

Gallery Tours (Discover China through Art)

CHINA INSTITUTE GALLERY

DCTA Tour Follow Up Questions

Confucius: *His Life and Legacy in Art*

February 11 – June 13, 2010

Confucius: His Life and Legacy in Art seeks to create a greater understanding of his role in Chinese culture and to examine why his extraordinary influence continues even today. We hope you better understand Confucius and his teachings after you have attended our DCTA (*Discover China Through Art*) gallery tour. Below are some questions to help you think more critically about this great philosopher and his extraordinary influence on Chinese society.

- ❖ In the Chinese civilization, jade has played a special role since the early Neolithic Age. How many types of jade objects are in the exhibition? What are their functions?
- ❖ How many types of bronze works are included in the exhibition? What kind of shapes do they have? What are their functions?
- ❖ What is your favorite art object in this exhibition? Can you explain the historical background of this artwork?
- ❖ How did Confucius's background prepare him to become an influential teacher?
- ❖ What is the greatest contribution Confucius gave to Chinese society and our world?
- ❖ What are the main teachings of Confucianism?
- ❖ What is your favorite Confucian saying?
- ❖ Confucius spent a great deal of time discussing morality do you think moral education is still essential in our modern times?
- ❖ Confucius emphasized that children should respect and always listen to their parents. Why do you think he believed this?

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For further information about Confucius, and to explore a variety of dynamic, interactive resources including a photo gallery, 3-D images from the exhibition, lesson plan, map, timeline and information about other upcoming exhibition-related programs and events at China Institute, please visit www.chinainstitute.org/featuredresources or www.China360online.org/featuredresources.



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360-View of an Object



Map of Confucius

Confucius

子曰：學而時習之，不亦說乎？
Zi yue, "xué ér shí xí zhī, bù yì yuè hū?"

The Master said, 'Is it not a pleasure, having learned something, to try it out at due intervals?' (*The Analects*, I.1)

One would be hard pressed to identify a more readily recognizable figure in Chinese history than Confucius—his ideas, as transmitted in the *Analects* and some other documents and then later elaborated upon by other philosophers (such as Mencius and Xunzi), have profoundly shaped Chinese civilization and culture. Given his imposing stature in Chinese history, it is somewhat ironic how little verifiable information is actually known to historians and scholars about the historical Confucius; much of what is commonly presumed about Confucius in the public imagination is distorted by centuries of accumulated legend, veneration, and iconography. The spring 2010 China Institute exhibition, *Confucius: His Life and Legacy in Art*, assembles a collection of visual representations of Confucius informed by such veneration as well as presenting objects related to the state cult that grew up around him. These exhibition-related web pages are designed to give audiences a brief introduction to five different thematic approaches to studying Confucius in order to help answer some essential questions:

- What do we know about Confucius, the man?
- What was the social and political context that shaped him and that his ideas respond to?
- What did he do in life, and how has that subsequently been recorded, appreciated, and criticized in art and literature?

The name "Confucius" is a Latinization of Kongfuzi (孔夫子), or "Master Kong." His given name is Qiu Zhongni (邱仲尼) and he lived in the small state of Lu between 551-479 BCE (the area of Lu is in today's province of Shandong). What in the west goes by the name "Confucianism" is really a doctrinal tradition that in Chinese is called "rujia" (儒家) or "rujiao" (儒教), the school or tradition of scholars. Confucius was a scholar who studied the past in order to find meanings for promoting social harmony in a society increasingly fractured by warfare and factionalism.

(more...)

General Overview

- Geography**
The significance of physical place that spatially situates the exhibition's content
- History**
The significance of historical and political periodization that temporally situates the exhibition's content
- Culture and People**
Human behaviors, beliefs, and customs that inform the exhibition's content
- Material Culture**
What the physical objects in the exhibit reveal about the socio-cultural identity of the objects' producers and possessors
- Appreciation**
How the exhibition's content is theoretically, economically, and morally appreciated

Categories

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Materials from the following websites might also give you a more advanced understanding of Confucius:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/confucius/>

<http://chinese.dsturgeon.net/text.pl?node=47084&if=en>

China Knowledge page on Confucius and Confucianism:

<http://www.chinaknowledge.org/Literature/Classics/confucius.html>

Asia for Educators, Columbia University's site on Confucian Thought:

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/ort/confucianism.htm>

Short article by Judith Berling of Kenyon College, "Confucianism":

<http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Religion/Fac/Adler/Reln270/Berling-Confucianism.htm>

[Confucian Temples](#), by Thomas Wilson (Hamilton College)

[Confucian Temple, Tainan](#) (photos)

You can find more resources about Confucius on our website:

<http://www.china360online.org/exhibitions/>

