

Qufu City and Confucian Architecture

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Paper presented at the 15th Annual Meeting of the Comparative and Continental Philosophy Circle (CCPC, remote), Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia, May 14, 2022

ABSTRACT

This article examines the city of Qufu, once the state capital of Lu (1042–249 BCE) in today's Shandong province, China. Qufu is the hometown of Confucius (551–479 BCE), and for sites associated with the Chinese philosopher. The Temple of Confucius in Qufu was constructed in 478 BCE, with its expansive complexes of the Kong Family Mansion and Cemetery, mostly dating from the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. These Three Confucian sites have been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1994, and are key areas in the study, alongside four modern Confucian architecture: Confucius Research Institute, Confucius Cultural Park, Confucius Six Arts City, and Confucius Museum. The paper seeks to understand what aspect of Chinese philosophy is reflected in Confucian architecture. The finding reveals Yin Yang balance and harmony is the basic aesthetic principle guiding the planning and design of Confucian architecture in Qufu.

Keywords: philosophy and architecture, religious architecture, courtyard architecture, Chinese architecture, China

1. INTRODUCTION

This research article explores the cultural city of Qufu in Shandong province of China. It begins by tracing the historical development of the city under different regimes, it then looks at the iconic architectural complexes of the Three Kongs: Kong Temple/Temple of Confucius, Kong Family Mansion, and Kong Forest/Cemetery of Confucius, which were mostly reconstructed during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, and which were included on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. It also briefly introduces the four contemporary architectural compounds built in the 1990s–2010s to commemorate Kongzi, which are the Confucius Research Institute, Confucius Cultural Park, Confucius Six Arts City, and Confucius

Museum. It ends with a discussion about the influence of Chinese philosophy on architectural planning and design, and draws a tentative conclusion about the significance of Confucian harmony worldwide.

The study thus attempts to investigate how Chinese philosophy is reflected in the planning and design *pattern* of Confucian architecture in Qufu by examining the three classical and four modern complexes that commemorate Confucius. The article is however not a historical study of a particular Confucian temple ^[1–6], or its idols ^[7], or a lengthy discussion of Confucianism in contemporary China and the world ^[3, 6, 8–10], nor a detailed account of the Kong Family descendants ^[1, 6, 11], though the paper touches upon all these aspects. This interdisciplinary research

takes a holistic approach to architectural and philosophical inquiries by exploring seven cases of architectural complexes to draw a preliminary conclusion. Due to the different lengths of history of these building complexes and the availability of their literature, there is an uneven coverage across the seven cases. Nevertheless, the situation has not affected the research method or the findings from the study.

Going westward for 1 km on Beijing-Fuzhou Expressway and exiting at Qufu, one can see a long and winding hill extending from north to south. This is the ancient city wall of Lu state with a history of at least 3,000 years. The city wall was demolished in 1978 and reconstructed on its original foundations a decade later (p. 198) ^[2]. Qufu's history as the state capital of Lu since the Zhou and Han dynasties had lasted for 1,200 years, which was its important historical development period, and which has left Qufu with notable historical traces. The Jin-dynasty writer and calligrapher Dang Huaiying (党怀英, 1134–1211) wrote a poem to praise Qufu: “The old junipers were once nourished by the dews of Zhou, and the broken tablets still have inscriptions of Han articles” (p. 14) ^[1]. The comparison of Qufu city plans of past and present indicates that its urban outline has not changed much since the ancient times [Figure 1].

2. QUFU CITY

Qufu (曲阜) [Figure 2], known as the “Sacred City of the East” (东方圣城), is today a county-level city with a total area of 815 sqkm under the jurisdiction of Jining (济宁). It is in the southwest of Shandong province, in the middle between Beijing and Shanghai, 135 km away from the provincial capital Jinan (济南) in the north, Si River (泗水) in the east, Yanzhou (兖州) in the west, and Zoucheng (邹城) in the south. Qufu is also surrounded by mountains and hills, such as the famous

Mount Tai (泰山), Phoenix Mountain (凤凰山), Nine Immortals Mountain (九仙山), Stone Gate Mountain (石门山), Defense Mountain (防山), and Mount Ni (尼山). Thus, Qufu may be said having good *Feng Shui* (“wind and water”) and it gathers the aura of heaven and earth.

The name “Qufu” (meaning “Winding Hill”) first appeared in the *Book of Rites* (礼记), as the historian Ying Shao (应劭) in the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220) noted: “There is a hill in the city of Lu, and it is 7 or 8 *li* long and winding, so it is called Qufu.”² As early as 5000–6000 years ago, the Huaxia (华夏) and Dongyi (东夷) ethnic groups thrived here and established the early Chinese civilization.

In the Western Zhou period (1046–771 BCE), the Duke of Zhou (周公旦, ?–?) was enfeoffed at the old place of Shangyan (商奄) on the shore of Zhusi (洙泗) and founded the state of Lu (鲁). The Duke of Zhou was granted Qufu to become the Duke of Lu,³ which was one of the largest feudal states at the time. Due to the lofty status and prestige of the Duke of Zhou, and his pioneering contribution to the rituals and music culture, Qufu became the most culturally developed city, like the eastern cultural center Haojing (镐京) at the time. During the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE), when different states fought for hegemony, rituals collapsed. Only the state of Lu had preserved the ritual system with its rich classical culture, known as the “Zhou rituals all in the Lu.”⁴

¹ “老桧曾沾周雨露，断碑犹是汉文章”

² “鲁城中有阜，委曲长七、八里，故名曲阜。”

³ 《史记·鲁周公世家》(*Historical Records of the Duke of Lu Zhou Family*)

⁴ “周礼尽在鲁”

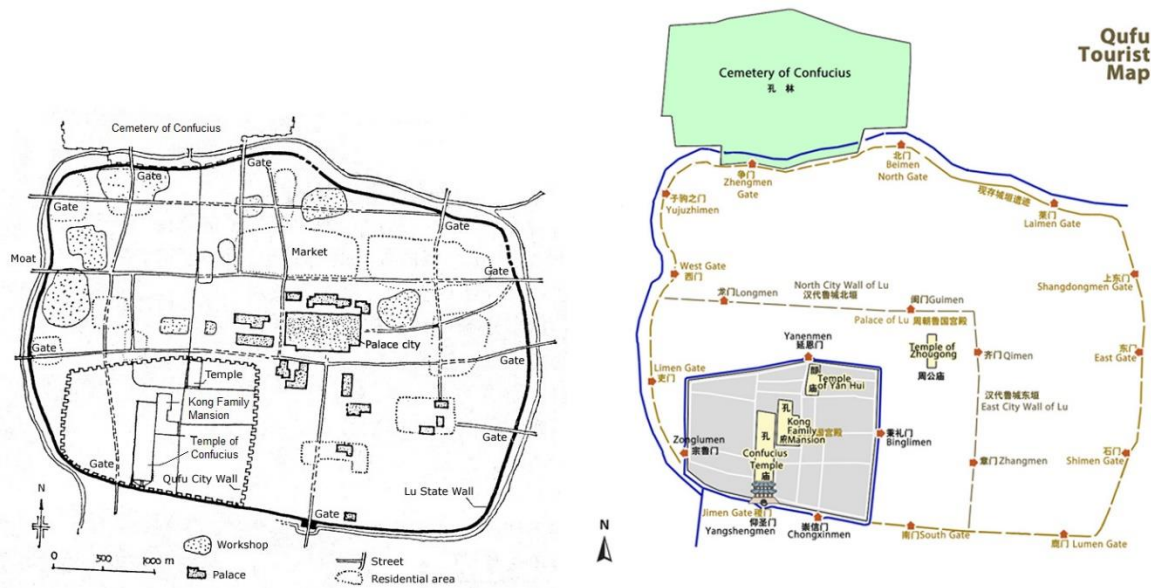


Figure 1. Comparison of Qufu city plans. Left: Map of Qufu with the city wall during the periods of Western Zhou (1046–771 BCE) to Western Han (206 BCE–23 CE). Source: Author's translation from the History of Chinese Architecture, 1986/2009, p. 35. Right: Qufu Tourist Map today. Source: <https://www.chinadiscovery.com/assets/images/qufu/maps/qufu-tourist-map.jpg>, accessed 2022/10/5



Figure 2. Qufu city sign outside the wall of the Temple of Confucius. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

In the Qufu area, archaeological excavations have found many relics belonging to Dawenkou Culture (大汶口文化) and Longshan Culture (龙山文化), dated around 5000–2000 BCE. Among the Three Kings and Five Emperors (三皇五帝) in Chinese history and legend, three of them have left traces in Qufu. Historical records show that about 4000–5000 years ago, the site was the Daming's Ruins (大庭氏之墟) where Emperor Yan (炎帝) lived. The Yellow Emperor Xuanyuan (轩辕黄

帝, 2717–2599 BCE) was born in Longevity Hill (寿丘), 3 km east of Qufu city. Shaohao (少昊, ?–?) also built his capital in Qufu, reigned for 84 years, lived 100 years, and was buried in Longevity Hill, whose mausoleum is still intact on the original site. In addition, Lu Ban (鲁班, 507–444 BCE), the revered Chinese deity of builders and contractors, was also from Qufu. *The Treatise of Lu Ban* (鲁班经), a handbook on the art of building and construction written in the Ming dynasty, was attributed to Lu Ban.

