

# 对话孔子 互鉴文明

## Dialogue with Confucius: Mutual Learning Among Civilizations

### CULTURAL FESTIVAL PAYS TRIBUTE TO INFLUENCE OF CONFUCIUS

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The 2024 China International Confucius Cultural Festival is kicking off on Friday in Qufu, a county-level city in Jinan, East China's Shandong province.

The city is also the birthplace of Confucius, who was born some 2,575 years ago. The festival, which will run until Oct 7, aims to better explore and showcase the contemporary value of Confucian culture and strengthen the international dissemination of Chinese culture.

With the theme of "Dialogue with Confucius, Mutual Learning Among Civilizations", this year's event is mainly hosted by the Shandong provincial government, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Commission of China for UNESCO.

Over 370 guests from 36 foreign countries as well as China's Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan have been invited to attend the opening and closing ceremonies and other main activities of the cultural festival.

In addition to the opening ceremony and the 19th UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literature award ceremony held on the Friday evening, key events of this year's festival include a memorial honoring Confucius.

The memorial ceremony will be held on Saturday morning in Qufu via live activities and online streaming, in a bid to broaden participation and enhance the global influence of the event.

People from more than 60 Confucian temples, academies and institutions from both home and abroad, as well as some mainstream media outlets, are paying tribute to Confucius online, promoting traditional Chinese culture and showcasing the influence of Confucian culture worldwide.

#### Key platform

Over the past few years, the global online memorial has become an important opportunity and platform for people to learn about



From left: An annual celebration of Confucius' birthday, which falls on Sept 28, is held in Qufu, Shandong province. Young people from overseas at a traditional Chinese culture event in Qufu show off bamboo scrolls. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Confucius and traditional Chinese culture, organizers said.

It has become a symbol of uniting Chinese communities, telling the Chinese story, and promoting exchanges and mutual learning among world civilizations, they noted.

As the ceremony begins, attendees will enter the Yangsheng Gate to attend the temple-opening rituals. The Yangsheng Gate was the main southern gate of Qufu in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), which now faces the Confucius Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

They then will move to the temple's Dacheng Hall where the main attendees will present flower baskets to the statue of Confucius online, promoting traditional Chinese culture and showcasing the influence of Confucian culture worldwide.

The tradition of the Confucius memorial ceremony dates back to 478 BC. It was initially held once a year in autumn and changed to

twice in spring and autumn since the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220).

The grand ceremony incorporates music and dance to express Confucian thought and culture, illustrating the significance of "ritual" in Confucian teachings. It has evolved into an opportunity for Chinese people to get together to honor their ancestors, perform time-honored traditions and uphold the virtues of their rich cultural heritage.

To promote traditional culture overseas, this year's festival is to host the "Together with Friends" international event series for the dissemination of Chinese culture for the first time. For example, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism will support Shandong in collaboration with overseas Chinese cultural centers and tourism offices to carry out a series of related activities that may last for months.

The organizers also plan to publicize Chinese culture and tourism in countries such as Germany, Serbia and Singapore, cooperating with overseas social media platforms to further

expand the influence of Chinese culture. Additionally, internationally influential media platforms are organized to conduct a worldwide collection of photos and short videos themed "Confucius in My Eyes", designed to mainly appeal to teenagers from around the world.

Nowadays, teenagers are a crucial group in promoting cross-cultural exchanges. The festival has also emerged as a significant platform for teenagers to study Confucian philosophy and experience Confucian culture.

By attending relevant activities during the festival, global teenagers can learn and inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture, further fostering exchanges and mutual learning among young students from China and abroad, local officials said.

To support the festival, various cities and counties across Shandong have planned more than 100 cultural and tourism activities from Sept 15 to Oct 7. They include a Confucian Culture Week designed for Chinese and foreign

students, theatrical performances and cultural competitions.

The Confucius cultural festival can trace its origins back to a special tourism activity called "Visit to the Birthplace of Confucius" inaugurated in 1984. The activity was upgraded to an international event in 1989 and approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council in 2014 to be one of the two long-standing traditional festivals in Shandong.

After 40 years of development and innovation, the festival has had a wide-ranging impact at home and abroad. It was selected by the China National Tourism Administration as a demonstration event for Chinese tourism celebrations and recognized by the International Festival and Events Association as one of the top 10 festivals in China with international influence.

Moreover, the festival has made significant contributions in the fields of culture and education. In 2006, for example, the event hosted

the first UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literature awards ceremony.

This award is aimed at recognizing outstanding contributions in the field of continuing education by government organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals worldwide. It was the first time that the United Nations named an international award after a Chinese figure, enriching the international connotations of the Confucius cultural festival and making it a highly influential international event.

#### Introduction of Confucius

Confucius, known as Kong Fuzi or Kong Zi in Chinese, was a renowned Chinese philosopher, teacher and political figure who lived from 551 to 479 BC during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC). He was an educator and philosopher who founded Confucianism, a school of thought that influenced later generations. He was also the first Chinese person to set up private schools and enroll students from all walks of life.

