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Live Confucian: The Newsletter of the Confucius Institute of Pace University December 2010

Confucius Institute Pace University

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Live Confucian

The Newsletter of the Confucius Institute at Pace University

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 2010

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An Intimate Scholarly Discussion By Yan Zhang



Liu Mengxi and Yu Dan led a lively discussion of philosophy.

In the afternoon of October 20th 2010, Professor Liu Mengxi and Professor Yu Dan, two famed scholars from China, had an intimate discussion with a group of New York scholars on Chinese philosophy and literature, at the executive boardroom at One Pace Plaza. Professor Liu is Director and research fellow at the Institute of Chinese Culture at the Chinese National Academy of Arts. He is a professor of literature, art science and theory, as well as founder and chief editor of the magazine *Chinese Culture*. Professor Yu is Vice Dean of the College of Arts and Media at Beijing Normal University. She is famous for giving Confucius's *Analects* a modern interpretation. Yu Dan has given more than 100 lectures on Confucianism throughout the world. These two scholars have known each other a long time. (cont. p. 5)

The Promising Future of Pace CI

By Dr. Weihua Niu, Director of the Confucius Institute at Pace University

Dear Friends of the Pace CI:

With the approach of the 2011, I want to thank you for your support in the past year. It has been a very exciting year with so many great events and programs, some of which are featured in this issue of the newsletter. In total, we have sponsored and cosponsored fifteen events this year to promote the understanding of the Chinese culture and language. We also launched two Chinese language courses, the NYCOS Student Essay Contest, and the Faculty Seminar program. Through these events, courses, and programs, we got to know you and hundreds of others from various walks of life. Importantly, we were able to form new alliances with many organizations in New York.

Looking ahead, we are even more excited. January 2011 marks the start of our Faculty Seminar and a number of Chinese courses designed both for Pace faculty and students and for the greater Downtown community. Moreover, in addition to organizing various events, festivals, and pro-

grams, we are also in the midst of launching several new projects, such as the development of Chinese teaching and learning materials, a state-of-the-art Chinese Resource Room and Chinese Language Testing Center, and a summer

camp. These developments promise that Pace CI will become a major force in promoting the understanding of Chinese culture and language globally.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing support. Please visit our website, subscribe to our email list, participate in our events, and come visit us. We are driven to excellence and innovation, and I hope that with your help, Pace CI can become an even greater center for the cultivation of Chinese culture and language.

Xin Nian Kuai Le -- Happy New Year!



Chinese Festivities on the Lower East Side

By Ansel Lurio, Program Coordinator



Students get their chance to help plant the nectarine tree.

Building on the success of the last Chinese Cultural Festival that was held at the Chinatown YMCA in June, the Confucius Institute held another festival at CAS-TLE Middle School (MS 345) on the Lower East Side on October 15. Unlike at the YMCA, which has a primarily Chinese student body, MS 345's students are mostly Latino and African-American. Holding the festival there, gave us the chance to reach out to a community unfamiliar with Chinese culture and values.

The theme of the festival was "honoring teachers", as Teachers' Day in China is celebrated at this time of year. Teachers' Day falls on the traditional birthday of Confucius, the great sage and teacher. Confucius is attributed to have said that "If you think in terms of a year plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people." To symbolize the growth that teachers bring to their students' lives, as part of the opening ceremonies, a nectarine tree was planted in the courtyard of the school.

Following the tree planting, the students were split up to participate in two fun and thought provoking interactive explorations of Chinese culture. Lin Ai Wei, Shifu led a demonstration of Kung Fu techniques and philosophy.

Students learned everything from the physics of why it is more effective to

kick with your front-facing leg, to showing that you respect your opponent and will not hurt him or her. Derek Rury and Cody Campbell, guided the students on a multi-media tour of "Magical China," inspiring them to paint murals depicting the life of Confucius. These activities caused the students to work up quite an appetite and they were treated to a Chinese meal of dumplings, noodles, and other mouthwatering dishes.