In 221 BCE, Qin Shihuang (秦始皇, 259–210 BCE) unified China, Lu became Xue (薛) county with its government located in Qufu. Ancient Chinese capitals were planned and designed to ensure the utility and safety of the emperors. The technical *Record of Trades* (考工记) in *Rituals of Zhou* (周礼) circulated in the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) stipulates: “The capital city should be built nine-square *li*, with three gates on each side, nine roads horizontally and nine vertically, nine tracks for the width of the north and south roads, the ancestral temple

to the east, the altar of soil and grain to the west, the imperial court in the front, and the market at the back.”⁵ According to existing archaeological discoveries, while no capital city before the Warring States period was found exactly matching this layout, Qufu was the closest example following this prescription^[12, 13]⁶.

During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), Qufu resumed its former name as the state of Lu. After the Han dynasty, Qufu was reduced to a county-level prefecture, and lost its former glory as a state capital. In 1012, Qufu was renamed Xianyuan (仙源) county. In 1129, the Jin (金) army went southward, Xianyuan county became part of the Jin dynasty, and restored the old name Qufu county. In 1511, the county was ruined by the Peasants Uprising in Hebei province that destroyed hundreds of dwellings and burned government temples and houses. Ming Emperor Zhu Houzhao (朱厚照, 1491–1521) ordered to rebuild a new city in the southwest corner of the old one, with the Temple of Confucius at its center, which became today’s Qufu city of the Ming dynasty. In the Qing dynasty, the local system of Qufu had basically remained the same as that in the Ming dynasty.

Since Han Emperor Wu (汉武帝, 156–87 BCE) adopted Dong Zhongshu’s (董仲舒) suggestion of “removing the hundred schools of thought and respecting Confucianism only,”⁷ Confucian ideology gradually became the orthodoxy in imperial China, as the saying indicates:

⁵ “匠人营国、方九里，旁三门，国中九经九纬，经涂九轨，左祖右社，面朝后市。”

⁶ However, after the Han dynasty, some dynasties made capital city planning based on some of the contents recorded in this passage to adhere to the ancient system, such as Yuan Dadu (now Beijing), Western Han Chang’an (now Xi’an), Han and Wei Luoyang, and Northern Song Dongjing (now Kaifeng), Southern Song Lin’an (now Hangzhou), Ming Nanjing and Beijing (History of Chinese Architecture, 1986/2009).

⁷ “罢黜百家，独尊儒术”

“The thousand-year-old rituals and music belong to the Eastern Lu, and the ancient officials and gentry all worship Confucius.”⁸ From Emperor Gaozu of Han, Liu Bang (刘邦, 256 or 247–195 BCE) to Qing Emperor Qianlong (乾隆, 1711–1799), 12 emperors had visited Qufu 20 times to pay respect for Confucius. Moreover, princes and ministers were dispatched to Qufu to pay homage 196 times^[1]. In 1988, at the first International Conference of Nobel Prize Winners in Paris, one of the conclusions they reached after reflecting on the theme “Facing the 21st century” was that “if humankind is to survive, it must go back 25 centuries in time to tap the wisdom of Confucius”^[14]⁹.

2.1 Confucius and Confucianism

Confucius (Kongzi 孔子) was born on the 28th day of the ninth month of 551 BCE, in Mount Ni (尼山), Qufu. He was named Qiu (丘), styled Zhongni (仲尼), and a native of Zuoyi (陬邑) of Lu state (today’s Qufu city, Shandong province). His ancestral home was Liyi (栗邑) of the Song (宋) state (now Xiayi 夏邑 county, Henan province). Confucius was a thinker, educator, and the “Great Ensemble, Ultimate Sage, and First Teacher” (大成至圣先师) of China [Figure 3]. At teenage, he was determined to study and travelled around Lu state. At middle age, he served the government and travelled around China. At old age, he returned to Lu and established his school. Throughout his life, Confucius took benevolence as his love to others, well-being of the world as his

⁸ “千年礼乐归东鲁，万古衣冠拜素王。”

⁹ 诺贝尔奖得主们究竟说过没有——查证 ‘诺贝尔奖获得者认为 21 世纪人类要吸取孔子的智慧’ 的报道，《现代教育报》2003 年 1 月 20 日 (Did the Nobel Prize winners say this? Checking on the report that “Nobel Prize winners believe that humankind should absorb the wisdom of Confucius in the 21st century,” Modern Education News, January 20, 2003), viewed April 6, 2022, <http://www.bengu.cn/homepage/paper/confucius02.htm>

responsibility, and mustered the courage to carry it through even though he knew it was impossible to achieve. Confucius is one of the most prominent cultural icons in the world, and the first person in ancient China to put forward the aesthetic statement: “The wise find pleasure in water, the benevolent find pleasure in hills.”¹⁰

The several millennia of Chinese cultural heritage was an important source of his thought. Confucius considered heaven as the beginning of all events, and earth as the foundation of all things. His main idea is expressed in *The Doctrine of the Mean* (or the Middle Way 中庸). Zhong (中) means “Middle Upright” (中正) or “Central Harmony” (中和), yōng (庸) means “mediocre” which relates to “use” (yòng 用).



Figure 3. Confucius statue at Confucius Cultural Park, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

Therefore, the Golden Mean (中庸之道) is the way of using the middle (用中之道), which is considered the proper way. Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean* elevates the concept of “holding to the center” as the Dao in early Chinese thought to guide people’s behavior, and to advocate “holding two ends but use the middle” (执两用中), that is grasping both ends and seeking the most appropriate solution amid contradictions. Harmony while being different (和而不同) and timing in the

middle (时中) are further enrichments adding to *The Doctrine of the Mean* ^[15]. The former emphasizes seeking harmony in differences, while the latter accentuates contingency as being appropriate in complex situations ^[1]. Confucian middle way is often regarded as the most common synonym for his thought and is metaphorically represented by the courtyard in the middle of dwellings where the courtyard space connects the heaven above and the earth below to achieve central harmony in one’s inner life ^[16, 17]. The Song-dynasty philosopher Zhang Zai (张载) praised Confucius who “set up the kernel of heaven and earth, created the life for ordinary people, continued the path of past sages, and spread peace to the world.”¹¹

Three aspects of Confucius’ contributions are noteworthy. First, he inherited ancient Chinese culture and devoted his later years to collecting and writing books and compiling the Six Classics (六经): Classic of Poetry (诗经), Classic of History/Book of Documents (书经/尚书), Book of Rites (礼记), Book of Changes/Classic of Changes (周易/易经), Classic of Music (乐经), and Spring and Autumn Annals (春秋)¹². Except for the lost Classic of Music, the other five were textbooks for Chinese literati students for several millennia during their imperial examinations. The Spring and Autumn Annals was the first historical record summarizing the over 200-year history of the state of Lu. Second, Confucius was a milestone in Chinese education. In the era of Confucius and before him, education was monopolized by officials and aristocrats. Confucius proposed “there should be no discrimination in education,”¹³ expanding his teaching to

¹¹ “为天地立心，为生民立命，继往圣之绝学，开万世之太平。”

¹² Six Classics (六经) was first seen in Zhuangzi: The Movement of Heaven (庄子•天运篇).

¹³ “有教无类”

¹⁰ “知者乐水，仁者乐山。”

commoners. He expounded the educational ideas of “learning while practicing,”¹⁴ “reviewing the old and knowing the new,”¹⁵ “teaching and learning go hand in hand,”¹⁶ “knowing what you know, and knowing what you do not know, this is knowledge,”¹⁷ and so on. Third, Confucius formed behavioral norms as in the Golden Rule: “Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself,”¹⁸ “establish others if you want to be established, make others successful if you want to be successful;”¹⁹ “Haste makes waste, taking petty profits will fail to achieve great endeavors,”²⁰ and so forth. All these sayings have profound influence on Chinese people.

