



Speech by Consul General Alexandre Giorgini at the Bastille Day reception in Macau

15 July 2019

Honourable Secretary for Transport and Public Works,
Dear Representative of the Office of the Commissioner of the People's Republic of China,
Dear friends of Sands China,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Chers compatriotes,

Let me first thank you, Honourable Secretary, Dear Raimundo Arrais do Rosário, for officiating at our traditional Bastille day, in spite of your heavy schedule. Your presence tonight is for us an honour and a great pleasure.

I wish also to express my warmest thanks to the Parisian Macau to welcome us this year. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for receiving us in this amazing hall under the best symbol of Paris, I mean the Eiffel Tower, which celebrates its 130th anniversary in 2019. This old woman is still in good health and send her blessings to her Macanese sister!

.....

Dear friends,

As Macau will be soon celebrating the 20th anniversary of the handover to China, I am proud to see that France is definitively one of its key partners. France is now Macau's 3rd biggest supplier of goods. French exports to Macau have increased by as much as 33% in 2018. Our country intends to be present in the luxury, wine and gastronomy sectors of course ; but also in a wider range of activities which are central to Macau's daily life, such as water supply, waste management, air transport or hospitality.

The French business community is particularly vibrant, thanks to the French Macau Chamber of commerce, which has rapidly grown into one of Macau's largest chambers, with currently more than 100 members.

I would also like to pay a special tribute to the Alliance Française which is a local organization chaired by Mrs Amber Li and supported by the French government. More than 700 Macanese students learn French there every year. Many thanks to the Alliance française for organizing this exquisite evening.

.....

Education and culture have the power to inspire and unite people.

Let's pay a tribute to what unites our people, that's to say culture. A couple of months ago, I had the pleasant surprise to discover in Macau some traces of an amazing romantic figure, Louis de Rienzi. This French traveller stayed in Macau from 1827 to 1829, and he left a beautiful poem in French honoring Luis de Camoes. And this poem can still be seen on a tablet in the Camoes grotto!

This year is the 230th anniversary of his birth, and believe me, he had a very adventurous life. After serving in the Napoleonic armies, Louis de Rienzi travelled to Asia and stayed more than two years in Macau. The poem he wrote for Camoes says: "*Le temps qui détruit tout agrandira sa gloire*" ("Time, that destroys everything, will however magnify its glory")! As he returned to France, he boarded a Portuguese vessel which wrecked on the Indonesian coast. He made his way back to Paris where he published a couple of geographical books about China and Oceania.

The poetry lover then decided to end his life tragically, as he committed suicide by shooting himself in 1843... and as a poet, he chose the grandiose gardens of the Versailles Palace for that! This is quite a romantic way to end his life, that I should not of course recommend!

Dear friends,

I know you are waiting me to talk about Napoleon! 2019 marks the 250th anniversary of his birth. Today, we have a unique opportunity, thanks to one of our most inspired art collectors, Pierre-Jean Chalençon, and to the Kraemer Gallery whom I warmly thank: the opportunity to have, as special guests, exceptional pieces that belonged to Napoleon. In this display, is exhibited one

of Napoleon's "bicorne" (his iconic hats). This is the one he wore during the battle of Essling in 1809 against the Austrians. For sure this hat witnessed some challenging moments! After having seen it, please do not say anymore that you are facing difficulties in life. Just fight. Also exhibited here are Napoleon's medal and sash of the Legion of Honor, the national order he created to reward outstanding merits.

I hope that these objects will inspire you to visit some new places in France: Napoleon's residences near Paris, the castles of Fontainebleau or Malmaison. And why not, two magic French islands: Corsica, where Napoleon was born, and the Martinique, in the Caribbean Sea, the birthplace of the empress Josephine.

.....

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

I hope that you will enjoy this evening's reception. As Napoleon said: *"Champagne! In defeat, one needs it! In victory, one deserves it!"*

Let me now propose a toast and celebrate together: Vive la France! To the people of the People's Republic of China and the Macau Special Administrative Region! Long life to our friendship!