

Promoted by birthplace, philosophy of Confucius enjoying modern revival

Rich cultural canvas to create rewards in Shandong

WEIFANG KITES

Weifang in Shandong province has been considered to be the birthplace of kite for a long time. More than 1,000 years ago, people in Weifang started to fly kites, which are made with bamboo frames and covered by paper and silk. And during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing dynasties (1644-1911), the city was a center of kite manufacture. Nowadays, kite flying has become a traditional custom among its residents. They go outside to fly kites, especially during the spring. The making of kites today has been regarded as a cultural heritage and its inheritors are making efforts to pass down the craft to kids.



With such a long history, vibrant cultures have evolved over time, some of them iconic the world over. The philosopher and educator Confucius, who brought the world Confucianism, was born in Qufu, Shandong province.

Other famous names from Shandong read like a who's who of China's culture and include military strategists Zhuge Liang and Sun Wu, ideologists Mencius and Mo-tse, calligrapher Wang Xizhi, inventor La Ban, doctor Bian Qie and poets Xin Qiji and Li Qingzha.

As history expands and culture diversifies an inevitable result is a rich expression in art and crafts. Langshan martial arts, mantis boxing and Qufu, often thought of as the original source, are all characteristic of Shandong.

There are more than 30 local operas, including Luizi Opera, Lazei Opera and Luizi Opera. Shandong also has three main kinds of zongzi, a popular rural folk dance, which are Guizhang, Jiaozhou Jiaozhou and Haiyang Jiaozhou.

To boost its cultural industries, the Shandong province government has implemented a series of initiatives and enacted policies in recent years. The first Shandong Cultural Consumption Season, an event held to promote local cultural industries, was held in 2017 in 17 cities, lasting for 100 days. Some 135 million people took part and more than 400 million yuan (\$58.8 million) was spent.

The second cultural consumption season was recently under way, on July 20, and this year is focusing on creating a long-term strategy for increasing revenue in cultural industries.

"With such a huge cultural consumption potential, Shandong is taking full advantage of the cultural consumption season to improve its cultural supply, integrate cultural resources and innovate cultural consumption channels, forging cultural consumption into a new economic driver," said Wang Lei, head of the Shandong Provincial Department of Culture. During the cultural consumption season, each city of the province carries out diverse cultural activities including dramatic performances, cartoon and comics shows, film festivals, photographic exhibitions and traditional opera, aimed at stimulating cultural consumption. According to the Shandong government, the added value of the cultural creativity industry is poised to hit 500 billion yuan by 2022, accounting for 10 percent of GDP in the province.



Confucius enjoying modern revival

By ZHANG DANDAN

Officials in Shandong province, where Confucianism got its start, are using innovative methods to apply the ancient philosophy to the present day, and spread appreciation of its benefits worldwide.

The traditional culture needs innovation — both in terms of content and the way that content is expressed — to conform to the times and meet the aesthetic habits of young people, said Wang Lei, head of the Shandong Provincial Department of Culture.

Wang added that the wisdom of Confucius, dating back more than 2,500 years, is still applicable to the healthy development of modern society.

The effort to spread Confucianism in the 21st century is being led by Nishan Academy, which is taking the lead in China to integrate the modern public library with the traditional academy, thereby propagating Confucian classics.

The local government is establishing the Nishan Academies in most of the public libraries above the county level, offering classes on ancient Chinese civilization and traditional Chinese culture every weekend. The classes are open to the public free of charge.

"Nishan Academy is not a traditional academy any more. Located in modern libraries, the academies allow more residents to have access to the treasure of ancient literature, books and records, granting the traditional culture vitality and lasting impact," said Li Xining, associate librarian of Shandong Library and secretary-general of Nishan Academy.

As of now, Nishan Academy has held more than 4,000 open classes on The Analects of Confucius, Confucianism, Chinese zither, folk music and archery. More than 100,000 people have attended the classes.

Nishan Academy isn't the only organization facilitating the propagation of Confucianism. In a program known as the "Rural (Community) Confucian" classroom, the government has appointed more than 500 qualified Confucian teachers to give courses on Confucianism in communities and rural areas across the province.

Covering Confucian classics, filial piety and morality, legal institution and moral practices, the courses are poised to share the time-honored culture in communities across Shandong.

And Shandong officials aren't just targeting their own province. To promote Confucianism worldwide, provincial officials are working with the Nishan Forum on World Civilizations, World Confucian Conference and Nishan Book House, according to Wei Shanchang, head of the foreign liaison division of the Shandong Provincial Department of Culture.

In 2017, Terzija was elected as a member of the Thousand Talents Plan. He added that "accepting the duty" to meet the expectations of the Chinese government was motivating them to work harder and utilize the maximum potential in resources, both from Manchester and China.

Zhang Jigang, executive vice-president of the Shandong People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, said the province had established enduring relations with countries around the world through sharing knowledge and experience in the wake of the continued opening up.

Yellow River ESTUARY

The Yellow River, China's second-longest river originates from Qinghai province, flows through the country and empties into the Bohai Sea near the city of Dongying in Shandong province. When flowing through the Loess Plateau, it carries a great deal of silt, which gives the river the muddy color and thick texture. When it merges into the sea, an obvious line appears at the confluence of the Yellow River and the Bohai Sea. The mud and sand carried by the river constitutes a part of the Yellow River Delta and the land of the delta is still expanding.

Shandong province is becoming a powerful draw for foreign nationals and international companies, officials and businessmen say, because of its favorable recruitment policies and dynamic business environment.

In April, the Shandong government published updated recruitment policies, adding various important aspects including a mechanism for attracting top-level people and methods for developing leading personnel.