For governing the country, Confucius suggested “governors should be upright,”²¹ and “to govern the country with virtue is like the North Star surrounded by all the other stars.”²² For social harmony, Confucius advised following the order of “ruler, minister, father, and son”²³ as he observed that “the virtuous unite without collusion, the villainous collude without unity,”²⁴ and “the virtuous are open-minded, the villainous are preoccupied with gains and losses.”²⁵ Regarding social conduct, Confucius proposed that “the virtuous speak cautiously but act swiftly;”²⁶ “keep silently what you have learned, study hard without being complacent, teach others patiently and tirelessly;”²⁷ “serve the ministers in the

office, serve your father and brothers at home;”²⁸ “if a ruler behaves righteously, he does not need to give orders, the people will satisfy what he wants; if he behaves badly, even if he orders repeatedly, the people will not obey him.”²⁹ These social and behavioral standards have big impact on the Chinese nation.

3. CONFUCIAN ARCHITECTURE

Confucius emphasized the philosophical concept of harmony (和) in political and social conducts. In aesthetics, it is reflected in the pursuit of balance and order in Chinese architecture, expressed through the central axis, bilateral symmetry, and the courtyard, which are the concretization of Confucian hierarchy regarding the center as the honorable position while harmony as the highest state. This section investigates how harmony is manifested in the planning and design of the historical Three Kongs: Kong Temple/Temple of Confucius, Kong Family Mansion, and Kong Forest/Cemetery of Confucius, as well as the four modern complexes in Qufu: Confucius Research Institute, Confucius Cultural Park, Confucius Six Arts City, and Confucius Museum.

3.1 Temple of Confucius (Kong Temple)

The Temple of Confucius (孔庙) in Qufu was shaped by the position and influence of Confucius in Chinese history. To show respect for Confucius and Confucianism, the emperors in imperial China built this large-scale temple in his hometown, in strict accordance with Confucian ideology, making the complex one of the most famous palatial structures in China. Precisely because of the richness in Confucianism and his great contributions to society, people from all over the world

¹⁴ “学而时习之”

¹⁵ “温故而知新”

¹⁶ “教学相长”

¹⁷ “知之之为知之，不知为不知，是知也。”

¹⁸ “己所不欲，勿施于人。”

¹⁹ “己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人。”

²⁰ “欲速则不达，见小得则大事不成。”

²¹ “政者，正也”

²² “为政以德，譬如北辰，居其所而众星共之。”

²³ “君君、臣臣、父父、子子”

²⁴ “君子周而不比，小人比而不周。”

²⁵ “君子坦荡荡，小人长戚戚。”

²⁶ “君子欲讷于言而敏于行”

²⁷ “默而识之，学而不厌，诲人不倦”

²⁸ “出则事公卿，入则事父兄。”

²⁹ “其身正，不令而行；其身不正，虽令不从。”

come to Qufu to pay homage to the Sage [Figure 4].

The Temple was first constructed in the 2nd year of Confucius death (478 BCE), and has undergone 15 major repairs, 31 medium repairs, and hundreds of minor repairs. Emperor Gaozu of Han, Liu Bang (刘邦, r. 206–195 BCE) traversed Lu and worshiped Confucius, which marked the first Chinese emperor to do so. Since then, the Confucius Temple had gradually received more attention, but its size was not exceptionally large at the time. At the end of the Western Jin dynasty (265–316), due to successive wars, the Temple was ruined and desolate. It was repaired in 505, 539, and 557, respectively. In 539, there erected “a statue of sacred face with a cross beside it,”³⁰ which was the first documented record of Confucius Temple with a statue. Thereafter, the Temple was repaired seven times during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127).



Figure 4. Gate opening ceremony at 8 am outside Confucius Temple, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

In the beginning of Jin army marching southward, the rulers did not pay much attention to the status of Confucius. After Qufu was conquered, the Confucius Temple and the books were completely burned. But shortly afterwards, the upper classes of the Jin dynasty recognized the importance of Confucius. In 1127, after the Jin Commander Wan Yanzong (完颜

宗) entered Yanjing (燕京, now Beijing), he built the Imperial Academy (太学), repaired the Imperial College (国子监), and paid homage to Confucius. Jin Zhangzong (金章宗) advocated Confucianism and allocated over 76,400 *min* (string of coins) to renovate the Confucius Temple in 1191, which lasted 4 years and completed it in 1194. In 1214, Mongolian soldiers went southward to the Central Plains and when they arrived in Qufu, they half destroyed the Confucius Temple. Thereafter, in 1237, Mongolian Taizong ordered the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage (衍圣公), Kong Yuancuo (孔元措) to rebuild the Confucius Temple in Queli (阙里)³¹. In 1297, the Confucius Temple was announced to be restored again, with the reconstruction started in 1300 and completed in 1302. This was the largest construction project during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). In 1329, the Temple was repaired again due to its gradual deterioration and was restored to its original appearance.

In the mid-Ming dynasty (1368–1644), many skilled craftsmen from Beijing and other parts of China were recruited to gather in Qufu. They represented the most advanced technical skills in the country at the time, making the Confucius Temple a symbol of unique artistic and aesthetic achievement in classical Chinese architecture, embodying the Confucian architectural style. The Ming dynasty was the heyday of the expansion of the Confucius Temple, with

³¹ Confucius' birthplace is known in history as both Queli and Qufu. Queli was a district within Qufu county during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) until the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), when the administrative center of Qufu was set up in a different location, which left the older town under the name of Queli. In the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the two merged on the site of Queli as Qufu city, which became the administrative center of Qufu county, while Queli has continued as a street name which runs adjacent to Confucius Temple and as a nostalgic name for the old walled city (Flath, 2016, p. xvii).

³⁰ “雕塑圣容，旁立十字”

the most extensive reconstructions occurred during the reigns of Hongwu (洪武), Yongle (永乐), Chenghua (成化), and Hongzhi (弘治). In 1374, the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage, Kong Xixue (孔希学) asked the emperor to renovate the Confucius Temple, and Ming Taizu Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋) immediately agreed. In 1387, Ming Taizu again ordered Zhang Min (张敏), an expert from the Ministry of Industry, to lead thousands of craftsmen to repair the Temple. In 1412, Ming Chengzu Yongle (永乐) arranged to renovate the Temple, and it was completed in 1418. In 1434, Zhou Chen (周忱) and Kuang Zhong (况钟) donated fund to rebuild the Gold Thread Hall (金丝堂). In 1460, the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage, Kong Hongxu (孔宏绪) rebuilt the Hall of Repose for the King Who Fathered the Sage (启圣王寝殿). In 1483, the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage, Kong Hongtai (孔宏泰) renovated the halls, corridors, verandas, pavilions, and a cooking school, including 358 couplets, which was completed in 1487. The Confucius Temple was repaired 21 times in the Ming dynasty, and the biggest one was after the lightning strike in 1499.

In 1728, the Confucius Temple was destroyed by war and his statue was burned. In 1734, it received the last and largest renovation. Throughout the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the Temple was rebuilt 14 times. In 1915 and 1925, the Hall of Repose (寝殿) was fixed twice. In the 1950s, the Hall of the Great Ensemble (大成殿), the Two Cloisters (两庑), and the Pavilion of Literary Constellation (奎文阁) were renovated. In 1970, the Hall of the Great Ensemble was again repaired.

Today, the Temple of Confucius covers a land area of 140,000 sqm, with a three-lane layout and nine-rise (*jìn* 进) courtyards running through the north-south central axis with east-west bilateral symmetry. There are seven buildings in line with the seven stars, and eight wells

corresponding to the eight trigrams (*bagua*) surrounded by the “Four Deities” (四神): Azure Dragon (青龙) in the east, Vermilion Bird (朱雀) in the south, White Tiger (白虎) in the west, and Black Tortoise (玄武) in the north. There is an atmosphere of cosmic harmony around the Temple, and it serves as an archetype of coherence.

The compound includes five shrines, three halls, one altar, 17 stele pavilions, with a total of 104 buildings and 466 rooms. It also contains 1172 inscriptions and 1250 old trees. The main structures include: Tones of Bronze and Resonances of Jade Archway (金声玉振坊) [Figure 5], Original Qi of Supreme Harmony Archway (太和元气坊), Heaven and Earth of Equal Virtues Archway (德侔天地坊), Daoist Crown of All Ages Archway (道冠古今坊), Gate of Lattice Star (棣星门), Gate of Timely Sage (圣时门) [Figure 6], Gate of Expanding the Way (弘道门), Gate of the Great Mean (大中门), Gate of Common Literacy (同文门), Pavilion of Literary Constellation (奎文阁), Thirteen-Steel Pavilion (十三碑亭), Gate of the Great Ensemble (大成门), Apricot Altar (杏坛),³² Hall of the Great Ensemble (大成殿) [Figure 7], Hall of Repose (寝殿), Eastern and Western Cloisters (东西两庑), Hall of the Sage’s Traces (圣迹殿), Corner Tower (角楼), Ancestral Hall of Worshipping the Sage (崇圣祠), Hall of the King Who Fathered the Sage (启圣王殿), among others. The gates and archways uphold an ideal of social and cosmic harmony during the rituals. The Pavilion of Literary Constellation, Hall of the Great Ensemble, and Hall of Repose are the three main buildings.