As a finale to the festival the Chinese Theatre Works dazzled the students with a sampling of traditional Chinese performing arts. Junling Wang played a selection of tunes on the Guzheng, a Chinese zither, and was followed by the Peacock Dance, with Qian Ma interpreting the beauty of the world's most splendid bird.

The highlight of the evening was a performance of *Stealing the Heavenly Peaches*, featuring Hongtao Fu in the role of the mischievous Monkey King and Kuang Yu-Fong as the fairy who attempts to stop him from stealing the peaches. Four lucky students were picked to be angels in the performance and as is the custom for first-time performers on the Chinese stage, were given a standing ovation from their fellow students when they finished. The most thrilling part of the production was the *Face Changing Dance*, a staple of Sichuan opera, performed by Naiyi Zhao. Part dance, part magic act, Zhao rapidly changed masks in the blink of an eye, so fast no one could see how he did it, wowing the audience.



The Monkey King charmed the students with his antics.

**"It takes ten years
to grow a tree and
a hundred years to
bring up a
generation of good
people."**

-Traditional
Chinese Proverb

十年树木，百年树人。

Looking Profoundly at Chinese Culture

By Dr. Yanyu Zhou, Associate Director

On Oct. 21, 2010, Professor Liu Mengxi, Director and research fellow at the Institute of Chinese Culture at the Chinese National Academy of Arts, delivered a seminar at Teachers College, Columbia University, on the topic of “The Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Culture.” The event was organized by the Confucius Institute at Pace University, the Renwen Society of the China Institute, and the Asia-Pacific Development Society of Columbia University.

According to Professor Liu, “culture” can be regarded as the life style and value system which a nation carries on, including knowledge, religion, beliefs, art, philoso-



phy etc.. Specifically, “traditional Chinese culture” refers to Chinese culture before the imperial system collapsed in 1911. Dr. Liu explained that there are two major characteristics of traditional Chinese culture. First, Chinese culture is inclusive and

tolerant. It embraces many cultures and integrates them as a whole. Second, Chinese culture itself is diverse. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism—major Chinese schools of philosophy—are all supported as integral parts of Chinese culture. Although Chinese culture is rich, diverse, and with a long distinguished history, the core values of Chinese culture can be included into two words: respect and sincerity. These two concepts are the fundamentals of the Chinese humanity which has formed the Chinese mindset and has maintained Chinese society throughout all of history. With his profound knowledge and deep insights, Professor Liu inspired the audience.

Musical Prelude

By Ansel Lurio



Preceding the talk by Dr. Mengxi, the audience was treated to a performance by a Chinese Classical Musical Troupe from Nanjing Normal University. The

members, who are mostly students, are virtuosos on their instruments and struck an emotional chord with the audience with their hauntingly beautiful interpretations of the pieces.

The troupe played together as a type of chamber group, known in China as a Sizhu (literally bamboo and silk – referring to the wind and string instruments) Ensemble, in duets, and as soloists. Some highlights included the ancient tune *Spring Snow*, elegantly performed on pipa (a pear shaped lute), *Horse Racing*, a lively duet that mimics horses riding on the Mongolian plains, and *Strolling Along the Su Causeway*, an ensemble piece that brings to mind the peaceful nature of the flowers and pavilions that line the causeway.

In Appreciation:

We would like to appreciate the hard work and contributions of three wonderful young men: Yichuan Ji, Ansel Lurio, and Cody Campbell. They are the engine behind all the programs and activities at the Confucius Institute at Pace University.



From left to right: Ansel Lurio, Cody Campbell, and Yichuan Ji.

Ancient Wisdom and Modern Sensibilities

By Yan Zhang

It was 6:30pm on October 20th 2010. All eyes were on Professor Yu Dan, as she presented Confucius's *Analects* with a modern sensibility



Yu Dan's mastery of oratory shows why she is such a respected figure in China.

at The Civic Student Union at Pace. Yu Dan specializes in the study of Confucius's philosophy and is Vice Dean of the College of Arts and Media at Beijing Normal University. In 2006, she gave a series of lectures on *The Analects* on China Central Television. Her quick wit, charismatic delivery and illustrations of Confucius' philosophy

with contemporary examples made her an instant household name in China. The audience at Pace University that night had a chance to experience her enlightening speech firsthand.