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CONFUCIUS

Confucius (551-479 BC), whose clan name is Kong Qiu, was a philosopher of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC) in Chinese history. It is recorded that Confucius was born in the district of Zou, near today's Qufu city in Shandong province.

He was an educator and philosopher who founded Confucianism, a school of thought that deeply influenced later generations. He was also the first Chinese person to set up private schools and enroll students from all walks of life.

His theory, Confucianism, focuses on the morality within personal life and governmental regulation, stressing well-organized social relationships and family systems as well as personal dignity such as justice, benevolence and sincerity.

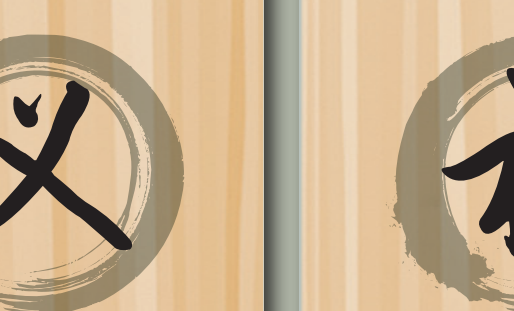
For thousands of years, Confucius has been regarded as a symbol of China's traditional culture, as well as the country's intellectuals. Nowadays, Qufu holds memorial events every year to honor the great philosopher and popularize his theory to the younger generations.



Benevolence



Loyalty



Manner



Wisdom



Honesty

Top draw for global expertise

By LIANG KAIYAN
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electrical and electronic engineering at the University of Manchester who has been a visiting professor at Shandong University since 2012, and who was elected as member of the "Thousand Scholar Plan" in 2014 — said a comprehensive recruitment policy was initiated in 2004 in Shandong.

Andrzej Bednarski, the international project director of the Shandong Sun Paper Industry Stock Co., has been working in the province ever since arriving from the United States in 2011. He was elected as a friendly envoy for Shandong province in 2016.

"I'm the only foreign worker in a company with 10,000 employees and this makes my work life very interesting," Bednarski said. "I am considered a foreign expert, so I receive a lower tax rate."

Last year, Shandong's government issued a policy to attract more foreign innovators — including incentives such as subsidies for companies up to a maximum of 5 million yuan (\$742,000) — aiming to promote the province's social and economic development.

There have been many major changes over a short time in Shandong, Bednarski said.

"The local business environment is very dynamic and fast-changing; each year brings new surprises and challenges," he said.

Shandong's paper industry now boasts many modern factories whose practical expertise can be used abroad where facilities can be older, Bednarski said.

Festo, a German technology provider, decided to set up its largest overseas production center in Jinan, Shandong province.

"We invite more foreigners to come and develop themselves in Shandong," Zhang said.

To date, some 84 foreigners have been recognized as honorary citizens of the province and 142 have been appointed what is called "friendly envoys" of Shandong.

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"Setting up the global production base in Jinan is the result of the group's investment strategy," said Yin Liyun, director of the project.

The center in Jinan is the main hub for Festo's push to develop its global market, especially for increasing market share in China, Yin said.

In 2016, the Shandong government signed an agreement with Festo, approving a total of 43.33 hectares of land to be used for the company's production center in the Jinan Innovation Zone.

To date, Festo has acquired 10 hectares of land and it will complete building of the first phase which will start operations at the end of November this year.

The company is negotiating with the government to buy another 33.33 hectares of land and is expected to complete construction on it by 2020.

"Compared with the past, the roles of government and companies have now become more equal and we are more like partners," Yin said.

In February, the Shandong government released a policy to accelerate the shift from old power generation to new energy, aimed at promoting economic development.

The policy is like a spring wind for the smart industry, Yin said.

"As a manufacturer of automation products, we are the immediate beneficiaries," he said.

"We have confidence in the support of local government and in its development plans."

"During national holidays in the first half of 2018 such as the New Year's Day, Spring Festival, Tomb-Sweeping Day, International Workers' Day and the Dragon Boat Festival, Shandong became a hot destination for tourists, attracting a total of 120 million visitors, an increase of 13.6 percent year-on-year.

To boost local tourism, the province is pouring in plenty of investment. In the first half of this year, more than 1,100 tourism projects were put on schedule in the province, with a total investment value of 115.3 billion yuan, an increase of 9.8 percent year-on-year.

Blessed with a wealthy history, the coastal province in East China has played a major role in the Chinese civilization. Therefore, the province offers those with a love of culture and history numerous things to see and do.

Mount Tai, one of the most prominent attractions in the province, is located in the city of Tai'an. The majestic sunrise, sacred cliffs and blooming crabs attract crowds of tourists every year.

The city of Qufu, the birthplace of Confucius, holds grand ceremonies every year to pass down the cultural heritage of that philosopher to the next generations, as well as to memorize the teachings of one of the greatest thinkers in Chinese history.

Known as the cradle of kites, Weifang gained fame as the "city of kites" during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Nowadays, Weifang kites, paper cutting, Chinese New Year woodcut painting and shadow play have become the province's iconic cultural legacies.

Jinan, capital of Shandong, is also called Spring City. More than 70 natural springs flow through the city. The Baotu Spring, which is also called Spouting Spring, is the most famous among them.

Qingdao, the coastal city, is currently holding the 20th Qingdao International Beer Festival. During the festival, there are a total of 13 tents for visitors to taste beers and other alcoholic drinks, providing more than 1,300 kinds of beer from more than 200 international brands.

Dongying, a city where the Yellow River enters the Bohai Sea, offers visitors the chance to see a wetland ecosystem in China's temperate zone. Every year, rare and endangered birds arrive there and breed their young.

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