

# The peaks and troughs of Macau's ivory trade

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## Abstract

Macau, now a small, special administrative region of China, has a long history in dealing in ivory. During the early centuries of Portuguese rule, ivory items—especially religious sculptures—were traded in Macau, and some of these items could have been carved there. The boom years for Macau's ivory industry were in the mid-1980s. Astute Chinese Hong Kong businessmen took advantage of a legal loophole. Macau's officials, unlike those in Hong Kong, did not implement CITES controls on raw ivory until 1986. So these businessmen set up ivory factories in Macau to exploit this loophole with the result that in 1985 almost 100 tonnes of tusks were imported legally into Macau to be processed into various items, especially beaded necklaces for the Hong Kong market. When Macau finally conformed to CITES regulations, the ivory industry declined significantly. By late 2004 there was not a single ivory factory left and only one full-time carver. In my survey carried out in late 2004 only 21 retail outlets displaying 1718 ivory items were recorded in Macau. The retail business was slow as the main tourists to Macau, who are mainland Chinese and Hong Kong people, are more interested in gambling than buying ivory. Thus Macau is now a minor player in the world's ivory commerce.

## Résumé

Macao, qui est aujourd'hui une petite région administrative spéciale de Chine, a un long passé de commerce d'ivoire. Au cours des premiers siècles passés sous la législation portugaise, les objets en ivoire, et spécialement les sculptures religieuses, étaient commercialisés à Macao, et il se pourrait que certains aient même été sculptés là. Les années glorieuses de l'industrie de l'ivoire à Macao se situent vers le milieu des années 1980. Des businessmen chinois de Hong-Kong ont en effet profité d'un vide juridique. Les officiels de Macao, contrairement à ceux de Hong-Kong, n'ont pratiqué aucun contrôle CITES de l'ivoire brut avant 1986. Donc, les businessmen ont installé des fabriques d'objets en ivoire à Macao pour exploiter cette possibilité avec comme résultat qu'en 1985, près de 100 tonnes d'ivoire ont été importées légalement à Macao pour y être transformées en objets divers, spécialement des colliers de perles destinés au marché de Hong-Kong. Lorsque Macao s'est finalement conformé aux réglementations de la CITES, l'industrie de l'ivoire a décliné de façon significative. Fin 2004, il ne restait aucune fabrique d'objets en ivoire, et il n'y avait plus qu'un seul sculpteur à temps plein. Dans l'étude que j'ai menée fin 2004 à Macao, je n'ai relevé que 21 points de vente de détail, qui proposaient 1718 objets en ivoire. Le commerce de détail était modeste dans la mesure où les principaux touristes qui visitent Macao sont des Chinois du continent et de Hong-Kong, qui sont plus intéressés par le jeu que par l'achat d'ivoire. Macao est donc devenu un acteur mineur dans le commerce mondial de l'ivoire.

## History of ivory carving in Macau to 1970

Macau was an insignificant fishing village on the south coast of China until 1557 when the Portuguese were permitted by the Chinese authorities to reside there permanently (Gunn 1996). The Portuguese needed a base on the Chinese coast from which to trade. Within only 20 years of settlement, the Portu-

guese and Chinese had built 1000 houses in Macau. The main commerce consisted of gold, musk, porcelain and silk imported from Canton (Guangzhou). These goods were then sent from Macau by ship to Japan. On the return journey, silver was brought back to Macau (Gunn 1996).

In the early 17th century Macau's ships went also to Manila, especially after the collapse of Japanese trade in 1639. During this time some ivory items,

particularly religious statues, may have been brought back to Macau to decorate churches, but such early pieces no longer exist. It is doubtful that any ivory carving was done in Macau at that time.

With the end of trade to Japan, Macau's fortunes declined. But in the mid-18th century, the economy strengthened with many foreigners in Macau trading with China. The earliest ivory statues found in Macau today were made in this century. These include five statues in St Dominic's church museum such as Our Lady of the Rosary and the Lady of Dores. These and nine other ivory religious statues in this church museum that date from the 19th or early 20th centuries are thought to have been made in Macau. Others in the church museum from the 19th and early 20th century are thought to have been crafted in Goa, Manila and Portugal.

