

WORLD: GLOBAL OIL PRICE DROP P.24 | BUSINESS: RAIL MERGER P.34

BEIJING REVIEW

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LEARNING PATTERNS

Confucius Institutes celebrate a decade of reaching out to the world




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A photograph of a diverse group of business professionals, including men and women of various ethnicities, seated in a lecture hall with red chairs. They are all smiling and looking towards the right side of the frame, suggesting they are attending a presentation or conference.

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Cover Photo: Russian students learn traditional Chinese paper-cutting craft at a Confucius Institute in Russia on October 22, 2013 (CFP)

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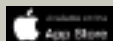
BUSINESS

P.34 | **Alliance Between Giants**

Rail behemoths join forces and pool resources



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EDITOR'S DESK

Bridging Cultures

The Confucius Institute ushered in its second decade this year. Since the first Confucius Institute was established in Uzbekistan in 2004, 472 such institutes and 730 Confucius Classrooms have been established in universities, as well as elementary and secondary schools, in 123 countries and regions. Some 50,000 teachers and volunteers have been dispatched abroad, educating a combined total of approximately 850,000 students around the world. By teaching the Chinese language and introducing Chinese culture, the Confucius Institute has played an important role in promoting communication between Chinese and other cultures.

Many countries have made their own attempts to promote language and culture. For example, France has the Institut de France; Germany has the Goethe-Institut; and Spain has the Instituto Cervantes. Since the birth of the first Confucius Institute, the non-profit organization, by learning from the successful experience of its Western counterparts and combining the features of the Chinese language and culture, has developed a set of new methods suitable for its own experiment in disseminating language and culture.

The Confucius Institute, named after ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 B.C.), is a learning center set up in foreign universities or research institutes. One of its most important tasks is

to provide standardized and authorized textbooks for Chinese-language learners around the world.

Confucius is regarded as a symbol of traditional Chinese culture. As early as 1593, *The Analects of Confucius*, a collection of Confucius' aphorisms and anecdotes compiled by his disciples, was introduced to Europe by Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552-1610). Today, the institute bearing the philosopher's name has spread around the globe. It has become an essential platform for promoting cross-cultural communication in order to reach mutual understanding and build a harmonious world.

According to statistics, in the past 10 years, Chinese leaders have attended more than 200 activities organized by Confucius Institutes in different countries and regions. More than 200 foreign leaders have attended activities organized by Confucius Institutes in their countries.

On March 29, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited a Confucius Institute in Germany. When talking with German sinologists as well as faculty and student representatives in Berlin, Xi said, "Grasping a language is grasping the 'golden key' to a country's culture." As the "golden key" to Chinese culture, the Chinese language will help more foreign people understand the country's culture and create closer relations between the peoples of China and other countries. ■

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UPWARDLY MOBILE

Employees pose for a group photo in front of the "HELLO MOTO" installation in celebration of Lenovo's acquisition of Motorola Mobility in Beijing on October 31.

Lenovo Group, the world's largest personal computer maker, announced the day before that it had fully acquired Motorola's mobile business, thus becoming the world's third largest smartphone maker. In the \$2.9-billion deal, Lenovo took over the Motorola brand and its portfolio of innovative smartphones such as the Moto X, Moto G and Moto E series, as well as inheriting the blueprints and prototypes for all future Motorola products.



JU HUANZONG

Return From the Moon

Researchers retrieve the return capsule of China's unmanned lunar orbiter in the central region of north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on November 1.

The test lunar orbiter, nicknamed *Xiaofei*, was launched on October 24 and traversed 840,000 km on its eight-day mission in which it rounded the far side of the moon to take some incredible pictures of Earth and the moon together.

It was the world's first round-trip mission to the moon in some 40 years, making China the third nation to do so after the former Soviet Union and the United States.

Anti-Corruption Agency

China will establish a new anti-graft body to put further pressure on corrupt officials, Deputy Procurator General Qiu Xueqiang has said.

Qiu told Xinhua in an exclusive interview that the plan for a new anti-graft agency was put forward by the Party committee of the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) and was approved by the central authority.

A vice-ministerial level, full-time member of the procuratorial committee will hold a concurrent post as head of the new anti-graft agency. The new agency will be better organized and better able to help the SPP handle major cases and break institutional obstacles.