The title of Professor Yu's speech was *Confucius From the Heart: Ancient Wisdom for Today's World*. She was able to connect with the audience, who were of different backgrounds and cultures, by using some of Confucius' ancient theories to answer the questions from their hearts. Confucius said we should reflect daily on three aspects of ourselves, namely loyalty, promises and learning. Yu explained, "We should ask ourselves everyday: Have I been loyal to my colleagues at work? Have I kept my promises to my family? And have I

learnt something to improve myself?" She also extensively talked about benevolence, one of the key elements of *The Analects*. According to her, Confucius's main philosophy is to love people. It is not difficult to achieve benevolence when we can love others. She mentioned that today some of us are getting richer but are not happy because we neglect the simplest things, in the process of fighting for more wealth and resources. She asked, "Are we moving too fast without reflecting?"



Enthusiastic members of the audience fight for a chance to get a photo of Yu Dan.

All in all, there was not a dull moment during her two-hour speech. In the end, she even answered some questions from the audience. With a graceful bow and grateful words, Yu thanked the audience and went into the crowd to greet her enthusiastic fans. They were eager to know when she was coming back as they could not wait for another feast for their minds!

Faculty Seminar

Facilitated by the director of the Confucius Institute, 6 faculty members from all disciplines of all campuses at Pace University will participate in a year-long seminar, including 16 two-hour seminar sessions, learning about the Chinese language and culture, during the spring and fall of 2011 and a two-week intensive study trip in China during the summer of 2011. By the end of the program, each participating faculty will submit a detailed outline of a course proposal with the Chinese culture as one of the major themes of the course. This is an innovative program encouraging cross-disciplinary curriculum development within Pace and scholarly exchange between the partner universities of Pace and Nanjing Normal University.

有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎。

"Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?"

- Confucius, *The Analects*, 1:1

An Intimate Scholarly Discussion (Continued from Page 1)

Professor Liu, was in fact Professor Yu's advisor when she was a graduate student at the Chinese National Academy of Arts. Professor Liu talked about Chinese culture's influence in the world. He briefly mentioned the symbols of culture within the Chinese literature - calligraphy and characters. He believed that the Chinese culture of three thousand years should be passed onto the next generation and it should be an integral part of the modern world. Professor Yu echoed Professor Liu's sentiments. "I regard culture as a 'verb'," she said, "and in the study of Confucius, we often ask ourselves what else can we do about the ancient intellectual treasures?" She explained that making the classic wisdoms understandable to the general public was the reason why she is now a professor of mass media communication. Another highlight at the discussion was Professor Yu's talk about *The Peony Pavilion*, a classic play written by Tang Xianzu in the Ming Dynasty. Thanks to her vivid story-telling, other scholars felt as if an ancient love story that transcended life and death was re-playing in front of them in mere seconds. The atmosphere of the discussion was friendly and intellectually stimulating and we look forward to more discussions of this kind in the future!

Chinese Characters in Ancient Mexico

By Ansel Lurio



On November 15, History Professor Fan Yuzhou of Nanjing University gave a lecture on "The Origin of Chinese Characters and Their Spread in Ancient Central America." It is widely believed that thousands of years ago, Asian peoples migrated over the Pacific Ocean from China into present-day Central America. Recently, Fan, a historian and expert in the Chinese writing system, made discoveries of ancient writings in present-day Mexico that are similar to the characters on oracle bones and tortoise shells from the ancient Shang dynasty in China. In his lecture, Fan not only showed that writings in Ancient China and Mexico were similar, but that there are similarities in the artifacts found in archaeological digs. For instance, the human figures sit in a similar kneeling position and have similar features. To back up his theory that the ancient Chinese could have migrated over the Pacific, Fan showed that the ocean currents made it possible for a boat, built thousands of years ago, to make the voyage all the way from China to Mexico.