The Museum of Macau has on display three 19th-century religious ivory statues and a crucifix reportedly carved in Macau. The bishop's house has two magnificent wooden female religious statues with the hands and faces delicately carved out of ivory. The silver on them would have come from Japan.

There is controversy, however, as to whether Macau's ivory statues were actually carved in Macau. The historian Manuel Texeira, who lived for many decades in Macau, thought that most, if not all, were carved in Manila (pers. comm. 1982). The former bishop of Macau, Domingos Lam, who renovated the bishop's house in 1992 and is knowledgeable about religious statues, stated that parts of some of the statues in St Dominic's church museum were carved in Macau, as was the case with some in the bishop's house (pers. comm. 2004). According to SKS Roy, a conservator and restorer at the Museum of Macau, a Portuguese professor called Fernando Antonio Baptista Pereira had identified Macau as the country of origin of the statues in St Dominic's church museum, based on the style of carving, and he had labelled them as such (pers. comm. 2004). The head of the Museology, Conservation and Restoration Section at the Museum of Macau, Grace Lei Lai Kio, thinks that the four sculptures in her museum—two of St Francis Xavier, one of St Francis Paul and a crucifix—were made in Macau (pers. comm. 2004).

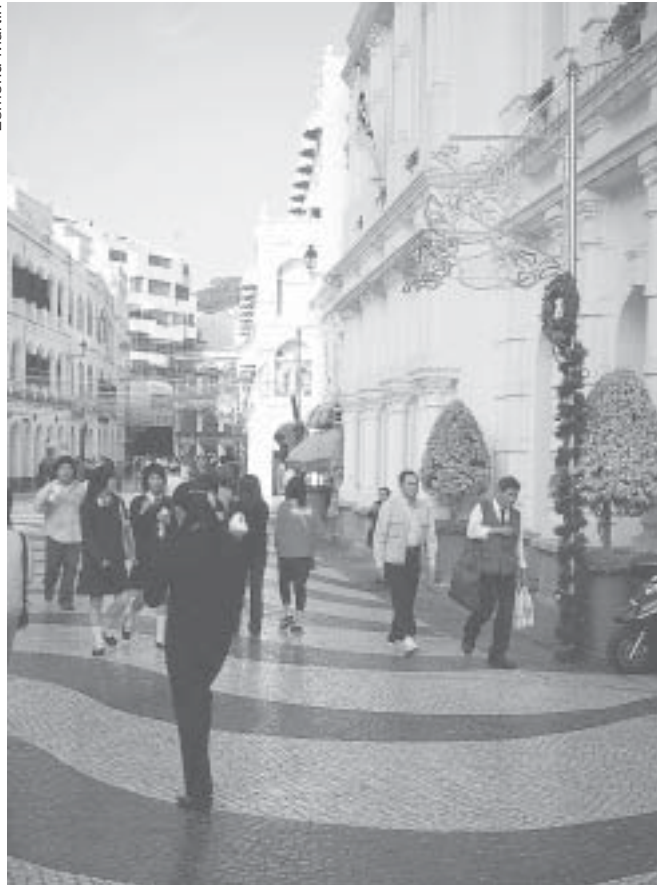
Whether or not ivory carvers were practising in Macau in the 18th and 19th centuries, and I believe they probably were, Macau's overall importance as a trading centre declined from the early 19th century, especially with the rise of Hong Kong from

the 1840s. By the turn of the 20th century, one writer described Macau as 'little more than an impoverished backwater' (Fallon 2004). Macau's economy was largely then based on opium and gambling monopolies and the production of fireworks.

During World War II Macau, which was officially neutral, was besieged by Chinese refugees from the mainland. At the end of the war, Macau's economy was strained, with most basic services in ruins and with the government having difficulties in making sure there was enough food for the greatly expanded population of almost 600,000 (Gunn 1996).