China established the anti-corruption

bureau under the SPP in 1995. After almost 20 years of development, it has struggled to meet demands due to ineffectiveness in handling corruption cases.

More Students Abroad

The government-sponsored China Scholarship Council (CSC) on October 30 said it will send 25,000 students abroad next year, 17 percent more than in 2014.

An official with the CSC said the expansion will include up to 8,000 more Chinese graduate and doctorate students.

The official said the CSC have sent 20,400 students abroad in 2014, making a total of 46,000 students in 85 countries supported by the CSC.

The council has established

ORIENTAL JEWELS

The 2014 China International Jewelry Fair will be held from November 13 to 17 at Beijing China International Exhibition Center, with over 1,200 exhibitors from 19 countries and regions attending



GAC

programs with some international organizations. In July, it signed an agreement with the UNESCO to send interns there.

Since 1996, the CSC has sent over 160,000 Chinese students to study abroad, and 98 percent of them have returned home.

Quantum Network

China will build a global quantum communication network by 2030, according to a leading Chinese quantum physicist on November 2.

"China's quantum information science and technology is developing very fast and China leads in some areas in this field," said Pan Jianwei, a Chinese quantum scientist and professor at the University of Science and Technology of China.

The field of quantum communication, the science of transmitting quantum states from one place to another, has grabbed global attention in recent years since the discovery of quantum cryptography, which is described as a way of creating "unbreakable" codes.

China will achieve Asia-Europe intercontinental quantum key distribution in 2020 and build a global quantum communication network in 2030, said Pan at the 2014 International Conference on Quantum Communication, Measurement and Computing, which opened on November 2 in Hefei, Anhui Province.

This is the first time that China has hosted the influential biannual quantum conference, which lasted until November 6.

More than 400 experts from 28 countries and regions discussed research, achievements and industrialization in the quantum information field during the meeting.

Anti-Drone Laser

China has successfully tested a homemade laser defense system for targeting small-scale drones flying at low altitude.

The machine is able to shoot down various small aircraft within a 2-km radius and can do so within 5 seconds of locating its target, said a statement released on November 2 by the China Academy of Engineering Physics, one

of the system's co-developers.

Characterized by its speed, precision and low noise, the system is designed to destroy unmanned, small-scale drones flying within an altitude of 500 meters and at a speed below 50 meters per second, it said.

The new laser system, which will either be installed or transported in vehicles, is expected to play a key role in ensuring security during major events in urban areas, the statement said, adding that a recent test saw the machine successfully shoot down more than 30 drones—a 100-percent success rate.

Political Ability

The “political ability” of rural Chinese people is at a medium level and more than half believe going to court is too much trouble, according to a Chinese university research report on October 30.

The report surveyed more than 4,000 residents in 242 villages nationwide from 2013 to 2014.

The overall political ability index of non-urbanites in China was calculated at 0.59, medium level (between 0.4 and 0.6), according to the report by the center for Chinese rural studies at the Central China Normal University.

Anywhere between 0.6 and 0.8 is considered high and 0.8-1.0 is very high. The index uses 36 categories, both objective and subjective, covering political knowledge, awareness, attitude and participation.

Rural people with high income and good education care more about political events and are more likely to join in public affairs.

“Rural people are a foundational aspect of the country's rule of law. Legal knowledge and awareness should be further promoted among rural people,”

Xu Yong, head of the rural studies center at the Central China Normal University



Medical Aid

Working staff in the Kotoka International Airport of Ghana unload medical aid materials, including protective clothing and goggles, sprayers, gauze masks, body thermometers as well as temperature monitors, from China on October 29.

Starting from April this year, China, the first foreign country to provide assistance to the affected nations, has delivered four batches of emergency relief items worth \$122 million.

Railway for Tibet

China has approved construction of a railway linking Lhasa, capital city of Tibet Autonomous Region to Nyingchi in its east, local authorities said on October 31.

According to the plan approved by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the Lhasa-Nyingchi section of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway runs 402 km from Nyingchi to Xierong, a stop on the Lhasa-Xigaze line.

The 32-km section from Xierong to Lhasa will be electrified.

The new Tibet line was one of

the three rail lines approved by the NDRC, the country's top economic planning body. The other two are from Ordos in the northern Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region to Ji'an in the eastern Jiangxi Province, and from Datong in the northern Shanxi Province to Zhangjiakou in neighboring Hebei Province. The total investment of the three is 250 billion yuan (\$40 billion).