³² The Apricot Altar (杏坛) in Qufu Confucius Temple was where Confucius gave lectures; it was a witness to most of Confucius educational undertakings, and a symbol of Confucius devotion to education.

The Hall of the Great Ensemble (大成殿), formerly known as the Hall of the King of Exalted Culture (文宣王殿)³³ and the Hall of the Sage (宣圣殿), is the main building in Confucius Temple, built in 1018 during the Song dynasty (960–1279). Its current name came from Mengzi's praise: "Kongzi was the Great Ensemble."³⁴ In 1104, Song Huizong Chongning (崇宁, r. 1102–1106) issued an order to change the name to the Hall of the Great Ensemble and inscribed a plaque with his own writing on it. In 1500, the hall was destroyed by lightning and rebuilt. In 1724, the hall was again struck by lightning. After the reconstruction, Emperor Yongzheng (雍正 1678–1735) inscribed another plaque. The reconstruction was authorized by the Qing court in accordance with the design of the Imperial Palace. Thus, the Hall of the Great Ensemble in the Temple of Confucius in Qufu, the Hall of Supreme Harmony (太和殿) in the Forbidden City of Beijing, and the Hall of Heavenly Gift (天贶殿) in the Dai Temple (岱庙) of Tai'an (泰安), are known as the "Three Great Halls" of classical Chinese architecture.

The Hall of the Great Ensemble has nine bays (*jian* 间) (54 m) in width and three bays (34 m) in depth. The base is 1836 sqm, and the top of the roof (32 m) has double eaves. There are 28 carved-dragon columns surrounding the corridors, all made from whole stones and supported on lotus column bases. The 10 carved-dragon columns under the front eaves are deep-relief carvings with unique patterns and vivid shapes, which are spectacular and rare treasures. The 18 eight-edged terrazzo columns on the rear eaves are decorated with cloud dragons; each side is lightly engraved with 9 dragons, each

column has 72 dragons, with a total of 1,296 carved legendary dragons [Figure 8].

The Temple of Confucius in Qufu as the state sanctuary for undertaking sacrificial ceremonies had followed strict regulations on the number of buildings, the form of the roofs, the color of the roof tiles, and the height of the buildings. It can be regarded as an archetype of Chinese architectural harmony, for the highest number of bays in a classical Chinese building was nine, followed by seven, five, and three. The Temple of Confucius has nine-rise courtyards from front to back, the Hall of the Great Ensemble has nine bays and double eaves, and the Gate of the Great Ensemble has nine vertical and nine horizontal nails, making it a total of 81 nails, which has almost completely imitated the Imperial Palace in Beijing. Elsewhere in China, Confucian temples in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties mostly adopted the numbers nine or five that only emperors could apply. Moreover, the buildings on the central axis are mainly in red and yellow colors, which are powerful tones corresponding to fire and earth in *wuxing*, or the Five Elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water), respectively. Before the end of the Qing dynasty, it was regulated that the glazed roof tiles of the main buildings of Confucius Temple could be green, corresponding to wood element.

The Temple of Confucius was reconstructed during the Jin (1115–1234), Yuan (1271–1368), Ming (1368–1644), Qing (1644–1911), and the Republic of China (1912–1949). In 1966, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the Confucius effigy was smashed. After 1978, the Temple was fully repaired, and the Pavilion of Literary Constellation was renovated. In 1982, Shandong province organized technicians to reshape the seated Confucius statue. Since then, the Qufu Cultural Relics Management Department has been repairing the Temple every year to keep it in good protection.

³³ Tang Emperor Xuanzong (唐玄宗) granted Confucius the title of King of Exalted Culture (文宣王).

³⁴ "孔子之谓集大成"

Since Emperor Gaozu of Han as the first Chinese ruler who worshipped Confucius, Confucianism has entered Chinese political stage. In the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties, all states and counties were required to build Confucian temples as schools for learning rituals. Thereafter, Confucian temples spread all over China. By the end of the Qing (1644–1911), there were over 1,500 Confucian temples all developed on the blueprint of Qufu Confucius Temple. After the Qing, Confucian temples have become the most magnificent buildings, often as representatives of the regional architecture.



Figure 5. Tones of Bronze and Resonances of Jade (金声玉振), along with a series of similar archways inside the Temple of Confucius, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 6. Gate of Timely Sage (圣时门), Temple of Confucius, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 7. Hall of the Great Ensemble (大成殿), Temple of Confucius, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 8. Carved-dragon columns surrounding the Hall of the Great Ensemble, Temple of Confucius, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

There are hundreds of well-preserved Confucian temples in China, 19 of which are listed as the national cultural relics protection units, but the Qufu Confucius Temple is the original one with the longest history, largest scale, and most typical form.

3.2 Kong Family Mansion

The Kong Family Mansion (孔府) is also known as the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage Office Mansion (衍圣公府), Office Mansion (公府), Old Mansion (老府), Sage Office Mansion (圣公府), Sage Mansion (圣府), and the Ultimate Sage Mansion (至圣府). It was the home of the grandson of Confucius and the Kong family's eldest descendants born by the wives (not concubines), and the office of the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage in successive dynasties. Built in 1377 and rebuilt in 1503, covering a land area of about 80,000 sqm, the Mansion is the oldest, largest, and best-preserved courtyard dwelling compound. The Temple of Yan Hui (颜回, 521–481 BCE, favorite disciple of Confucius) is in the northeast adjacent to the Mansion, and the Temple of the Duke of Zhou (周公旦) is situated in the northeast corner right outside the walled compound [Figure 1].

Soon after Confucius death, his eldest son and grandson lived in the old Residence of Granted Inheritance (袭封宅) in Queli. The house merged with the temple, called Temple House, where Confucius descendants and disciples lived to look after his clothes, musical instruments, chariots, and books collected over a period of 200 years.³⁵ While respecting Confucius and promoting Confucian culture, Chinese emperors added official titles to his offspring and granted them land to build the Mansion. Since Emperor Gaozu of Han admitted the ninth-generation grandson of Confucius, Kong Teng (孔腾), to specialize in worshipping Confucius, the Kongs became a noble family with a clear lineage and the longest testable ancestry in Chinese history.

The Kong Family Mansion is separated from Confucius Temple only by

a wall, making the Mansion and the Temple a unified whole, forming the core of Qufu city. The entire Mansion complex faces south, in a three-lane layout with a north-south central axis and east-west bilateral symmetry, nine-rise courtyards, and over 560 buildings in history, but over 480 buildings in existence today. The complex was expanded in the Yuan (1271–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, and the fluctuating number of buildings reflects the successive emperors' grants to Confucius descendants.

The main gate in the middle of the three bays is a Ming-dynasty architectural form, with a vertical plaque inscribed with two golden characters 圣府 (Sage Mansion) in blue background [Figure 9], allegedly written by Yan Song (严嵩, 1480–1567). On the left and right wooden pillars hang a couplet with golden characters written by Ji Yun (纪昀, 1724–1805), also in blue background, that reads: “The Kong Family Mansion is as peaceful, rich, honorable, and glorious as the Country; Confucian articles have been passed down through generations since the Sage is as old as the Sky”³⁶ [Figure 10]. The couplet is a true portrayal of the Kong Family's prominent status in China. In front of the gate, there are a screen wall, a stone lion, and a horse block³⁷.

The middle lane is the central axis of the compound, whose front part accommodated the government office with three halls and six rooms. The six rooms were used by the subordinate officials to handle rituals with music, military, and agricultural activities. The three halls were where the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage managed his official affairs. The inner quarters were where the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage's family lived.

³⁶ “与国咸休安富尊荣公府第，同天并老文章道德圣人家。”

³⁷ A horse block is a platform for use in mounting or dismounting from a horse or entering or leaving a vehicle.

³⁵ “故所居堂弟子内，后世因庙藏孔子衣冠琴车书，至汉二百余年不绝。……孔子布衣传十余世，学者宗之。”

The middle lane has a succession of gates and halls, including the main gate, second gate, Gate of Regaining Light (重光门), main hall, second hall, third hall, and the inner quarter at the back, with the inner quarter's gate, front upper room, front hall with its east and west wing halls, rear hall with its east and west wing halls, and the Pavilion of Jujube Locust (枣槐轩). Some of the gates and halls were built in the Ming dynasty, while most others were constructed in the Qing dynasty, with a historical building area of about 12,740 sqm.