Beginning in the 1950s the economy of Macau changed. It became based on the manufacture of goods, with industrialists in Macau and from Hong Kong investing in electronics, imitation flowers, garments, plastics, textiles and toys.

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Macau maintains a unique Portuguese atmosphere that attracts large numbers of visitors, the main buyers of ivory.



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This religious statue in the bishop's house is over a metre tall with ivory hands and face, and silver imported from Japan.

## Macau's ivory industry, 1979 to 1990

Ivory items were made in Macau in the 20th century, but it is not known exactly when Macau's modern industry started. The owner of the Min Heng Ivory Factory in Macau, who started working there in 1970, claimed that his uncle had started the factory just before World War II. He believed it was the first modern ivory factory there (Ho Fook Shing, pers. comm. 1986).

When I first visited Macau in 1979, I went to the Min Heng Ivory Factory. The workers were all born in Macau, and some had been trained by Hong Kong craftsmen who came to Macau temporarily and solely for that purpose. In 1979 there were seven workers using electric drills to make a great variety of ivory objects, such as animal and human figurines, ban-

gles, chopsticks, jewellery and name seals. None received a salary but were paid for what they produced. The most successful earned 2000 patacas (USD 385) per month while trainees earned 800 patacas (USD 154) per month. In 1982 I returned to this factory and interviewed another employee, who gave me more details. There were five permanent workers at that time. One craftsman said he had been crafting ivory in Macau since 1952. Workers earned on average 1000 patacas (USD 162) per month and the tusks all came from Hong Kong. The artisans made the same types of objects as they had in 1979 for tourists in Macau, although some items such as name seals were also exported to Japan and Taiwan. The factory sold the leftover chips and powder from the ivory carving to local people to cure indigestion (it was mixed with boiling water and drunk by people who had eaten too much spicy food, especially in the hot season). Residents did not buy them for fertilizer, a practice in Japan, as they disliked the smell.

The ivory business prospered in Macau during the 1970s and early 1980s because ivory wholesale and retail prices were lower than in Hong Kong as labour and rents were cheaper. The carving was more often of lower quality, however, than in Hong Kong and mainland China.

In the early 1980s Hong Kong and other member states tightened controls on raw ivory trading to conform with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Although Portugal became a Party to CITES in 1981 and Macau was a Portuguese colony until 1999, the Portuguese government did not officially require Macau to implement CITES procedures until February 1986. Therefore, a small group of Hong Kong ivory traders made use of this loophole. They looked for places from where they could import tusks into Macau, such as non-CITES Parties or exporting countries with improper documentation, as it was now illegal to take these dubious tusks into Hong Kong. The tusks were processed in Macau into items such as jewellery, name seals and figurines. Then the ivory could be legally taken as worked ivory to Hong Kong. Macau was thus the perfect place as an entrepot for carving activities because it was close to Hong Kong (one of the largest ivory markets in the world), possessed skilled cheap labour, and most importantly, tusks were cheaper and could be imported without CITES documentation, unlike in Hong Kong. These cunning Hong Kong ivory traders thus took advan-

tage of Macau's laxity in conforming to CITES by not only importing tusks from dubious sources but by also setting up new ivory factories from about 1983 and expanding the existing ones (Woodrow 1988).

As a result, Macau became a huge importer of tusks in the mid-1980s. Imports of tusks rose from only 294 kg in 1981 to 23,200 kg in 1983, 42,103 kg in 1984, 97,275 kg in 1985 and 71,005 kg in 1986. Most big consignments came in from Dubai via Hong Kong (in transit) to Macau (Parker 1989). Of course, many of these tusks were from poached elephants, especially from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. Often they were shipped from Burundi via Dubai to Macau. Exports of worked ivory from Macau to Hong Kong rose considerably from 1981 to 1986. In 1981 the export value was only USD 95,035, but by 1985 it was USD 664,486. In 1986, the peak year, it rose to USD 1,830,813. Afterwards, with the implementation of CITES in Macau starting in 1986, the official export value declined. By 1988 the figure was down to USD 827,979 (Milliken and Melville 1989).