The Tibet project will cost 36.6 billion yuan (\$5.95 billion) and take seven years to complete. The state-owned China Railway Corporation will build and operate the line.

Traffic Control

An odd-even license plate policy for cars, including those from outside Beijing, is put in place from November 3 to 12, in an effort to improve air quality during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting.

According to the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau, starting from November 3, 70 percent of the municipal government's vehicles, around 19,000 of its fleet, faced driving restrictions.

Beijing imposed a traffic ban based on an odd-even license plate system during the 2008 Olympics, which saw 45 percent of the city's cars off the roads and helped clear the skies.



Moderate PMI

Activity in China's service sector continued to moderate in October, with the purchasing managers' index (PMI) for the non-manufacturing sector sliding to its lowest point since January, official statistics showed on November 3.

The non-manufacturing sector PMI posted at 53.8 percent in October, down 0.2 percentage points from September, according to a report jointly released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP).

The country's official manufacturing PMI also dropped to a five-month low of 50.8 percent in October from 51.1 percent in September, according to data released by the NBS and CFLP on November 1.

However, the readings were still above the 50-percent boom-bust line, which separates expansion from contraction on a monthly basis.

"Although the index pulled back slightly, it is still running smoothly, with some signs of good development demonstrated," said Cai Jin, Vice President of CFLP.

Information Sharing

Chinese courts and banks will establish an information sharing system to punish court order defaulters and facilitate enforcement, the Supreme People's Court (SPC) announced on November 2.

The SPC and the China Banking Regulatory Commission have jointly issued a circular on sharing such information online, and according to



CHEN YICHEN

TURNING WASTE INTO WEALTH

A worker transports straw in a storehouse of Jiangsu Guoxin Rudong Biomass Power Generation Co. Ltd., which is among the country's first group of straw-burning power generation projects and has been put into commercial operation since July 2008

the circular, Chinese banks will take measures such as restrictions on loans and issuing credit cards to people who have defaulted on court orders.

The banks will also help the courts in information inquiry, fund freezing and seizing regarding such defaulters' cases, the circular said.

However, the circular also stressed that such measures must be taken with due procedures and fund security being guaranteed.

Reassuring Car Owners

China's quality watchdog demanded joint-venture FAW-Volkswagen submit new materials to verify the effectiveness of a latest recall due to defective rear axles.

On October 17, the company announced a recall of more than 581,000 cars, including its New Sagitar and Beetle vehicles, as the trailing arms of the rear axles could rupture in certain scenarios. It offered to place a metal plate in the trailing arm to ensure the proper operation in case of a rupture.

China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) said in a statement on November 1 that its defective product management center has ordered the company to provide further materials for verifying the recall measure's effectiveness.

The AQSIQ also ordered its management center to devote more technological resources to the case and organize assessment of FAW-Volkswagen's recall by inspection bodies and industry experts.

The center asked affected car owners to contact the company's dealers for examination in the case of a trailing arm deformation or a rupture and also to report the problem to the center online, the statement said.

New Air Route

China Eastern Airlines will launch the first route from Shanghai to Nepal's capital Katmandu on December 2, the company said on November 1.

The new daily flight will use a Boeing 737 aircraft, and flights in both



YAO JIANFENG

Preparing for a Harvest

A consumer picks corn seed at the Liaoning Shenyang Seed Trade Fair.

The three-day fair, opened on November 3, attracted more than 1,000 enterprises, research institutions and farmers, with the theme of "picking safe and quality seeds."



Twilight Years That Sparkle

An old lady tests out an intelligent lift chair at the 2014 China Senior Citizen Exposition held in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, from October 31 to November 2.

directions will be via Kunming, capital city of southwest China's Yunnan Province.

Nepal has been attracting more and more Chinese visitors in recent years with its natural landscape, as well as cultural and religious heritage. Data showed that Chinese people visiting Nepal at their first stop stood at 51,400 in the first half of 2014, up by 22.41 percent from a year ago.

Currently, Air China is operating flights from Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province, to Katmandu, and China Southern Airlines is operating flights from Guangzhou, capital city of south China's Guangdong Province, to the same location.