News Briefs

- This July, Ansel Lurio attended a meeting for local museums and other cultural institutions at the September 11 Memorial Museum to discuss collaborative plans to commemorate the World Trade Center Attacks on their 10th anniversary.
- On August 9th, Dr. Weihua Niu visited the Confucius Institute at San Diego State University (CISDSU), met with the staff members at the CISDSU, discussing potential future collaborations between the two Institutes.
- On Sept. 16th, Ansel Lurio and Dr. Niu attended the Mid-Autumn Fundraising Banquet of the Greater Chinatown Community Association.
- On Sept. 21st, Representatives from People's Education Press visited the Confucius Institute in order to discuss collaborations and publishing opportunities in the future.
- This November, Dr. Yanyu Zhou, built up relationships with many Chinese language and cultural agencies. On November 13-14, Zhou participated in "The Chinese Language Teachers Association – National Capital Region 2010 Fall Conference" and "US 1st Chinese Language and Culture Technology Expo (CLCTE)", which was held at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD and on November 18-21, in the "ACTFL 2010 Annual Convention and World Languages Expo" in Boston, MA.
- From December 9-11, Dr. Zhou will travel to Beijing to attend the 5th International Confucius Institute Convention.
- On December 17-19, the New York Chinese Opera Society will hold its annual performance at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts.

Exploring an Innovative Approach for Learning Chinese

By Ansel Lurio



Jinguo Zhang, who taught *Chinese for Business*, used the pinyin system for teaching, which allowed the students to learn a great deal in just a few brief weeks.

One of the goals of the Pace CI is to facilitate cross-cultural understanding between people in the United States and China. One way in which we aim to do this is through Chinese language instruction. This fall, for the first time ever, the Confucius Institute at Pace University offered non-credit introductory courses in Conversational and Business Chinese. These five-week, 10 hour courses were designed to fit the busy schedules of students and professionals. In *Gateway to Chinese* students learned how to have a basic conversation in Chinese and in *Chinese for Business* students learned 50 of the most useful phrases for traveling in China and gained an understanding of Chinese business culture and customs. Both of our teachers tried to be as hands-on as possible and hopefully kindled a desire in their students to continue on in their study of Mandarin. We hope that these classes are just the seeds of a much more comprehensive language program at the Pace CI in the future.

学而不厌，诲人不倦

“Never be contented with your study; never be impatient with your teaching.”

- Confucius,
The Analects, 7:2

Student's Perspective: Cody Campbell

For the last 5 weeks I've had the pleasure of taking the *Chinese for Business* course at The Confucius Institute here at Pace University. . Many of the people I work with speak Chinese and I thought it time I learned at least some basic phrases. The class was an excellent opportunity for a person like me, who had no experience with the Chinese language and didn't have the time to commit to a full semester's length courses at a near-by university. Though the language seems intimidating, and I was certainly nervous beforehand, the speed and structure of the course quickly put me at ease.

During each class we focused on a theme – for example, family, food, travel, etc. Each theme was accompanied by 5 common phrases that we were expected to learn for the day. Because of this, I was able to study outside of class with

something specific and goal oriented in mind. It was neither overwhelming nor overly difficult. And since we really concentrated on the speaking and listening aspect of the language, I wasn't bogged down with memorizing Chinese characters. The comfortable class room environment and the non-threatening way the class was conducted made it a real pleasure to be a part of. I'm not as intimidated as I was 5 weeks ago. The class was a fantastic foundation upon which I can continue to build more skills in the future. Though I'm not fluent in Chinese, I feel as though I've picked up enough of the language to hold some short, basic conversations with my colleagues – which they love!

