

## Charming Shandong, Hometown of Confucius

# Cultural wealth to boost Shandong's economy

By ZHAO RUIXUE

How to transfer time-honored cultural wealth into economic benefits is now a serious concern of the authorities in Shandong, the hometown of Confucius.

Last year, the province saw its cultural industry – a sector that the locals refer to as including publications, media, animation and even tourism – constitute about 20 percent of year-on-year growth and earning 85.79 billion yuan in revenue.

"Shandong's rich culture lays a solid base for the development of the province's cultural industry," said Li Qun, head of the provincial publicity department, adding that a number of

local enterprises are now making efforts to build their own brands relating to local cultural characteristics.

"Seeing the province's richness in cultural resources, the authorities in Shandong are also intensifying its efforts to support the brand-building initiative," Li added.

According to statistics from the provincial government, a total of 45 billion yuan has been invested in the cultural sector during the first half of this year.

With regard to its cultural assets, Li said Shandong, as one of the important birthplaces of the Chinese civilization, features Confucius Culture and links to the Red Culture of the Communist Party.

In addition, the China (Qufu)

International Confucius Cultural Festival, which has been ranked as one of the world's top 10 most influential festivals by the International Festivals & Events Association, brings both culture and an annual revenue of over 2 billion yuan for the tourism sector.

Another place with cultural significance is Taishan Mountain, one of "Five Sacred Mountains" in China and a World Cultural and Natural Heritage site.

Since this October, the Grand Worship of Heaven and Earth in Taishan will open to the public. Also called "fengshan" in Chinese, this is an outdoor performance that commemorates the historic ceremony held by ancient emperors.

The area's recent initiative

is to hold the Taishan International Climbing Festival every year, which aims to further promote its recognition in the world.

In Jinan, the provincial capital, the Cultural Industry Exposition, which has been held for the past two years, has witnessed the signing of more than 1,500 projects related to cultural industry.

In addition to the festivals and events, the province has also seen the rise of some famous brands in the media and publication fields.

For example, Dazhong News Group is now the leading newspaper company in Shandong. Last year the group's total assets reached 3 billion yuan and its business revenues hit 1.8 billion yuan.

The Qilu Evening News, a subsidiary of the group, has been listed among the top 10 evening newspapers in China over the past four years.

The paper's brand value is now evaluated at more than 1.4 billion yuan.

Shandong Publishing Group is another successful example in brand building. Its assets totaled 8.43 billion yuan and sales revenue was 6.73 billion yuan last year.

Brands of private companies in Shandong have also come to the forefront. Leading this league is the King and Key Education Group based in Zibo. This book distributing company reported 1.2 billion yuan in sales revenue last year, making it the number one among private book dis-



Tens of thousands of people from across the globe come to Qufu every year for the Confucius Cultural Festival, helping make it one of the top 10 gatherings of its kind in the world.

tributors in China. With respect to the animation industry, three animation industry bases featuring digital

animation games and software development have been established in Qingdao, Yantai and Jinan.



A ritual combining song and dance is the regular performance at the event.

## Festival to commemorate the greatest thinker of China

By WANG QIAN

To commemorate the greatest thinker and educator of China, the 2009 China (Qufu) International Confucius Cultural Festival will be held from September 27 to 30 in Qufu, a city in southwest Shandong province, also known as Confucius' hometown.

The annual festival is a large international celebration integrating academic exchanges, culture, tourism, economy, science and commerce.

It has been held around Confucius's birthday – September 28 – since 1984.

The primary purpose of the festival is commemorating Confucius's great contributions to Chinese culture. It also aims to strengthen international cultural exchanges and promote cultural heritage and national identity.

This year's festival will be composed of five major activities: a memorial ceremony, the release of the 8th update of the Confucius Genealogy, and the award ceremonies for the Confucius Prize for Literacy, Culture and Tourism.

The Confucius Prize for Literacy is noted as the first international prize approved by the UNESCO which was named after a Chinese.

The Confucius Prize for Culture and the Confucius Prize for Tourism are dedicated to recognizing the contributions of outstanding individuals, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations in the two fields.