Horizontally, the Kong Family Mansion can be divided into two parts: front and back. The front part was for the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage to conduct external activities and handling official affairs and meeting guests. The back was the living and study area for family life.



Figure 9. Main Gate of the Kong Family Mansion, Qufu. Source: Photos by the author, 2017



Figure 10. Couplet on the wooden pillars at the main gate of the Kong Family Mansion, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

The south/front side of the East Lane is called Eastern Academy (东学), where the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage honored the emperor and received officials, which includes the Hall of Reading Classics (念典堂), Hall of Resembling Nine (九如堂), Pavilion of the Emperor's Ink (宸翰阁), and Blue Hall (兰堂). The middle was where the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage worshipped his ancestors, with the Hall of Gratitude (报本堂), Hall of Admiration and Grace (慕恩堂), Hall of Consistency (一贯堂), and Ancient Ancestral Temple (桃庙). The names of these spaces reflect Confucian philosophy. The rear of the East Lane was the living quarters of the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage's second son, the Wujing doctor of the hereditary Hanlin Academy who worshipped Zisi/Kong Ji (子思/孔伋), the grandson of Confucius who was also a philosopher.

The south/front side of the West Lane is called Western Academy (西学), where the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage studied poetry, rituals, painting, calligraphy, and meeting friends, with three-rise courtyard dwellings such as the Pavilion of Red Calyx (红萼轩), Hall of Loyalty and Forgiveness (忠恕堂), and Hall of Peace and Harmony (安怀堂). The place names again manifest Confucian philosophy. The rear of the West Lane was for the children to study and the Duke of Fulfilling the

Sage to live leisurely, with the Home School (学屋) and the Flower Hall (花厅). Finally, there is the Garden.

The division of the compound was clear, and the arrangement orderly. In addition, the names of the buildings bore the imprint of Confucianism. For example, the Hall of Consistency (一贯堂), Hall of Loyalty and Forgiveness (忠恕堂), and Hall of Peace and Harmony (安怀堂) all commended Confucian philosophy, and the Eastern and Western Academies not only honored Confucius achievements in establishing schools, but also showcased his descendants' learning abilities, and attaching great importance to education [Figures 11–14].

The main hall, built in the Ming dynasty, was where the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage received orders, greeted officials, examined major cases, and held major ceremonies. It symbolized the power of the Kong Family clan and the center of the patriarchal rule. The main hall has five bays in width and three bays in depth, the middle is a painted cloud bat and eight-treasure warm pavilion.

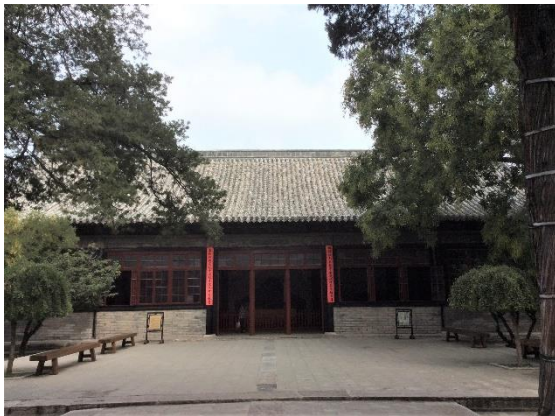


Figure 11. A hall inside the Kong Family Mansion, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

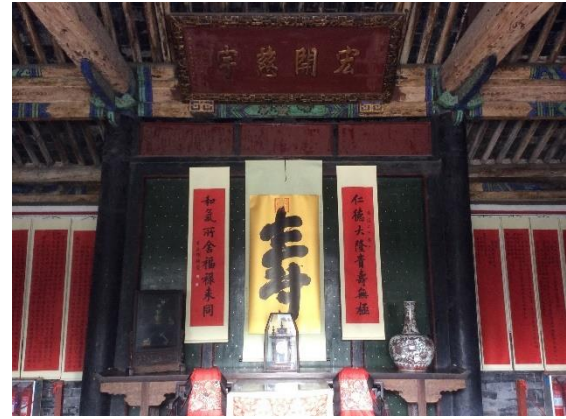


Figure 12. Longevity (寿) character in a hall of the Kong Family Mansion, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 13. Double-Happiness (囍) character in a hall of the Kong Family Mansion, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

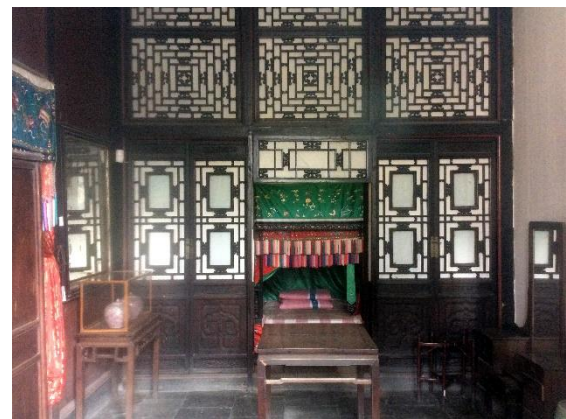


Figure 14. A sleeping chamber inside the Kong Family Mansion, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

The garden is at the far end of the central axis of the Mansion that can be entered from the home school or the rear hall. Originally designed and built by Li Dongyang (李东阳) in 1503 during the

Ming dynasty, the garden was later expanded and rebuilt by Yan Song (严嵩) and Emperor Qianlong (乾隆), making it the current scale. During the Jiaqing (嘉庆 r. 1796–1820) period of the Qing dynasty, Kong Qingrong (孔庆镕), the 73rd generation of the Duke of Fulfilling the Sage, brought several iron stones from elsewhere and named it “Iron Hill Garden” (铁山园), in which there are all kinds of landscape design elements such as rockery, lotus pond, bamboo grove, winding bridge, water pavilion, veranda, flower bed, flower hall, study room, orchard, old woods and vines, exotic flowers and plants, occasionally decorated with unusual stone bonsai, stone tables and benches. There is also a 400-year-old “five cypresses encompassing the locust tree”³⁸ with five branches, whose middle part is a locust tree, known as the “five-gentlemen cypress,”³⁹ which is particularly famous as a unique scene in the garden.

Confucius offspring together represent the oldest, continuous aristocratic family in the world, even more noble than the imperial families because the emperors normally lasted only for one dynasty or generation, whereas the Kong Family has survived 77 generations in over 2,400 years, not only because of the protection of their ancestors and the favor of the emperors, but also because of their family mottos: “Honesty and tolerance can sustain a family, just as poetry and books can last long and spread widely,”⁴⁰ and “the virtuous are self-righteous,”⁴¹ which are still displayed in one of the courtyards.

Although the first seven generations of Confucius descendants were one lineage, there are now over 4 million, with over 100,000 concentrated in their hometown Qufu, the rest are all over China, and some live overseas in more than 20 countries worldwide. The Duke of

Fulfilling the Sage was the title granted to the eldest grandson of Confucius, and the title alone has lasted 880 years. Therefore, the Kong Family Mansion is reputed as the “First Family Mansion in the World.”⁴²

The Kong Family Genealogy⁴³ is the oldest and most complete family tree in Chinese history. Since its establishment in the Yuanfeng (元丰, 1078–1085) period of the Northern Song dynasty, the lineage has been in good order for over 1,000 years. It shows that the Kong Family clan had the most restrictive rules for women. For example, the female family members were prohibited to make a pilgrimage to the temple, prohibited to remarry, and prohibited to be servants, among other restrictions. If anyone violated the clan rules, they would be punished by the clan head or the government, and even removed from the family tree and expelled from the clan.

3.3 Cemetery of Confucius (Kong Family Cemetery, Kong Forest)

Located 2 km north of Qufu, the Cemetery of Confucius (孔林), also known as the Cemetery of the Sage (宣圣林), and the Cemetery of the Ultimate Sage (至圣林), is the family cemetery of Confucius and his descendants.

Exiting from the north City Gate, passing through the woodland path between the old cypresses, crossing the stone bridge, square, and Twin Stele Building (双碑楼), entering the Cemetery’s First Gate (大林门), Second Gate (二林门), crossing the Zhushui River (洙水河), passing the Tomb Gate (墓门), Reflection Hall (思堂), Sacrifice Hall (享殿), one arrives at Confucius Tomb. After his death (April 11, 479 BCE), Confucius was buried in the Upper Beisi of the Lu city⁴⁴ by his disciples who had stayed on

³⁸ “五柏抱槐”

³⁹ “五君子柏”

⁴⁰ “忠厚传家久，诗书继世长。”

⁴¹ “有德者品自高”

⁴² “天下第一家”

⁴³ 《孔子世家谱》

⁴⁴ “葬鲁城北泗上”

for 3 years of mourning, while his most loyal student Zigong (子贡, 520–456 BCE) had remained for another 3 years. The disciples planted many rare trees from different places⁴⁵ [Figure 15].