HIGH-END HEAVY TRUCK

A staff works in an assembly shop of the newly completed FAW Jiefang production base in Qingdao, Shandong Province



Industrial Park

China and Germany have joined hands in building an industrial park to bolster technological upgrade in China's industry-intensive northeast.

Located in Shenyang, capital city of Liaoning Province, the 120-square-km park will be home to a host of industries such as assembling, automobiles, chemistry, medicine and electronics.

Aiming to enhance cooperation and exchanges, the move will help boost technological upgrade in northeast China, with both parties focusing on emerging sectors of high-end machine tools, robotics, 3D printing and others, said Yan Bingzhe, a local official

in Shenyang.

Amid growing bilateral relations, trade between China and Germany is closer than ever. By the end of 2013, some 400 German enterprises had opened branches in Liaoning, creating \$2.1 billion worth of foreign capital.

Anti-Dumping Review

The Ministry of Commerce began a review of its anti-dumping measures on adipic acid from the United States, the EU and the South Korea on November 1.

The sunset review of the five-year measures, first imposed on November 1, 2009, will last for 12 months ending on November 1 next year, according to the ministry.

The review comes after four domestic companies said dumping or damages to the domestic industry would reoccur if anti-dumping measures were terminated.

During the review period, adipic acid imports from South Korea will still be subject to anti-dumping duties ranging from 5.9 percent to 16.7 percent.

Meanwhile, imports from the United States and the EU will be subject to levies from 5 percent to 35.4 percent.

Adipic acid is primarily used in the production of nylon 6-6, polyurethane foam and polyester resins.

Oil Price Cut

The National Development and Reform Commission cut the retail price of gasoline by 245 yuan per ton (\$39.86) and of diesel by 235 yuan (\$38.32) on November 1.

The adjustment means retail prices will drop by 0.18 yuan per liter for gas and 0.2 yuan per liter for diesel.

The cut is the seventh since July, as international crude prices continue to slide.

The latest price cut will bring retail fuel prices to below 7 yuan per liter (\$4.34 per gallon) in most regions.

China has a pricing regime that adjusts domestic fuel prices when international crude prices change by more than 50 yuan (\$8.15) per ton for 10 working days.



SWEDEN

Foreign Minister Margot Wallström answers journalists' questions at a press conference in Stockholm on October 30, after the Swedish Government announced its decision to officially recognize the state of Palestine, becoming the first country to do so in the EU



ROMANIA

Prime Minister and candidate of the center-left coalition Victor Ponta and his wife Daciana Sarbu cast their ballots at a polling station in Bucharest on November 2, on the first round of the presidential election



COLOMBIA

Family members of 12 trapped miners who were presumed dead cry outside a flooded coal mine in the municipality of Amaga, Antioquia Department, on October 31



AUSTRALIA

Army chiefs from Australia and New Zealand attend the Albany Convoy Commemorative Event in Albany on November 1, marking the 100th year since their first convoy of troops left for the battlefields of World War I



BRITAIN

A man drives passengers in his 1903 L'Elegante sports car across Westminster Bridge in London on November 2, as he took part in the London-to-Brighton Veteran Car Run, an annual event since 1896



Belgium

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak (left) and Ukraine's Energy and Coal Industry Minister Yuri Prodan shake hands after signing an EU-brokered gas agreement in Brussels on October 30, under which Russia will resume gas deliveries to Ukraine through the winter to March

↓ REAL ESTATE TYCOON DONATES OVERSEAS

Pan Shiyi, Chairman of SOHO China, one of the country's leading real estate enterprises, donated \$10 million to Yale University together with his wife Zhang Xin on October 29. Although the donation will be used to sponsor Chinese students who have been admitted to the prestigious university, many commentators said that donating to schools in China should have been Pan's first priority.



Pan, born in October 1963 in Tianshui, northwest China's Gansu Province, has no overseas educational background, while his wife, who serves as SOHO China's CEO, graduated from the University of Cambridge and worked on Wall Street for a number of years. Pan began his real estate career in south China's Hainan Province in 1987 before establishing SOHO China in Beijing eight years later.

The couple announced that they will donate a total of \$100 million to renowned universities outside China. Prior to the Yale donation, they donated \$15 million to Harvard University in July.

The Mysterious Neighbor

China Newsweek
October 27

As ancient Oriental civilizations located respectively on the north and south side of the Himalayas, China and India share many similarities. They both have a population of over 1 billion, hold enormous potential for economic development, and their respective military powers have both been consistently on the ascension.

