

Centenary of the Birth of Henrique de Senna Fernandes

Henrique de Senna Fernandes (15 October 1923 – 4 October 2010) was a renowned writer and prominent lawyer from Macao. He was born in a prestigious Macanese family with Portuguese, Goanese, and Chinese ancestry that had a history of over two hundred years.

Henrique de Senna Fernandes studied law at the University of Coimbra in Portugal and returned to Macao to practise in 1954. He served as the president of the Lawyers Association and was also involved in educational and cultural affairs in Macao, holding positions such as teacher, school principal, library director, president of the Association for the Promotion of Macanese Education, member of the Legislative Assembly, member of the Education Committee, and member of the Cultural Committee, among others. Before Macao's return to the Motherland, he was invited to witness the signing ceremony of the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration in Beijing.

Henrique de Senna Fernandes was devoted to writing and achieved remarkable literary accomplishments. As early as his student days, he won the "Literary Award of the University of Coimbra" for his short story "A-Chan, the Tanka Girl". The Cultural Affairs Bureau has published many of his works, including: "Nam Van – Stories of Macao", "Love and Tiny Toes", "The Bewitching Braid", "Mong-Ha", "*Os Dores*" and "The Night Born in December", some of which have been adapted into films and received critical acclaims. He also wrote numerous articles, including a series of essays on Macao films that were compiled into the book "Cinema in Macao – From the Early 20th Century to the 1930s".

Henrique de Senna Fernandes was a master in using narrative to depict the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures in Macao. His works cover different racial groups and social classes, vividly and faithfully capturing the way of life in the past while shedding light on the interactions and traditions of the Chinese and Portuguese, as well as the traditional Macanese cuisine in the first half of the 20th century. His works were realistic yet romantic, simple and heartwarming, filled with profound humanistic sentiments, enriching the canon of Macao literature and regarded as classics.

Throughout his life, Henrique de Senna Fernandes received numerous honors and awards, including: Officer of the Order of Public Instruction (1978), Commander of the Order of Prince Henry the Navigator (1986), Grand Officer of the Order of Saint James of the Sword (1998), Medal of Cultural Merit (1989), Medal of Valor (1995), Citizen Emeritus of Macao (1999), Medal of Cultural Merit (2001), Portuguese Correspondence Member of the Sciences Academy of Lisbon (2003), and Honorary Doctorates (2006 and 2008).

Henrique de Senna Fernandes was an erudite and exceptional individual with a broad and compassionate humanistic spirit, and also a representative figure of local culture. He left behind a significant artistic legacy for Macao and served as an example for his commitment and contribution in fostering the development of Macao's culture.

Cultural Affairs Bureau
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