Figure 15. Tree-lined passage in the Cemetery of Confucius, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

The Tomb of Confucius is situated in the central and south part of the Cemetery, with an extent of 30 m from east to west, 28 m from north to south, and 5 m in height, in front of which are two stone tablets, with an inscription on the front one that reads: “The Tomb of the Great Ensemble, the Ultimate Sage, and the King of Exalted Culture”⁴⁶ [Figure 16]. On the east side is the tomb of his son, Kong Li (孔鲤), in front of which is the tomb of his grandson Kong Ji/Zisi (孔伋/子思). This burial arrangement is called “carrying sons and grandsons.”⁴⁷

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Kong Ji (c. 483–402 BCE) was also a philosopher during the early Warring States period (475–221 BCE) who occupied a special place in the Kong Family and the development of Confucianism because of his compilation *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸) to expound Confucianism and establish the Simeng

School, which is a collective term for Zisi and Mengzi Schools⁴⁸.



Figure 16. Confucius Tomb, Cemetery of Confucius, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

In the Song dynasty (960–1279), Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200) combined *The Great Learning* (大学, reputedly authored by Zengzi), *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects of Confucius* (论语), and *Mengzi* (孟子) into one volume, called *The Four Books* (四书), making the set the most important Classic of Confucianism. After the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Chinese imperial examinations were based on the chapters and sentences from the *Four Books*.

Over the past 2,400 years, with the increasing number of burials of Confucius descendants, the Cemetery has expanded to cover a land area of over 2 million sqm, enclosed by a wall of 5591 m in perimeter, inside of which are about 100,000 tombs and 116 historical structures, including the cemetery gates and sacrifice halls, 85 pairs of stone statues, and more than 100,000 trees, among which over 9,000 trees are more than 200 years old, alongside 130 kinds of exotic plants and flowers. As such, the Cemetery is also known as a botanical garden and an outdoor museum integrating tombs, buildings, stone carvings, and inscriptions. There are further 4,000 tombstones from Jin, Yuan, Ming, Qing, and the Republic of China,

⁴⁵ “弟子各以四方奇木来植，故多异树，鲁人世代代无能名者。”

⁴⁶ “大成至圣文宣王墓”

⁴⁷ “携子抱孙”

⁴⁸ “思孟学派” 是子思学派和孟子学派的通称。

making it the largest number of stone monuments in China. Except the Han stele which has been relocated to Confucius Temple, the Cemetery has abundant inscriptions written by famous calligraphers in the Ming and Qing dynasties, including those by Li Dongyang (李东阳), Yan Song (严嵩), Weng Fanggang (翁方纲), and Kang Youwei (康有为), among others.

As a dedicated gravesite for Confucius and the Kong Family, the buried direct descendants have come to the 76th generation, and the collateral descendants to the 79th generation, making it the longest and largest uninterrupted cemetery in the world, which has provided important physical data for studying ancient Chinese family clan funeral system and customs. It has surpassed the tombs of all emperors in Chinese history because the longest imperial dynasty lasted only several hundred years; with the changing and replacement of dynasties, most emperors' tombs were destroyed by later dynasties. The Cemetery of Confucius, although not destroyed by archaeological excavation for scientific research, suffered catastrophic damage during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).

It is said the Cemetery of Confucius has survived for several millennia because the chosen site has good *Feng Shui*. The axis of the divine pathways and corridors are angled to varying degrees from a true north-south orientation; the passage in front of the First Gate is 5° degrees north to east, the walkway from the First to the Second Gate is 5° degrees north to west, and the axis of the corridor in front of the Sacrifice Hall of Confucius Tomb is even more leaned towards the west. The two westward deviations of the axis can be explained from the perspective of *Yin Yang* and *Wuxing* (Five Elements). Thus, Confucius had better foresight than that of the imperial families, as most emperors' tombs were built due north-south, which were only preserved in one dynasty. The

Cemetery of Confucius is not due north-south but a little tilted, to bless his descendants for generations to come^[1]. The *Feng Shui* awareness of the cemetery is, to a certain extent, scientific^[18, 19].

3.4 Confucius Research Institute

Qufu Confucius Research Institute (孔子研究院) began construction in 1996 and opened in 2000. It has the functions of academic research, museum exhibition, document collection, information exchange, and personnel training. It was planned and designed by Wu Liangyong (吴良镛), an academican of Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering, and an emeritus professor from Tsinghua University.

Confucius Research Institute covers a land area of 9.5 hectares, with a built-up area of 26,000 sqm. The overall planning takes a square and a circle as the basic forms, drawing on the Yellow River Chart (河图) and Luo River Writing (洛书)⁴⁹, Nine Constellations Magic Square Matrix (九宫格), and *Feng Shui* theory. The design ingeniously expresses Confucian concepts of benevolence (仁) and harmony (和), meanwhile, reflecting Chinese architectural identity, the spirit of the time, and a commemoration of Confucius.

On entering the east Main Gate, one is immediately surrounded by verandas, with willow trees along the walkways before reaching the Biyong Square (辟雍广场), which is 80 m × 80 m (6,400 sqm). In the middle of the square is a circular platform surrounded by a pool in the form of an inner circle and an outer square [Figure 17], symbolizing circular heaven and square earth (天圆地方). As the water is

⁴⁹ Yellow River Chart (Hetu 河图) and Luo River Writing (Luoshu 洛书) are mysterious figures passed down from ancient China. It is the origin of Heluo culture and the source of Chinese culture. Since the beginning of the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), Hetu and Luoshu have been recorded in the document literature.

“encircling like a wall” (壅绕如璧), it is named Biyong (辟雍). Biyong is also ritual building that embodies endless enlightenment. Confucian temples for local nobilities all over China could only set up semi-circular pools called “Pond of Dissolution” (泮池), only in the Imperial College of Beijing (国子监), there is a full circular pool Biyong.

At the center of the Biyong Square is a high square platform with three levels, each level has three steps. One can walk up to the top of the platform that is 8.88 m high. The middle is paved with blue granite into a circular shape. The outside of the circle and the steps are all yellow granite, implying that the sky is blue, and the earth is yellow. There are 77 nozzles embedded in the blue granite, the central one has the highest water spray, the middle four have medium-high water spray, and the outer 72 have the lowest water spray, symbolizing Confucius (central), Yan Hui, Zeng Shen, Zisi, Mengzi (middle), and the 72 sages (outer). There are 300 nozzles in the outer pool, with one representing 10, denoting the 3,000 disciples. The 377 nozzles spray water while the breeze blows through a faint rainbow, it vividly depicts the grand occasion of the first ideological climax in Chinese history initiated by Confucius and his disciples. The spring gushing from the steps is like a curtain, which also signifies that Confucianism has been passed down from generation to generation and has lasted for millennia.

North of the Biyong Square is the 4-storey main building in high-podium bright-hall style, with a height of 30 m, and a width and depth of 88.8 m [Figure 18], overlooking the Square. The first floor is the platform base, the second floor is in square shape, and the third and fourth floors are in circular form, symbolizing circular heaven and square earth. A major part of the Institute is the exhibition space displaying significant Confucian studies in China and around the world. Its outdoor

environment also has a grandeur design and can be a good place for contemplation.

Going from the north bridge of the Square and walking up the stairs, there is a small platform. A piece of natural stone functions as a screen wall on the east and west sides of the main entrance on the ground floor of the main building. The screen walls are ingeniously hollowed out in the middle, with the shapes of a bell in the east and a chime in the west. These two musical instruments, along with the two sacrificial vessels in the shapes of an ox and an elephant, symbolize Confucian culture of rituals and music, and the bell and the chime also have the meaning of “Tones of Bronze and Resonances of Jade” because Mengzi praised Confucius for his great achievements as such: “The one who assembles great achievements have the Tones of Bronze and Resonances of Jade. The Tones of Bronze is the beginning of an order, and the Resonances of Jade is the end of an order.”⁵⁰ Later generations have therefore frequently used the metaphor of “Tones of Bronze and Resonances of Jade” to refer to the fame of Confucius.