However, despite their similarities, for many Chinese, India remains a strange and, culturally if not geographically, distant land. The Chinese people's understanding of India has been of late limited only to reports about numerous recent rape cases in the country, Sino-Indian border disputes and President Xi Jinping's visit to the country in September. Their impression of India is mainly derived from movies such as *Slumdog*

Millionaire. In 2013, the number of Chinese tourists to India was just over 1 million.

It might therefore be surmised that the Chinese people's understanding of India is wholly inadequate. As two nations rising in the world, the relationship between China and India is of great importance in the 21st century. With the global center of gravity shifting to Asia, the matter of India, which has become Asia's third and the world's ninth largest economy, will increasingly have bearing on both China and the world.

In addition to their knowledge regarding popular subjects such as the Bollywood film industry, the much-revered Indian cuisine, India's dominant place in the global IT industry and the infamous slums of its main cities, the Chinese need to know more about India.



Repositioning Confucianism

Caijing Magazine
October 27

The series of activities recently carried out by the Chinese Government commemorating the 2565th anniversary of the birth of ancient philosopher Confucius have sparked a fresh debate on traditional Chinese culture.

Since the 1990s, China's traditional culture has attracted an ever-increasing amount of attention. However, there have long been two polarized opinions, with those who endorse it holding that traditional culture should rightfully be inherited because it can overcome the shortcomings of our present society and its opponents regarding it as a giant obstacle to social progress.

Every nation should cherish its traditions. Discussing whether or not the Chinese should pass on their traditional culture is an exercise in futility because as long as one speaks Chinese and writes in Chinese, he or she cannot possibly evade traditional culture.

However, it is notable that the Chinese traditional culture based on Confucianism has not displayed a strong ability or tendency to improve itself. That's partly because as Confucianism was historically wedded to political power, it was shielded from pub-

"We'll never slacken the efforts to deepen the fight against corruption in the army."

Chinese President **Xi Jinping**, calling for strict self-discipline in the country's armed forces at a conference held on October 30-31 in Gutian, southeast China's Fujian Province

"The U.S. Federal Reserve announced the tapering plan one year ahead, so the effect has already been absorbed. This demonstrated the Fed's responsible attitude."

Song Ke, a researcher with the International Monetary Institute at Renmin University of China, commenting on the U.S. Federal Reserve's recent decision to put an end to its quantitative easing program



lic commentary or criticism. This made it roundly impossible for the philosophy to re-evaluate itself and change with the times.

No such obstacles any longer exist with regard to researching Confucianism and other traditional systems of thought in China. A large amount of funds are being invested in several major projects aiming to study ancient culture. Scholars should also carry out comparative studies of Chinese and Western cultures and learn about the advantages of other philosophical traditions.

Fewer Death Penalties

Global Times
October 28

China's lawmakers are mulling over removing death penalties for nine crimes, including smuggling weapons and nuclear materials as well as fraud. This move would bring the total number of capital sentences down from 55 to 46. The draft amendment to the Criminal Law was submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for a first reading during the legislature's bi-monthly session.

China's policy of diminishing death penalties for certain crimes while retaining capital sentences for others is stable. Some have raised concerns that a reduction in crimes punishable by death will lead to more crime. This is mostly a baseless assumption. Throughout the world, no evidences prove that a lessening of the death penalty will lead to a higher rate of crime. Efforts to increase the efficiency of solving criminal cases and prevent crimes will help to make up for the loss of deterrence resulting from the abolition of death penalties for these nine crimes.

Stopping the use of the death penalty for non-violent crimes seems to be an irreversible trend in the long term, which will have to be realized one step at a time. It's improper to exaggerate the threat that reducing death penalty-punishable crimes would bring.

↓ 'FOXHUNTER'

Liu Jinguo, Vice Minister of Public Security, was elected deputy secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China (CPC), during a plenary meeting of the CPC top discipline watchdog in late October. Liu is currently spearheading China's international manhunt targeting corrupt officials and suspects in economic crimes that have fled the county.

The campaign, known as Fox Hunt 2014, was launched in July to "block the last route of retreat" for corrupt officials at a time when a major crackdown on graft had already narrowed the space available for abuse of power. Since its inception, approximately 180 economic crime suspects abroad have been brought into custody.