The festival will also see the release of the update of Confucius genealogy, which is the world's most extensive family tree to date. The compilation of the new genealogy has taken place for more than a decade at a cost of over 10 million yuan. Viewed as the link for the descendants of Confucius, this genealogy is expected to draw his descendants from all around the world to Qufu.

Besides these major activities, a series of related events are scheduled to make the festival even more engaging. Among them are the international academic seminar for the 2,560th anniversary of Confucius's birth, an online activity called "The Dialogue

Between the Contemporary Times and Confucius," a CCTV special program for the festival, the 2009 Summit Forum on Businesspeople with Confucian Traditions, as well as the First Forum on Confucianism Influence on Honest and Clean Governments.

The online activity of "The Dialogue Between the Contemporary Times and Confucius," begun in July will last to October. To date, more than 3 million people have participated in this activity. In addition, a large-scale singing and dancing drama – "Confucius" – will debut during the festival and is expected to become a regular event performed year-round.

Since the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), the thought of Confucius has extensively influenced China and other neighboring countries. Over the past 2000 centuries, people have held all kinds of activities to commemorate this sage.

This year's event is co-sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, the National Tourism Administration and the provincial government of Shandong.

## Confucius, the sage of sages

By DAI YAN

Confucius, whose actual name was Kong Qiu and courtesy name was Zhongni, lived between 551 and 479 BC during the late years of China's Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC).

He was born in the city of Qufu, which was located in the ancient Chinese state of Lu. A great thinker, educator and statesman as well as one of the most learned people of his time, Confucius was also the founder of a school of moral doctrine that encourages "justice" and "peace," known today as Confucianism.

Confucianism has a decisive influence on the traditional Chinese culture. Later generations honored Confucius as "the sage of sages" and "the teacher



Confucius

of all ages."

Confucianism is not only the core of traditional Chinese culture, but has also deeply influenced the world's cultural history, and many intellectuals and philosophers from around world have studied it.

Since the 17th century, countries and regions around China, such as Japan, Korea,

Vietnam, successively built Confucius Temples to worship the great sage. Since the 18th century, with the immigration of Chinese people to countries in Europe, the Americas, as well as Asia, started to build Confucius Temples. There used to be 3,000 such temples around the world, with 1,300 still well preserved. Many of the temples, especially those in the Southeast Asia regions, continue to hold ceremonies to worship Confucius on his birthday.

Confucian tenets have now become the important sign of the East Asian culture and the significant heritage of the whole world.

At present, more than 200 Confucius Colleges have been established in more than 50 countries and regions in the world.

For more than 20 centuries, memorial ceremonies have been held in the Qufu's Confucius Temple. The grand ceremony was known as "The Ceremony of the State" in ancient times. Today, it is the most influential ceremony during the International Confucius Culture Festivals.

During this year's festival, a special highlight will be given to the descendants of Confucius, a group of people surnamed Kong, because of the release of a new edition of the Confucius Genealogy.

According to Guinness Book of World Records, the Confucius Genealogy is regarded as the world's longest family tree, recording more than 70 branches and two million names of the sage's descendants. The Confucius' family tree boasts 83 generations.

## Confucius Cultural Festival Schedule

- Opening Ceremony of 2009 China (Qufu) International Confucius Cultural Festival and award ceremonies of "The Confucius Prize for Literacy," "The Confucius Prize for Culture" and "The Confucius Prize for Tourism"
- Time: September 27
- Venue: Qufu Apricot Altar Theater
- Debut performance of "Confucius", an impressive singing and dancing drama

- Time: September 27
- Venue: Qufu Apricot Altar Theater
- The Second World Confucian Studies Conference
- Time: September 27-29
- Venue: The Research Institution of Confucianism
- The issuing ceremony of the eighth update of Confucius' Genealogy
- Time: September 24
- Venue: Qufu Temple of Confucius

- 2009 Memorial Ceremony for Confucius
- Time: September 28
- Venue: Hall of Great Perfection in the Temple of Confucius
- Conference for commemorating the 2,560th anniversary of Confucius' birth
- Time: September 22-28
- 2009 Businesspeople Conference
- Time: September 26-28
- Venue: Jining



Opening ceremony of the 2008 China (Qufu) International Confucius Cultural Festival.