During this ivory boom, a new factory, Un Heng Ivory, was set up in early 1985 by a Hong Kong businessman, Chou Wing Hung. At the time of my visit in January 1986 there were five full-time carvers, all from Macau; the manager, Chun Chun Cheong, was

from Hong Kong. Several of the owner's relatives also worked part time on carvings in the factory. According to the manager, the owner established his factory in Macau because of cheaper tusks—HKD 400–550/kg compared with HKD 500–650/kg in Hong Kong—and cheaper labour—HKD 50/day compared with HKD 70/day in Hong Kong for ivory craftsmen. The exchange rate at the time was HKD 7.8 to USD 1. The factory used about 4 tonnes of ivory in 1985 with most being used for making beads for necklaces. All these necklaces went to Hong Kong; none were sold locally (Chun Chun Cheong, pers. comm. 1986). The manager admitted that about 10 ivory factories (Woodrow 1988), mostly small ones with perhaps 100 craftsmen, had opened in Macau by the mid-1980s (TH Poon, Tat Hing Ivory Wares Factory, Hong Kong, pers. comm. 1986).

Another new ivory factory, the Song Heng Cong Ngai, was opened in 1983 by the Poon family, well-known Hong Kong ivory traders. During my January 1986 visit, there were 13 artisans making mostly ivory beads for necklaces. In this factory, the artisans put small pieces of ivory into a vice and lowered an electric machine with a rotating head onto the vice to make the ivory pieces spherical. They then put the rough beads into a tumbler with ivory powder and water to



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Some of Macau's oldest ivory sculptures are exhibited in St Dominic's church museum.

improve the finish. Next they put wax on a cloth that was spun across the beads to make them shiny. If the beads were brownish, the artisans used hydrogen peroxide to bleach them. Most beads were made from 'white' or soft ivory (from the savanna elephant) because it was cheaper than 'yellow' or hard ivory (from the forest elephant). The craftsmen also made bracelets and earrings. All the items were exported to Hong Kong (Ching Cheong, supervisor, Song Heng Cong Ngai, pers. comm. 1986).

I returned to the Min Heng Ivory Factory in early 1986, my third visit to this factory, and business had picked up considerably since its earlier slump in 1982. There were now 7 full-time craftsmen, but when business was good the manager hired up to 20 more artisans. Salaries had gone up from 1982 to 1986 by 50%, and the artisans were earning around USD 256 a month, further illustrating that ivory carving was booming in the mid-1980s. They were paid a salary rather than paid per item as this allowed them to produce higher quality items rather than rush their work.

In January 1986 the largest factory in Macau was the Luen Fat Ivory Factory, which had been established in 1979 by another Hong Kong businessman. The factory started with 3 or 4 workers, but beginning in the middle of 1981 business greatly expanded, until by early 1986 there were 35 artisans. Men carved netsukes and Japanese-style figurines (90% of the output) while women smoothed and polished the items. They received a monthly salary; experienced carvers could get HKD 1800 (USD 225) a month. The owner preferred to buy 3-kg tusks (USD 45/kg) for making figurines, but he sometimes bought 7–8-kg tusks for bracelets and 12–13-kg tusks for chopsticks (Lo Sun Vo, supervisor, Luen Fat Ivory Factory, pers. comm. 1986).

The Van Heng Silverware and Ivory Company was set up in 1985 in Macau by a man from Hong Kong (where he also was involved in a business called the Yan Kee Ivory Company). This company imported tusks for carving and also imported ivory items for retail sale that had been made on the China mainland. The manager stated that they imported tusks into Macau from African countries that had no CITES permits, especially from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and also tusks that had CITES permits from Hong Kong. Tusks with no CITES permits were bought by the company for 10–15% less. The company sold these tusks wholesale for USD 40/kg for 1-kg tusks, USD 58/kg for 3–5-kg tusks, and USD 100/kg for 10–30-kg tusks. The manager admitted that

business was prospering in Macau now that Hong Kong could only import tusks with CITES permits. Carvers in Macau were producing many ivory items that Hong Kong businessmen came to Macau to buy.