Liu, 59, was born in a village in north China's Hebei Province. After graduating from a local school in 1974, he worked at different levels of governmental and police departments in the province for over 30 years before becoming vice minister of public security in 2005.



"With easier access to mortgages and greater availability, at least 30 percent more home buyers will jump into the property market because upgraders, who are shopping for better properties, are able to enjoy the same mortgage benefits as first-time buyers."

Zhang Dawei, chief analyst at real estate agent Centaline Property, talking about China's recent loosening of its mortgage policy

"Air pollution is a regional problem—one that will require factories in Beijing as well as its surrounding provinces to work together to reduce pollutant emissions."

Ma Jun, Director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, a Beijing-based non-profit organization, calling for concerted efforts to improve air quality in the capital ahead of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

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COVER STORY

CULTURE AND COMMUNI

After a decade of development, Confucius Institutes have become an essential platform for promoting understanding between China and other countries

By Yin Pumin



BEAUTY OF ART: A student performs Chinese calligraphy at a celebration event held by the Confucius Institute at the University of Helsinki, Finland, on September 26

CATION



On September 27, the first Confucius Institute Day, all Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms worldwide, along with Hanban, the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing, held events to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the institutes' establishment through providing cultural experiences to millions of local people.

The institutes, named after ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 B.C.), serve as non-profit entities designed to provide a better understanding of Chinese culture through language tuition and cultural events in overseas universities. The first such institute was established in Uzbekistan in 2004.

To date, China has opened 472 Confucius Institutes in universities and 730 Confucius Classrooms in elementary and secondary schools in 123 countries and regions. Fifty-thousand teachers and volunteers have been dispatched abroad, educating a combined total of approximately 850,000 students around the globe.

In a letter of congratulation to the institute on its 10th anniversary, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that Confucius Institutes have taught the Chinese language over the past decade, which has played a key role in promoting positive relations with other countries.

"Confucius Institutes belong to the whole world, not just China," Xi wrote. "Let us continue to promote the civilization and cultures of all people, enhance communication and create a brighter future together."

A bridge between cultures

The institute at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, east of the international dateline, was the first to kick off the celebrative activities, while the one at the University of Hawaii was the last.

In the east of the United States, Confucius Institutes at Bryant University, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Rhode Island, and Central Connecticut State University held a Chinese Culture Night in Providence, Rhode Island. They also held a series of Chinese cultural events in the Waterfires Festival of Providence, attracting both local people and tourists.

Students from Bryant University and China's Zhejiang University preformed Chinese dragon dancing, a Kungfu show, Peking Opera and Chinese traditional music.

The Waterfires Festival is a widely attended event in New England, attracting tens of thousands of people every year.

Zhang Meifang, Chinese Deputy Consul General in New York City, said Confucius Institutes enrich the festival and serve as a bridge connecting various cultures and a path leading toward a harmonious and diversified community.

Established in October 2006, the Confucius Institute at Bryant University was the first China-funded institute in southern New England dedicated to the promotion of Chinese language and culture. Each year, some 2,000 people study the Chinese language as well as Chinese culture and arts here.

"We've worked very hard in the past eight years. [Everyone agrees] it has been a very great way to promote cultural exchanges," said Ronald K. Machtley, President of Bryant University.

Currently, the United States hosts 100 Confucius Institutes and 358 Confucius Classrooms, providing Chinese language instruction to as many as 220,000 American students in 2014, according to Hanban.

Susan Pertel Jain, Executive Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and a professor of art, has allowed her own passion in Chinese art to be absorbed into the institute's programs.

"People need to be inspired. Chinese art often provides the strongest impetus to learn the language," said Jain who holds degrees in Chinese language and Asian theater.

She emphasized that her institute is not only a place for learning the Chinese language, but also provides a space for local professionals in art to improve their interactions with Chinese counterparts during their work.

In Washington D.C., there was no institution until 2013, when George Washington University opened the city's first. Since its launch, the Confucius Institute has served more than 100 working professionals in the D.C. area, including employees of foreign embassies, neighboring universities and the federal government, according to Steven Knapp, President of the university who is currently serving a two-year term as one of 10 members of the Council of Confucius Institute Headquarters, a combined governing body and advisory board for Confucius Institutes worldwide.