Figure 17. Biyong Square (辟雍广场) of the Confucius Research Institute, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

⁵⁰ “集大成也者，金声而玉振之也。金声也者，始条理也；玉振也者，终条理也。”



Figure 18. Main building of the Confucius Research Institute, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

3.5 Confucius Cultural Park

Qufu Confucius Cultural Park (孔子文化园) is located 800 m south of Confucius Temple, opposite to Confucius Research Institute in the west. From the aerial view, the Park seems to be the complementary part of the Research Institute connected by the crescent shaped Xiaoyi River (小沂河) passing through the sites. The project was completed around 2009–2016, covering a land area of 2,888.8 sqm⁵¹ with over 400 Ming-style buildings. The theme expresses the *Analects of Confucius*, while its planning and design have adopted the elegance of classical Chinese gardens with a layout following the natural contour of a river site in an organic and spontaneous style.

After entering the West Gate of the Park, one immediately sees a Confucius statue [Figure 3]. In the north side, there is a Chinese Studies Center (国学中心) planned in traditional Chinese architectural style with a north-south central axis, a courtyard paved with the pattern of circular heaven and square earth, and a Hall of the Great Ensemble (大成殿) named after that in Confucius Temple.

Walking along the main route of the park, one will encounter moon gates, archways, a stele garden, a bridge, long corridors, galleries, pavilions, platforms, stone sculptures, inscriptions, calligraphies, halls, and so on. The main architectural structures include the Apricot Altar Theater (杏坛剧场), Hall of Virtuous Flora (善华堂), Hall of Bright World (光世堂), Pond of Dissolution (泮池), Hill of Benevolence (仁山), Island of the Lake of Happiness (乐湖岛), Pavilion of the Song of Returning Home (咏归亭), Must-See Pavilion (必观亭), among others.

The natural landscape includes trees, flowers, grass, streams, pools, waterfalls, rockeries, grottos, winding paths, and so forth. Water (*yin*) and rocks (*yang*) are two fundamental elements in classical Chinese garden design as they represent *yin yang* balance and harmony [20]. The park has added facilities for hosting live performances, lectures, exhibitions, and other cultural activities [Figures 19 and 20].

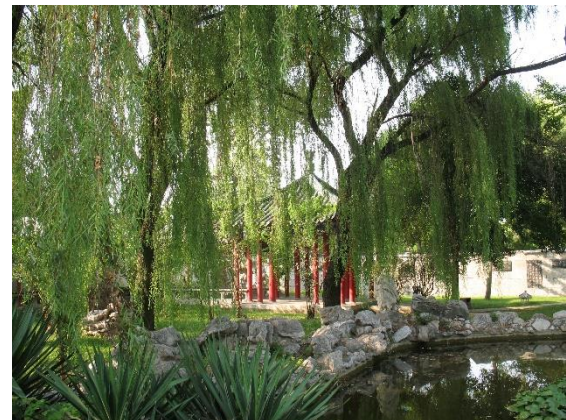


Figure 19. Pavilion, willow trees, and stream, Confucius Cultural Park, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

⁵¹ The current circumference of the universe = $2 \times 46 \text{ billion light years} \times \pi = 288.88 \text{ billion light years}$.



Figure 20. Bridge, trees, pond, and rockery, Confucius Cultural Park, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

3.6 Confucius Six Arts City

Confucius Six Arts City (孔子六艺城) in Qufu is a theme park completed in 1992 and opened in 1993, covering a land area of 13 hectares and a built-up area of 60,000 sqm. It is now divided into two parts: Confucius Six Arts City (Experience Area), and Confucius Former Residence Garden (孔子故里园, Folk Customs Exhibition Area).

The planning of the Six Arts City has adopted ancient Chinese architectural symbolism of circular heaven and square earth, incorporating not only beautiful gardens, but also indoor attractions with extensive scenes of rich cultural connotations, exquisite and colorful amusement facilities, and elegant palatial buildings with complete functions. It interprets Confucian six arts of “rituals and etiquettes, music and dance, archery, chariot driving, calligraphy, and mathematics”⁵² in a unique way, aiming to uphold Confucian ideology and be an exemplar of “melting the past while casting the present.”⁵³

After entering the south Main Gate of the Six Arts City, a large plaza with ritual scenes of miniatures of people and imperial buildings immediately appears

[Figure 21]. In the east and west sides of the plaza, there are two massive screen walls in black background and engraved in gold color of Confucian six arts performances in Chinese history. Within the site, there are numerous designated areas, including “Confucius Travelling the States,”⁵⁴ “Confucius Lecturing at Apricot Altar”⁵⁵ [Figure 22], “Hall of Rites” (礼厅), “Hall of Books” (书厅), “Hall of Driving” (御厅), “Hall of Music” (乐厅), “Hall of Archery” (射厅), and “Hall of Mathematics” (数厅) which is designed in the form of a globe at the center of the Six Arts City. Taking the six arts as the main theme, it creates artistic attractions with a combination of pre-Qin style and modern technologies, producing broad views and extraordinary atmospheres in Confucian era that are informative, entertaining, and participatory, so that visitors can experience the life of Confucius and participate in various tour programs, such as observing Zhou rituals, appreciating music and dance, competing archery, seeking traces of the sage, learning calligraphy, listening to lectures, and exploring labyrinths, while experiencing the long and profound Chinese history.

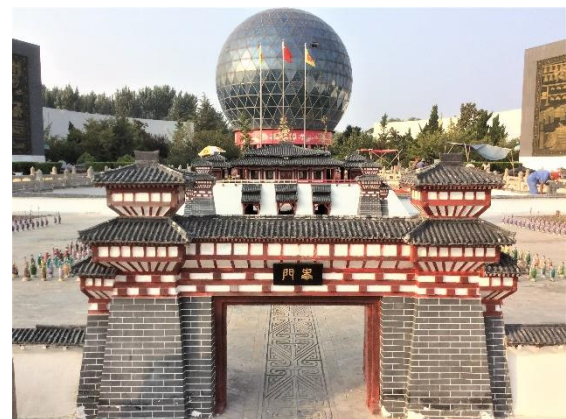


Figure 21. Front plaza, Confucius Six Arts City, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

⁵² “礼、乐、射、御、书、数” (礼法、乐舞、射箭、驾车、书法、算术)。

⁵³ “熔古铸今”

⁵⁴ “孔子列国行”

⁵⁵ “孔子杏坛讲学”

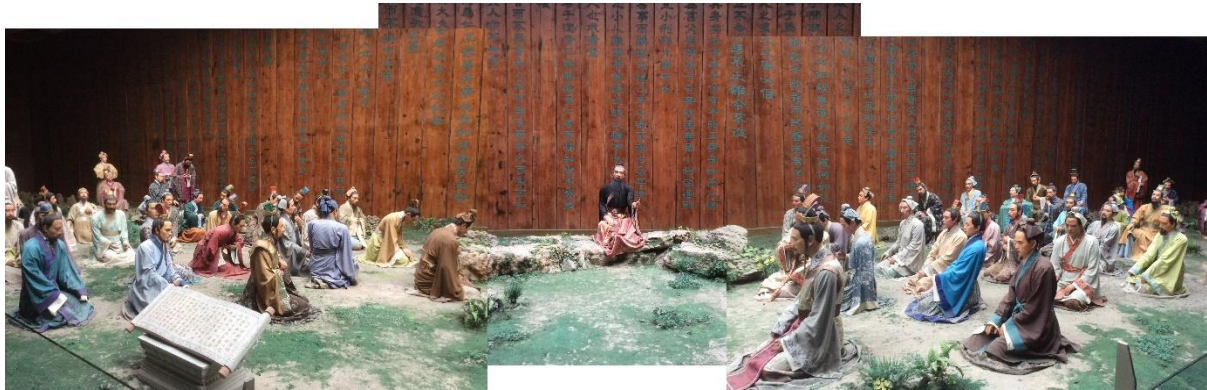


Figure 22. Confucius Lecturing at Apricot Altar, Confucius Six Arts City, Qufu. Source: Photos by the author, 2017

Confucius Former Residence Garden is located right to the east of the Six Arts City as an essential part of it, with a themed cultural landscape resembling a Chinese scroll painting. It unfolds a rich history of folk customs, presenting concrete and colorful historical scenes of the Kong Family's "One Hundred Households Workshop,"⁵⁶ inherited skills, situation comedies (sitcoms), Han-dynasty marriage customs, and folk-art performances. One may feel like walking through the prosperous ancient Lu capital. Taking full advantage of modern technologies, the Residence Garden has incorporated numerous cultural tourism products, including in-depth Confucian culture experience tour, Confucius study tour, Confucius hometown New Year celebrations, and intangible cultural heritage experience tour, among others [Figures 23 and 24]. However, the Six Arts City seems to gear towards tourism; there is a high degree of commercialism in this place.