Confucian philosophy emphasizes personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice, kindness and sincerity. His teachings, collected in *The Analects*, stress the importance of family, respect for elders and reverence for the past.

He believed that a harmonious society could be achieved through the cultivation of virtue and adherence to ethical principles.

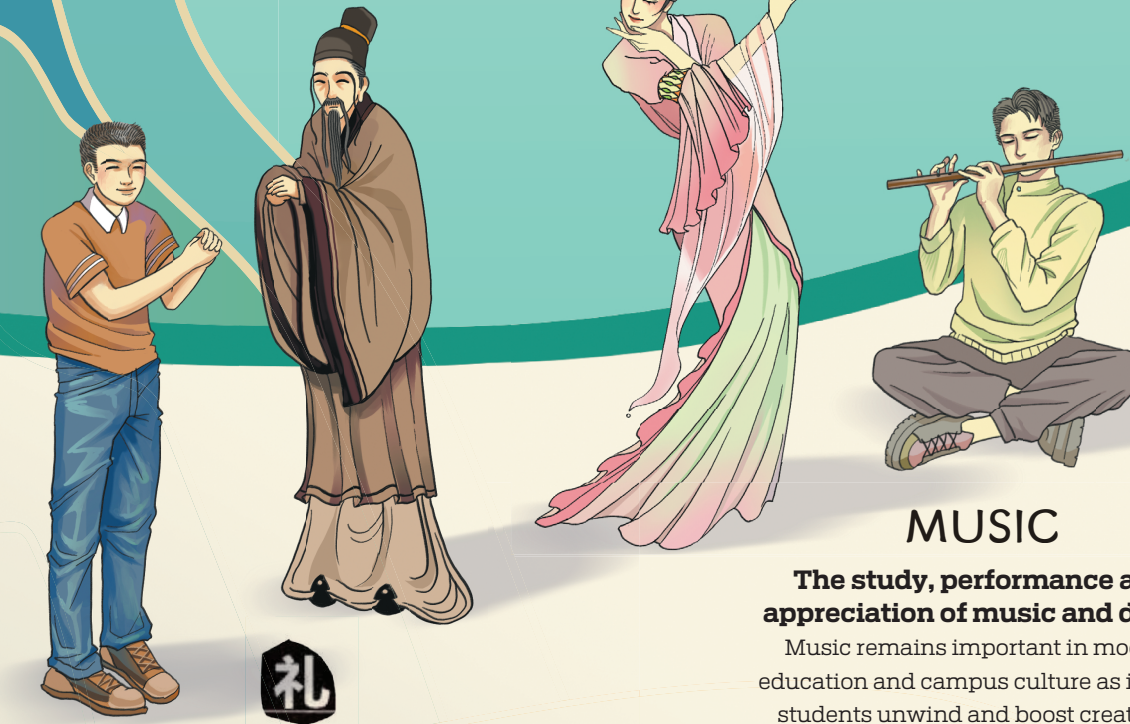
Confucius held various government positions and sought to implement his ideas through political reform. But he spent much of his life traveling from state to state, offering advice to rulers and teaching his disciples.

Although he faced many challenges and his ideas were not widely accepted during his lifetime, his influence grew significantly after his death. For thousands of years, Confucius has been regarded as a symbol of China's traditional culture, as well as the country's intellectuals. His legacy endures through the continued study and practice of Confucian principles in modern times.

#### 礼 RITES

**Ceremonies, manners and social norms**

While there is no compulsory course on *li*, or rites, nowadays, etiquette and courtesy are still crucial for personal development and a harmonious environment.



#### 乐 MUSIC

**The study, performance and appreciation of music and dance**

Music remains important in modern education and campus culture as it helps students unwind and boost creativity.



#### 射 ARCHERY

**The skill and practice of archery**

Archery has transformed from a traditional skill to a popular sports activity, which can not only improve students' physical fitness but strengthen their willpower.



#### 御 CHARIOT DRIVING

**The skill of driving a chariot**

Yu, or chariot driving, is the skill of operating vehicles today.



三人行，必有我师焉。  
among any three people  
there must be one who can be my teacher

吾尝终日而思矣，不如须臾之所学也。  
It is not delightful to have friends coming from afar?

己所不欲，勿施于人。  
Don't do unto others what you don't want done unto you.

学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆。  
He who learns but does not think is lost.

知者不惑，仁者不忧，勇者不惧。  
He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.

学而不厌，诲人不倦。  
To study and never feel sated; to teach others tirelessly.

四民各业，内修外治。  
within the four seats, all men are brothers.