Government authorities in Macau were fully aware of the activities of the Hong Kong ivory traders then working in Macau. But the CITES Secretariat was unaware of this expansion until it was fully operative. The Secretariat then was extremely concerned. In October 1985 the CITES Secretariat reported to the CITES Standing Committee 'increasingly large volumes of "illegal" trade in rhino horn, musk and ivory were being routed to Hong Kong via Macau' (Reeve 2002). By 19 December 1985 the Macau government reacted to the criticism and said they would only allow the import of tusks that had been sanctioned by CITES. On 10 January 1986 four large containers of ivory originally from Tanzania weighing 35,000 kg shipped from Singapore to Macau were refused entry into Macau (António Pinho, Director, Economic Services, Macau government, pers. comm. 1986).

Macau, however, still had not conformed fully with CITES, so the Secretariat decided to take action in January 1986. On 16 January the Secretariat urged Parties to 'prohibit or prevent trade with or through Macau and any specimens of species included in the CITES Appendices'. Soon afterwards the Secretariat sent a mission to Macau. The Macau government responded almost immediately by announcing that CITES was to come into force on 22 February. Therefore, three months later the CITES Secretariat rescinded its January request to the Parties to ban all trade in CITES-listed species to and from Macau (Anon. 1986, 1987; Reeve 2002).

In early 1986 the Macau government carried out its first registration of raw ivory in stock in Macau, but only for full tusks (Macau, Government 1986). Twenty-nine companies declared 2374 tusks weighing 22,034 kg. By far the largest quantity was registered under Tat and Company Ltd belonging to the wealthy Poon family: 933 tusks weighing 15,305 kg. The next largest was declared by Lung Fung Hong Company: 83 tusks weighing 386 kg (Arnaldo Correia, Department of Commerce, Macau government, pers. comm. 1987).

The implementation of CITES in Macau had drastic effects on the local ivory industry. Many workers lost their jobs, and factories went out of business. The Song Heng Cong Ngai factory, owned by the Poon family, closed down in April 1987 and moved to the



The Lisboa Hotel displays several magnificent ivory carvings in its public areas.

United Arab Emirates with many of its workers; other ivory craftsmen left Macau to work in Dubai. By December 1987 when I was again in Macau, some of the workers were returning as they could not cope with Dubai's heat or food. Finally in late 1989 the United Arab Emirates authorities closed down all the ivory factories (Martin 1992).

The Luen Fat Ivory Factory in Macau, however, was still in business in December 1987, but there were fewer craftsmen, earning HKD 2000 (USD 250) a month, and making mostly figurines that went to Hong Kong or were sold to tourists in Macau. The Un Heng Ivory Factory was also still in business. I saw seven workers, mostly women, semi-processing beads for necklaces that were sent elsewhere in Macau for finishing. They were also producing name seals and cigarette holders. The employees were complaining that business was not good.

Macau's Department of Commerce (pers. comm. 1987) did not know where these new ivory items were going nor who was buying them. They were supposed to provide export licences, but none had been issued. As not enough tourists came to Macau to buy all the ivory items produced there, they realized that many items were being smuggled, probably into Hong Kong and mainland China. The Hong Kong Department of

Agriculture and Fisheries, responsible for Hong Kong's ivory trade controls, agreed with this view (pers. comm. 1987).

On 20 November 1989, as a further step to improve controls on the ivory trade, the first detailed registration was implemented of both raw and worked ivory stocks in Macau. This was at a time when many countries had just brought in national laws prohibiting the import and export of ivory. Twenty-five companies registered a total of 17,734 kg of ivory—10 companies with 773 kg of full tusks, 17 companies with 13,484 kg of pieces, 12 companies with 1439 kg of semi-finished products and 22 companies with 2037 kg of worked items (Macau, Government 1989).

In January 1990 the CITES prohibition on commercial imports and exports of ivory came into effect for all CITES member states, including Macau. This international legislation finally ended Macau's brief importance in the world's ivory trade.