Figure 23. Confucius Former Residence Garden, Confucius Six Arts City, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 24. Confucius portrait at Confucius Former Residence Garden, Confucius Six Arts City, Qufu. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

⁵⁶ “孔家百户作坊”

3.7 Confucius Museum

Qufu Confucius Museum (孔子博物馆) is located 4 km north of Confucius Temple, on the south end of the city's central axis, echoing the Three Kongs UNESCO World Heritage Site. Imitating Han Chinese architectural style, the Museum's main building was completed in 2017 and officially opened in 2019. Its predecessor was Qufu Cultural Relics Bureau, Kong Family Mansion Cultural Relics Archives. Planned and designed in a square form also by Wu Liangyong, Confucius Museum covers a land area of 168,000 sqm and a built-up area of 55,000 sqm, with a total of 17,000 sqm exhibition spaces.

The upper exhibition hall holds displays focusing on Confucius, consisting of a Preface Hall with five parts, offering a general introduction to Confucius through multimedia projections. The five parts include Confucius Era, Confucius Life, Confucius Wisdom, Confucius and Chinese Civilization, and Confucius and World Civilization. The lower exhibition hall has the exhibitions of the family treasures of poetry and rituals in three units: Grace of the Predecessors to Their Descendants (余荫百世), Kong Family Mansion Archives, and Queli Legacy.

In addition, there are special exhibition halls for temporary displays. The collections of 700,000 cultural relics of various kinds mainly came from historical accumulations of the Kong Family Mansion, archaeological excavations^[21], donations, and auctions. The internationally well-known collections include 300,000 private documents and archives of Confucius from the Ming dynasty to 1948, over 40,000 rare and ancient books since the Song dynasty, over 8,000 Ming-Qing-style clothes and costumes, and many ritual instruments related to worshipping Confucius. In December 2020, Qufu Confucius Museum was rated as a national first-class museum [Figure 25].



Figure 25. Confucius Museum near completion. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

On June 11, 2022, the Rituals and Music Institute (礼乐传习所) was launched at Confucius Museum, with the opening ceremony held at the Pavilion of Literary Constellation (奎文阁) on the 3rd floor. The Institute aims to research, teach, and disseminate knowledge, and to promote and popularize Confucian rituals and music culture that has been passed down to all aspects of society for millennia.

4. DISCUSSION

The Confucian concept of central harmony is reflected in the planning and design of historical Confucian architecture in Qufu, namely the Temple of Confucius and the Kong Family Mansion, both of which have a north-south central axis, east-west bilateral symmetry, nine-rise courtyards, and hierarchical arrangement of the halls and rooms within the compound, in compliance with the cosmic order. Ancient Chinese worldview of circular heaven and square earth are also persistent in the planning and design of modern Confucian architecture in Qufu, such as the Confucius Research Institute, Confucius Cultural Park, and Confucius Six Arts City [Table 1]. Moreover, the Daoist concept of *Yin Yang* and *Feng Shui* are mirrored in the planning of the Cemetery of Confucius, Confucius Research Institute, Confucius Cultural Park, and Confucius Six Arts City [Table 2].

Table 1. Chinese philosophy reflected in Confucian architecture in Qufu

No.	Confucian Architecture	First Construction Time	Reconstruction Style	Planning and Design Pattern	Chinese Philosophy
1	Temple of Confucius	478 BCE	Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911)	North-south central axis, east-west bilateral symmetry, nine-rise courtyards	Harmony with cosmic order
2	Kong Family Mansion	1377	1503: Ming (1368–1644)	North-south central axis, east-west bilateral symmetry, nine-rise courtyards	Harmony with cosmic order; <i>Yang Zhai</i> (House for the Living)
3	Cemetery of Confucius	479 BCE	Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911)	<i>Yin Yang</i> , <i>Wuxing</i> , <i>Feng Shui</i>	Harmony with cosmic order; <i>Yin Zhai</i> (House for the Dead)
4	Confucius Research Institute	1996–2000	Neoclassical	Circular heaven and square earth	Harmony with heaven and earth
5	Confucius Cultural Park	c.2009–2016	Ming (1368–1644)	Circular heaven and square earth, <i>Yin Yang</i> balance	Harmony with cosmic order
6	Confucius Six Arts City	1992–1993	Neoclassical and Modern	Circular heaven and square earth	Harmony with heaven and earth
7	Confucius Museum	2017–2019	Han Chinese	Square earth	Harmony with earth

Source: Tabulation by the author

Table 2. Four pairs of *Yin Yang* relationship of Confucian architecture in Qufu

No.	Yang	Yin
1	Temple of Confucius (south)	Confucius Museum (north)
2	Kong Family Mansion (south)	Cemetery of Confucius (north)
3	Confucius Cultural Park (east)	Confucius Research Institute (west)
4	Confucius Former Residence Garden (east)	Confucius Six Arts City (west)

Source: Tabulation by the author

Since the Han dynasty, Confucian ideology had played an active role in advancing and consolidating multi-ethnic China and promoting national culture and economy for a long time, making the country one of the most advanced civilizations in the world before the Western Industrial Revolution that began in 1760. After more than two millennia of continuous development, Confucianism has become a deep-rooted element of mainstream Chinese culture that has had a profound impact on political, economic, social, cultural, and other aspects of Chinese life. Today, Confucianism is still an important spiritual foundation with a strong vitality for China's remarkable progress.

Confucianism traversed the borders and spread to east and southeast Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam over the millennia, and has greatly promoted the social stability, economic development, and cultural prosperity of these countries, so that their politics, law, education, ways of thinking, value systems, and living customs, all have embedded with Confucian ideology. Therefore, China and the above-mentioned countries have been considered as "Confucian Cultural Circle."⁵⁷ In the 17th century, Confucianism crossed the ocean and extended to Europe, having played a certain role in the formation and development of the later French Enlightenment Movement and German Dialectical Thought. In 1687, Latin translations of the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Analects of Confucius*, were published in Paris, marking Confucianism official introduction to the West.

Since the 20th century, Confucianism has stepped further to the world, with the *Analects of Confucius* being translated into dozens of languages including Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Russian, Arabic, Hebrew, English, French, German,

Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, among others. The great historical influence of Confucius has made his temple gradually built outside China since the 3rd century BCE and has been firmly established around the world since the late Ming dynasty. There were once over 2,000 Confucian temples in Asia, and at least 100 in existence across the globe today, but Qufu Confucius Temple is the original one.

Qufu hosted the International Confucius Culture Festival that was linked to the first International Confucian Studies Conference in 1987, World Confucian Conference in 2007, and the Nishan Forum of World Civilizations held annually since 2010 at the birthplace of Confucius in southwest Qufu. The World Internet Conference Nishan Dialogue on Digital Civilization was also held here from June 25–27, 2023, with the theme titled: "The Era of Artificial Intelligence: Building a Digital World of Communication, Mutual Learning, and Inclusiveness" [22]. These conferences aim to create dialogues between the world's two leading and balancing civilizations: Confucianism and Christianity, while drawing on comparative wisdoms of Confucius and Jesus.

5. CONCLUSION

This article provided an in-depth and detailed study of the cultural city of Qufu and the Three Kongs: Kong Temple/Temple of Confucius, Kong Family Mansion, and Kong Forest/Cemetery of Confucius, mostly rebuilt in the Ming and Qing dynasties and that became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. It also traced the four modern architectural complexes related to Kongzi built in the 1990s–2010s: Confucius Research Institute, Confucius Cultural Park, Confucius Six Arts City, and Confucius Museum.

The study has found that these architectural compounds were planned and designed according to traditional Chinese architectural principles of circular heaven

⁵⁷ "孔子文化圈"

and square earth, *yin yang* balance and harmony, *wuxing*, *Feng Shui*, north-south central axis, east-west bilateral symmetry, and nine-rise courtyards, exhibiting a well-defined Confucian culture of social hierarchy and central harmony, in line with the cosmic order. Thus, the aesthetic principle of harmony has extended from philosophy to architecture, which confirms the existing research findings^[17, 23-25].

The research has also found that Confucianism and Confucian temples have spread to east and southeast Asia, Europe, America, and elsewhere. In particular, the four countries of China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam are collectively called “Confucian Cultural Circle.” It is hoped that this sphere may expand and enlarge in the 21st century and beyond to create a more harmonious world.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

The research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

FURTHER DISCLOSURE

This paper was presented at the 15th Annual Meeting of the Comparative and Continental Philosophy Circle (CCPC, remote), Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia, May 14, 2022. The PowerPoint Presentation can be found at: https://www.academia.edu/79092301/Qufu_City_and_Confucian_Architecture_Presentation

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