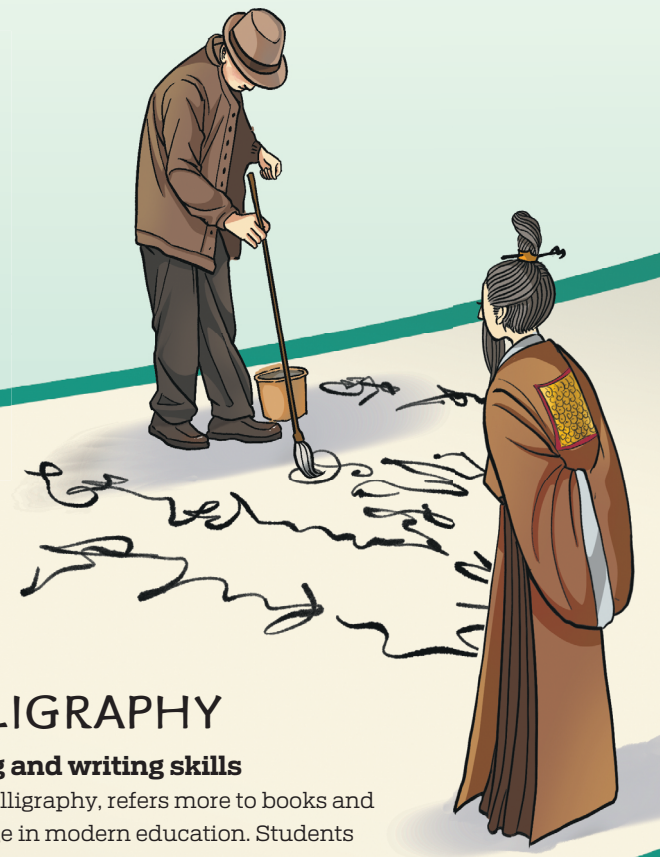
礼之用，和为贵。  
礼，礼之用，和为贵。

#### 书

#### CALLIGRAPHY

**Reading and writing skills**

*Shu*, or calligraphy, refers more to books and knowledge in modern education. Students are encouraged to read more books to train their mind and broaden their perspectives.



#### 数

#### MATHEMATICS

**Arithmetic skills**

As a basic science, mathematics is conducive to students' logical thinking and problem-solving ability. It's also considered the foundation of scientific and technological advances in contemporary society.



### LANDMARK INSTITUTIONS AND EVENTS IN QUFU KEEP CONFUCIUS' TEACHINGS ALIVE



From left: A cloisonné incense burner from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), a bronze vessel (a type of food vessel used in sacrificial ceremonies) from the Zhou Dynasty (c.11th century-256 BC), a gold and silver gibbon-shaped bell buckle from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), and a horse sculpted from yellow jade from the Warring States Period are among relics held by the Confucius Museum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

digital technologies and art forms, showcasing the essence of Confucianism and the aesthetic of traditional culture.

"The exhibition is quite different from those I've seen in museums before. There are no artifacts or guides, but it's visually stunning and captivating," said 12-year-old tourist Wang Zhiling from Hebei province.

The museum also organizes some 500 social and educational activities every year. These include art classes during traditional festivals, Confucius-themed workshops in local communities as well as educational exhibitions held around the country.

"We hope to pique children's interest in Confucius in this way and better pass down our traditional culture to future generations," Yang said.

The museum is not the only scenic spot in Qufu focused on rejuvenating and promoting Confucian culture, especially to teenagers.

Local cultural authorities said they have been committed to exploring the connotations of Confucianism and using innovative methods to assist its spread in modern times.

Today, visitors to the city go beyond simply visiting Confucian heritage. They can watch spectacular performances and shows themed around Confucianism, and take part in multiple traditional cultural activities including calligraphy, paper-cutting and seal-carving.

Additionally, workshops on Confucian teachings are held in local schools and communities regularly to cultivate children's morality and incorporate traditional culture into residents' daily lives.

Confucianism, which emphasizes tolerance,

integrity, coordination and harmony, is applicable in any era and provides valuable insights into challenges facing the world, Confucius experts said.

The city also engages in international exchanges and communication among different cultures and civilizations in order to promote Confucianism around the world.

Every year, two grand events — the International Confucius Cultural Festival and the Nishan Forum on World Civilizations are held in Qufu, attracting officials, scholars and descendants of Confucius from home and abroad.

"These international events have become vital platforms for the world to better understand China and foster dialogues among different civilizations," said Liu Xiaobing, vice-president of the Confucius Research Institute of China.

Founded in Qufu in 1996, the institute has established a research base for learning and exchanges

between Chinese and other civilizations, as well as a center for Confucianism research and communication overseas and its branch in South Korea.

It is also home to an experience base developed by the Confucius Institute Headquarters in 2014, which aims to spread Confucianism and traditional culture among young students worldwide.

Spanning about 18,000 square meters, the base consists of two experience areas and houses more than 20,000 copies of Confucian classics.

Visitors can learn about Confucius' life story and thoughts as well as the global influence of Confucianism through an array of exhibitions, while they are offered diverse cultural activities including Chinese tea ceremony and pottery-making, Liu said.

So far, the experience base has received some 15,000 visits from the Confucius Institutes of countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.