### Government controls on the ivory trade in Macau since 1990

After the CITES ban on international trade in ivory in 1990, no new ivory was allowed to be imported into nor exported from Macau in any form. Never-

theless, some traders smuggled in ivory. From 2002 to 2004 three consignments were confiscated. In March 2002 a man from Macau attempted to smuggle in 61 small pieces of ivory, weighing only 1 kg in total, overland from mainland China. He was arrested and fined 2000 patacas (USD 250). In July 2002 another person from Macau was arrested in a shop, having smuggled in 17 pieces of ivory from Hong Kong. He was fined 750 patacas (USD 94). In April 2003 2 people from mainland China were intercepted on a ship trying to smuggle into Macau 52 pieces of ivory weighing 175 kg. They were arrested and fined 5000 patacas (USD 625). Most wildlife product seizures are carried out by the Customs Department. The penalties for dealing in illegal wildlife commodities are fines from 500 to 5000 patacas (USD 63–625) (Lo Pui Kei, Acting Head of Division, Macau Economic Services, Foreign Trade Division, Government of the Macau Special Administrative Region, pers. comm. December 2004).

In most circumstances the personal possession and commercial sale of raw and worked ivory within Macau is legal on the basis that most of it predates the 1989 ban. There is little evidence of recent imported ivory. All shops need business licences from the government, but no special one is required for vendors selling ivory, nor for the ivory items themselves. The government has an inspection team to check shops, but it rarely examines antique or gift shops as these are not thought to be a problem. Instead the inspection team concentrates its efforts on the very large shops with textiles and foods (José Oliveria, head of Investigations Department, Macau Economic Services, pers. comm. December 2004).

## Macau's retail ivory trade in 2004

Towards the late 1990s, wealth grew further in Macau, with tourism steadily increasing along with a booming gambling industry (Macao Special Administrative Region 2004a). By 2003, 11,887,876 visitors came to Macau: 48% from mainland China, 39% from Hong Kong and 9% from Taiwan (Macao Special Administrative Region 2004b). Gambling and shopping were, and still are, the main attractions. Thus from 2000 to 2005 Macau's economy expanded phenomenally. The per capita income grew 10% in 2002 and 15.6% in 2003, one of the highest in the world. By 2003 the per capita income was almost USD 18,000, making Macau's 450,000 inhabitants some

of the richest in Asia. Had tourist and local demand for ivory items in Macau thus expanded?

In December 2004 I therefore again surveyed Macau's ivory industry and found that there were no ivory factories remaining and only one full-time ivory carver was still practising. This man, Heong Ka Wa, came to Macau in 1994. Born in Hubei Province in China in 1938, he learned his profession there and taught students how to carve very small ivory figurines; also he had taught calligraphy. He moved to Macau to join members of his family and continued this work. In 2004 he was buying very small pieces of ivory for USD 31/kg to carve his mini-figurines. He also sometimes bought 1-kg pieces for USD 250/kg to make into name seals and sculptures. During the last few years he has used just less than 1 kg of ivory per year. His workshop, where he also sells his items, is near the ruins of the 17th-century church of St Paul. In December 2004 he had on display 159 ivory items, the most numerous being pendants (55), name seals (52) and miniature figurines (34); he also displays his calligraphy work. His ivory miniatures are usually about 1 cm high and 0.8 cm wide and sell for USD 38 to people from Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore and Taiwan. He sells standard size name seals with carved hallmarks for USD 25 to USD 63 to customers from Japan, Macau, South Korea and Taiwan.

I then surveyed the whole of Macau, known as the Macau Special Administrative Region, for the ivory retail trade: the peninsula and the islands of Taipa and Coloane. I found 21 retail outlets displaying 1718 ivory items, a fraction of the 37,948 that I counted in Hong Kong in late 2004. There were 4 shops in hotels and 16 more in the main shopping area of the peninsula, 7 of which were on Rua de S. Paulo; one in a hotel on Coloane island and none on Taipa island. Of these 21 retail outlets, 11 were gift shops, 9 were antique shops and one was a combined workshop and gift shop (Mr Heong's). Most outlets were small compared with those in Hong Kong, displaying only a moderate number of ivory items: 82 on average compared with 422 in Hong Kong, surveyed also at this time.

