

Libraries in Macao

Macao was the earliest region that developed libraries in the Far East, dating the foundation of its first library, the Saint Paul School Library, from 1594. In 1727 was founded in Macao the second library, the Saint Joseph Seminary Library. In 1895, the Governor Horta e Costa appointed a committee formed by secondary schools teachers to prepare the rules of the National Library, which was the first public library, the Central Library of Macao. In 2005, we have more than 240 libraries in Macao, of which 47 are public, managed and administrated by the Central Library of the Cultural Institute, the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau and civic associations. If we take into consideration the population of Macao, estimated in 460 thousand persons, each library will have to assist averagely 9,787.2 inhabitants. On the other hand, in an area of 23 square meters, Macao has an average of two public libraries per square meter.

The souvenir sheet included in this stamp issue "Libraries in Macao" issued by the Macao Post is dedicated to a Chinese library with a remote history, a library called "**Public Library of Macao Chamber of Commerce**" or better known as the "Octagonal Kiosk". Installed for more than half century in Saint Francis Garden, this two floors kiosk was built in 1948. Its library follows the growth of the Macao population and has great historical and pedagogic value.

The other four stamps are dedicated to the following libraries managed by the Central Library of the Cultural Institute of Macao:

Central Library of Macao (Main library) – Located at Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida Avenue, has two floors with an area of about 2,000 square meters, which was reopened to the public in 1983. Being well equipped, has a documentation room, a children books room, an area for newspapers and periodicals reading, a books depository and an informatics network room.

Sir Robert Ho Tung Library – The building was built before 1894, having been purchased in 1918 by the Commendator Robert Ho Tung, a wealthy gentleman from Hong Kong, for the price of 16,000 dollars, to serve as a leisure and rest place during the summer sweltering season. In 1955, the building was donated to the Government of Macao, according to its owner's will. On 1st August 1958, the Sir Robert Ho Tung Library was officially opened to the public. With its peculiar villa style, the Sir Robert Ho Tung Library is surrounding by a garden, something never seen in Hong Kong and Macao. This library has three floors, being the second floor called "Depository of Sir Robert Ho Tung Books Pavilion" where are stored about five thousand classic books in Chinese, with special prominence to the classic and historical Chinese anthologies published in the year Jia Jing of the Ming Dynasty, sixteen collections of the Jia Ye Tang House of the distinguished collector of the modern epoch Liu Chenggan, and also the famous ancient work of Weng Fanggang titled "Draft of the Summary of Four Depository of Books Prepared by Weng Fanggang".

Coloane Library – Opened to the public in 1993, it is located in Coloane, at Cinco de Outubro Street. Its books are mostly children books and romances. With Portuguese style architecture, its building is neo-classic and has in its corridor six large columns with the carving decoration. Facing the beautiful landscape of Lapa Island, this library is appreciated by its pleasant environment that inspires in its users the fancy for reading.

Mong Ha Library – Founded in 1988, it is located in the Mong Ha District and has three floors. It has a children books room, a newspapers and periodicals reading room, a depository of books. The Mong Ha Library is the oldest public library of Macao.