geocentric astronomy—bewitched the Japanese and transformed the nation. The traces of this influence can be found in words that came into Japanese from Portuguese and are still used today: *botan* (botão; button), *pan* (pão; bread), *tabako* (tabaco; tobacco), *birodo* (veludo; velvet), *karuta* (carta; playing cards), *kompeito* (confeito; sweets), *beranda* (varanda; veranda), *manto* (manto; mantle), *meriyasu* (meias; knitting), *kappa* (capa; cape). Even *tempura* (tempero), the batter-fried dish that is widely regarded as typically Japanese, comes from Portugal.

In the century before Japan severed its relations with the West by placing a ban on Christianity, Macau was Japan's window on the world. Today, in advance of its scheduled reversion to China in 1999, Macau is searching to define its role in the twenty-first century and constructing the necessary framework to support it. Dr. Rangel is one of the youthful leaders overseeing this task.

The boat docked at the pier. I was surprised and touched that Dr. Rangel should

have come to meet me personally. Knowing how extraordinarily busy he is, I was humbled by his kind gesture. Whenever we meet, he is always very gracious and courteous. His unaffected good-naturedness complements his handsome appearance well. Dr. Rangel was born in Macau in 1943. His academic brilliance was noted at an early age. Later, he attended the University of Lisbon in Portugal, Cambridge University in the United Kingdom and the University of Bonn in Germany. He is an excellent speaker. A journalist once said that his extemporaneous remarks are like a finished manuscript ready for publication. From his student days, he has represented Portugal at international conferences around the world, and he has also won first prize in Spain's international debating contest.

We first met a year before my visit to Macau [in Tokyo in April 1990]. I was astonished to learn that he had read all of my works in both Portuguese and English translation. Leaders of nations other than Japan are really so well read. On that occasion, he shared his belief that the message I have been working so hard to bring to the world through my activities is steadily reaching people's hearts. That message is that humankind must overcome differences of nationality and race and come together as citizens of the world.

Macau is a tiny territory, but it pulses with great energy. The exchange between East and West is distilled in its history. Its streets, too, reveal this combination of Chinese energy and the tranquil fragrance of Portugal. With its red, blue, green and yellow panes of stained glass, and flowers of all kinds spilling over the projecting window balconies, Macau's atmosphere is warm and embracing. Many have come to the territory for refuge and acceptance: Japanese Christians fleeing persecution, Western traders driven out of other nations and Chinese escaping famine and flood.

The Macau spirit welcomed all, without regard to nationality or religion. And that spirit shines with even greater brilliance today. The focus of a speech I delivered at the University of East Asia (now the University of Macau), following my conferral of an honorary professorship from the university [in January 1991], was to use this spirit to its greatest potential. How can we broaden narrow nationalism or ethnocentrism into an awareness of our shared humanity? The only way, I concluded, is through a new, humanistic education.

I gave this address at the height of the Gulf War. In introducing me, Dr. Rangel observed that unless we devote ourselves to education that places utmost value on the individual human being, we would be left with a truly ugly world. Dr. Rangel is dedicated to education, and he has himself taught. He has poured his energies into educational reform, based on his beliefs that the development of society starts with the development of the individual, and that human resources are our greatest asset.

In the past, few young people in Macau were able to receive a higher education. The doors to Chinese universities were closed to students from a Portuguese territory. Scholarships were also scarce. Dr. Rangel knew this wouldn't do, so he set about changing it, bringing into play that Portuguese spirit of love, adventure and challenge. The University of Macau had formerly been a private university,

but in 1988 it was taken over by the government-funded Macau Foundation. Thereafter, it was opened to all qualified local students. Previously, because the cost of tuition was so high, most of the students had come from Hong Kong. But now a new policy has been introduced under which local students are eligible for a more than fifty-percent reduction in tuition.

Dr. Rangel also worked to introduce compulsory elementary school education, and added new programs in vocational and adult education, as well as correspondence courses. It is his belief that developing human resources should be given the highest priority. He also stressed this in his lecture at the Fourth Soka University Pacific Basin Symposium, held at the University of Macau in August 1994. He said:

Culture should have a higher priority over politics, because the former is the reign of essence and the latter the reign of accidents. There is no way to universal political understanding without one's prior knowledge and acceptance of the other. Only a profound cultural awareness is able to provide this....

We should reject that tomorrow's world is to be simply animated by strictly market rules and the "ethic" of material enrichment at all costs.

The entire Orient will be negating itself if it does not proclaim the superior excellence of the spirit.²

Scholars from thirty universities and academic institutions, representing sixteen nations and territories, participated in the symposium. The very fact that the gathering was held and with such great success is proof of Dr. Rangel's enthusiasm and commitment. He is a man of action, as the words of the great Portuguese artist Jose Sobral de Almada Negreiros (1893–1970), which he quoted in his speech, testify: "The words to save Humanity were all told, only one thing remains: to save Humanity."³

Though I was only there for a short and very hectic visit, Macau's beauty will always stay with me. Macau proved eloquently that different cultures can coexist, and it is a gift of hope for all humanity as we advance toward an increasingly integrated and unified world and a new Age of Great Voyages.

As I made my way back by boat to Hong Kong, I thought: In the wide ocean, all ships of different shapes and colors can sail gaily and freely. A small river or lake cannot possibly hold such a diverse variety of vessels and their passengers. The wide ocean corresponds to the awareness of being a world citizen, and bringing that awareness to each harbor and bay across the globe is the basic task we are faced with today. Cultural exchange and humanistic education are the tools we have for spreading that awareness.

Dr. Rangel declared, "We are the actors of this enormous interchange between the two parts of the planet [East and West]."⁴ It is an interchange that will lead us to the great ocean of possibilities and limitless potential. The courage and indomitable spirit of his seafaring ancestors shone in Dr. Rangel's gentle features.

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1. Luís Vas de Camões, *The Lusiads*, trans. William C. Atkinson (London, Penguin Books, 1952), p. 217.
2. Dr. Jorge A.H. Rangel, "East and West Co-existence and Harmony With a View to the 21st Century," delivered as the keynote address at the Fourth Soka University Pacific Basin Symposium, held at the University of Macau on August 22, 1994.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

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