"One of the unique roles and opportunities we have as a Confucius Institute is not only to reach out to our own students and educate them in Chinese language, history and culture, but also to reach beyond our campus to our neighbors," Knapp said while delivering the opening speech at a ceremony held by the Confucius Institute at George Washington University on September 26.

During the event, Greta Morris, acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy at the U.S. State Department, also gave a brief address congratulating the university's Confucius Institute for spreading Chinese culture throughout Washington D.C.

"As a diplomat, as well as a state department official who has studied and used foreign language in my overseas postings, I know how important it is to be able to speak and understand another language," she said. "Fluency in a foreign language is not only necessary for communication, but the key to understanding another culture."

Eric Baker is studying at the George Washington University's Confucius Institute. The Virginia-based professional said the effort the university has put into its Confucius Institute has yielded results in his career. He currently works for Loginex International, where he specializes in international employee relocations. He hopes his studies at the Confucius Institute will help him turn his focus to East Asia.

Baker added that he feels at home at the center, where he's made many friends from different cultures. "It's a place where people of all ages and backgrounds, in all stages of their careers, can come to exchange their common interest in China," he said. "It is truly a great community, and it offers a haven to those who want to be a part of it."

Business is a major factor in motivating local people to learn Chinese at the Confucius Institutes, according to Li Ning, a teacher who taught Chinese at the Confucius Institute at Heidelberg University, Germany, from 2011 to 2013.

"From the perspective of the students, they have practical goals. Many of the students or their parents are business people working in China and traveling between Heidelberg and



SINGING MERRILY: Local students sing Chinese songs during an activity held by the Confucius Institute at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, on March 7

Beijing or other Chinese provinces many times a year. They believe that knowing some Chinese can help their business," Li said.

In Europe, there are a total of 158 Confucius Institutes and 178 Confucius Classrooms, according to Hanban. Germany alone hosts 15 Confucius Institutes and three Confucius Classrooms.

The Confucius Institute at Heidelberg University was jointly established by Heidelberg University and China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University in April 2010. While offering language courses for the public at large, the institute also put focus on cultural offerings, said Li. Its main target groups were academics, university and secondary-school students, teachers of Chinese, and members of commercial enterprises.

"We often hold seminars, conferences and workshops—sometimes in conjunction with other institutes—on Chinese painting, calligraphy, music and literature, as well as courses on traditional Chinese medicine," Li said.

The institute also organizes service functions and networking events for the entire Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region in collaboration with their partners there.

In Italy, the Confucius Institute at La Sapienza University in Rome was the first

among the 11 Confucius Institutes to be established in the country. Its Italian director, Federico Masini, was emphatic about the success of the program so far.

"When we established the Confucius Institute in Rome eight years ago, many wondered how we could possibly bring together two cultures so different to each other. Today, thanks to mutual willingness and curiosity, we proved that it can be done," Masini said.

Exchange between Italians and Chinese at the institute has even gone beyond just language learning.

"I have been practicing Tai Chi for five years, and that is why I also study the Chinese language," said Piero Del Vecchio from Rome. He said a specific interest or goal would be usually needed in order to draw someone close to such a distant language.

"For some people, it is the hope to find more chances for their business, for students is the hope of a better future. For me, it was Tai Chi. I have found the wisdom I have derived from Tai Chi has benefited my body and mind," he said.

Masini said the interaction between the two cultures would bring long-term benefits for Italian society. "Cultural exchanges with China will impact positively on our society as a whole. The exchanges would also contribute to preparing our future Italian citizens to be more open-minded people."

Comprehensively inclusive

In Cyprus, the University of Cyprus and the Beijing Institute of Education officially initiated cooperation on October 27, marking the event with an inauguration ceremony for the Confucius Institute at the university.

President of the University Nicos Anastasiades, said this valuable interaction would lead to innovative and progressive collaboration in the academic, research, and educational fields.

In Hungary, the Central and Eastern Europe Chinese Language Teachers Training Center began its first training course at the Confucius Institute of Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest in June. Dozens of local Chinese language teachers from eleven Central and Eastern European countries

came to attend training.

In Africa, China operates 42 Confucius Institutes at many of Africa's top universities, stretching from Cape Town to Cairo.