All the shops were Chinese-run except for two Indian ones. One was an antique shop in a hotel that sold Indian works of art but also Indian ivory items made before 1990. There were 111 miniature paintings on thin pieces of ivory illustrating traditional Mogul Indian scenes (dancers, battles, parades and



Heong Ka Wa, the last full-time ivory carver in Macau, specializes in carving miniature ivory items.

gardens) and Renaissance-style paintings. There were also 46 typical Indian bangles and five sculptures, the largest being a 40-cm-tall elephant with three men in a howdah. One other shop owned by an Indian was also selling pre-1990 Indian ivory: 47 bangles and 8 necklaces, among other items.

There were at least 289 older objects (made before 1990) going back to three supposedly 18th century pieces: part of a religious statue, a traditional Chinese musical instrument and a card holder. Of these older items 38% were Indian paintings, 32% bangles, 14% figurines and 4% necklaces; 89% were made in India and 11% were made in Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China.

Of the new and old ivory items in Macau that I had time to identify by type, the most common were human and animal figurines (33%), bangles (16%), pendants (10%) and rings (10%) (table 1). Most of these (86%) were from Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China with the rest from India.

Prices of these ivory items varied hugely depending on the shop and on the quality, age and origin of the item. As these items were relatively few and widely variable it was not possible to produce a meaningful average price. For example, name seal prices ranged from USD 10 to USD 188 and 1-cm-thick ban-

Table 1. Types of ivory seen for retail sale in Macau in December 2004

Item	Percentage
Figurine	33
Bangle	16
Pendant	10
Ring	10
Painting	7
Name seal	7
Necklace	5
Earring	4
Miscellaneous	8
Total	100

gles from USD 10 to USD 100. The Indian paintings on ivory varied hugely depending on quality. A 20 x 10 cm miniature of the Virgin and Child was USD 25 as it was so poorly painted, while a 25 x 15 cm portrait of a woman wearing a sari inlaid with real pearls and red stones was USD 4200, both after 35% discounts. Figurines carved in the region mostly in the 1980s that were 2.5 cm high cost USD 23 while the Indian elephant with a howdah mentioned earlier was USD 49,800 after a 20% discount.

The main customers for these ivory items in Macau are Americans, Europeans, Japanese and Tai-



wanese. Chinese from the mainland rarely buy ivory items in Macau, but instead choose diamonds, gold and watches.

## Conclusion

Macau has had a long tradition in ivory, but this may be coming to an end, despite its booming economy. The flourishing period for ivory carving was in the mid-1980s when there were several large ivory factories producing thousands of items a year, mostly for the Hong Kong market. With the introduction of controls on the Macau ivory trade in the mid-1980s and the ban on international ivory trade in 1990, all the large factories had closed down by the early 1990s. In 2004 only one craftsman was active although there may have been one or two others working part-time.

There is no economic incentive to try to smuggle tusks into Macau for domestic use as the one active carver uses less than a kilo of ivory a year. Theoretically, Macau could become an entrepot for tusks moving to mainland China, but this is unlikely as the Chinese smuggle it in directly and prefer to avoid transit points where there are reasonable controls at the international boundaries, as is the case now with Macau.

Retail sales of ivory items in Macau are slow, partly because a greater variety of ivory objects for the tourist is available in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Only if Macau's gambling sector expands to attract many more Japanese, Taiwanese, South Koreans and Malaysians, who still like to buy ivory, might the ivory industry revive for retail sales of the 1700 or so remaining items on display. The locals are not presently interested in buying ivory, despite their increase in wealth.

Presently controls on internal sales on ivory items are minimal, but adequate, as there is only a small turnover in ivory; thus additional government paperwork is not required. But if demand were to pick up, another stock-taking of ivory would be helpful to deter newly made items from mainland China being imported illegally and sold to tourists in Macau. For now, however, Macau's ivory market is small and not a threat to elephants in Africa and Asia.

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