China also runs one of the world's largest short-term training programs. The African Talents Program, launched in 2012, aims to train 30,000 African professionals in China between 2013 and 2015, and 18,000 African trainees will benefit from full scholarships to study at Chinese universities under the scheme.

In Ghana, its first and only Confucius Institute was established at the University of Ghana in May 2013. It was established to help Ghanaians learn the Chinese language, enjoy Chinese culture and help to develop and further fortify China-Ghana relations, said Mei Meilian, Director of the Ghanaian Confucius Institute.

Ignatius Suglo is a graduate of the University of Ghana. Having won the Special Prize for the overall best position in the Chinese Bridge Competition as a student, he went on to represent his country in the worldwide Chinese Bridge Competition this year.

The Chinese Bridge Competition is a large-scale international contest sponsored by Hanban that aims to prompt the enthusiasm of students worldwide in learning Chinese and to strengthen the global understanding of the Chinese language and culture.

Suglo went into the world competition in Beijing and finally won the second place among all the African students. He was among the first

batch of students at the University of Ghana to begin learning Chinese.

"Looking back after many years, I think it has paid off," Suglo said. He believes learning Chinese has broadened his horizons especially on world affairs. Having studied with Chinese students, he has also learnt a lot of their culture.

In Asia, China has also established many Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms. Hanban's figures show that there are 102 Confucius Institutes and 58 Confucius Classrooms today.

Thailand hosts 12 Confucius Institutes and 11 Confucius Classrooms, the most in Asia. The Confucius Institute at Khon Kaen University was launched in 2006, making it the oldest in the country.

"The school has become a benchmark Confucius Institute for Thailand and the rest of Asia," said Wang Guibin, Director of the Confucius Institute at the university.

According to Wang, his institute has the most students learning Chinese in Thailand. "This semester alone, more than 6,900 students registered at different teaching centers of our Confucius Institute," he told *Beijing Review*.

Besides teaching Chinese, the institute is also committed to promoting Chinese culture among different groups of people in Thailand.

Today, with a new classroom building ready to open in December, the Confucius Institute at Khon Kaen University is set to become the larg-

est in the world. "With the best facilities, I have confidence we will take our institute to a higher level in promoting cultural communications between the peoples of China and Thailand," Wang said.

Like those in other areas, the Confucius Institutes in Central Asia and Transcaucasia have also seen rapid development. According to *Hanban*, the number of registered students in the region stood at 24,000 in 2013, up 33.3 percent year on year.

Alina Molokova has been learning at the Confucius Institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, for three years. She now speaks fluent Chinese and is has also taken up calligraphy. Like Molokova, other students regularly gather to practice what they say is the most difficult form of writing, but an intriguing one at that.

"Calligraphy is so interesting. I really love Chinese, and I hope to attend university in China," Molokova said.

"Students are interested in writing with a brush, not because they want to be calligraphers themselves. We want them to have some interest in Chinese culture in general," Tashkent Confucius Institute teacher Tuo Jianming said.

With one side hoping to spread its cultural influence in the region and the other eager to learn about it, Confucius Institutes are welcomed in cities across the region.

Many students say that as a former part of the Soviet Union, they often put great emphasis in learning about Russia and other ex-Soviet Bloc countries, while knowing little about the economic powerhouse that lies just next door.

"When two peoples try to develop trade ties, mutual understanding between their cultures is crucial. Confucius Institutes help people learn the language for practical purposes," said Taissy Marmontova, an assistant professor with the Regional Studies Department of Eurasian National University in Kazakhstan.

Atuoda, a staff member of the China Southern Airlines office in Bishkek, now works for the ticketing department. His Chinese impresses every customer. He has also learned Chinese at the Confucius Institute at Bishkek Humanities University. His Chinese proficiency helped him get the job. ■

Confucius Institutes and Classrooms Worldwide

(as of October 2014)

The Americas: 152 Confucius Institutes in 17 countries, 424 Confucius Classrooms in 7 countries

Europe: 158 Confucius Institutes in 38 countries, 178 Confucius Classrooms in 22 countries

Asia: 102 Confucius Institutes in 32 countries and regions, 58 Confucius Classrooms in 14 countries

Oceania: 17 Confucius Institutes and 59 Confucius Classrooms in 3 countries

Africa: 42 Confucius Institutes in 29 countries, 11 Confucius Classrooms in 8 countries

(Source: Confucius Institute Headquarters)

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