Cody Campbell is Program Coordinator at the Pace CI

New Staff Member: Yanyu Zhou

Yanyu Zhou has been the Associate Director of the Confucius Institute since October 2010. She earned her Ph. D in education from the University of Maryland, her master's degree in education from McGill University in Canada, and her bachelor's degree in political science from Guangxi University for Nationalities in China. Before joining Pace CI community, Dr. Zhou worked as Principal at Kwong Kow Chinese School in Boston, MA. She also was the initiator of the Baltimore, MD County Public Schools Chinese Language and Culture Program. As an educator, Dr. Zhou has taught at all levels. As Associate in Research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University, she is the author of numerous book chapters and journal articles. Her latest book, *Success for All: A Comprehensive Educational Reform for Improving At-Risk Students in an Urban School in China*, was published in 2008. Dr. Zhou's interests include philosophy, ethics, history, education, literature, art, and science.



Our Growing Family



From left to right: (front row) Earl Montgomery, Ansel Lurio, Yanyu Zhou, Weihua Niu, Vanessa Sayajon, Yichuan Ji, and Lin Yi Yi; (back row) Derek Rury, Lin Ai Wei, Cody Campbell, Maria Iacullo-Bird, Norma Quiridumbay, Yan Zhang, and Wang Jue.

Meeting with Delegates From Nanjing Normal University

By Dr. Weihua Niu and Ansel Lurio

On July 6, 2010, a group of 19 administrators and staff from Nanjing Normal University, the academic partner of the Confucius Institute at Pace University, came to visit to meet their counterparts at Pace, discussing potential collaborations between the two universities.

Upon arriving, Dr. Weihua Niu talked to the delegates about what we at the Confucius Institute have done in the last year and where we see ourselves going.

Cody Campbell and Ansel Lurio showed the delegates the Chinese Cultural Experience Corner, and the touch screen culture



Dean Herrmann spoke about the differences between Chinese and American institutions of higher learning.

programming that is on the computers.

After touring the Confucius Institute, the delegates were treated to a lunch with a number of faculty members from Dyson College. Dr. Nira Herrmann, the Dean of Pace's Dyson School of Arts and Sciences, and Prof. Wanghong Liu, vice Chancellor of Nanjing Normal University, each introduced the history and structure as well as various programs of their own universities. Faculty also shared the interest and ideas in scholarly exchange. The delegates from Nanjing Normal University

were extremely gracious guests and we at the Confucius Institute and Dyson College hope to visit their university in China soon.

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Summer Institute

Editorial Board:

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Dr. Weihua Niu | Ansel Lurio |
| Dr. Yanyu Zhou | Yan Zhang |
| Cody Campbell | |

NYCOS Essay Contest

Thanks to the gracious support of the New York Chinese Opera Society (NYCOS), this fall the Confucius Institute at Pace University hosted an essay contest for all levels of students from Pace University on the topic of Chinese art, history or culture. The first essay contest of its kind at Pace, it was designed to encourage students to learn about Chinese Culture and Language. The best three essays were recommended to the New York Chinese Opera Society for awards. There will be an award ceremony on December 18 at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts, during the annual NYCOS performance. The winning essays will also be published on the website of the New York Chinese Opera Society.



Teachers expand their knowledge of Chinese language pedagogy at the Summer Institute

On August 25 to 27, the Confucius Institute at Pace University hosted a three-day Summer Institute, cosponsored by the New York State Asian Languages Bilingual Technical Center (ALBETAC), New York University Project for the Development of the Chinese Language Teachers (DCLT), and the New York City Department of Education Office of English Language Learners (OELL), and the Pace CI. The theme of this Summer Institute was Teaching Bilingual Classes and Chinese Literacy Development in Various Subject Areas. A total of 93 educators from the tri-state area attended the Institute.

Confucius Institute Teams Up with AmeriCorps

By Cody Campbell



Over the last year, Pace CI has fostered a terrific relationship with the Community and Volunteer Mobilization AmeriCorps Program, based out of Pace University. AmeriCorps is a federal volunteer service organization that places its members in a variety of national and local roles, from public education to environmental cleanup and disaster response.

Pace CI first teamed up with AmeriCorps in June of 2010 for the Chinese Cultural Festival at the YMCA @ MS 131, a celebration of the Chinese holiday Duanwu, typically known as the Dragon Boat Festival in the West. A fun and exciting day of lessons and activities, the festival exposed junior high students to the rich history and culture of China. AmeriCorps and Pace CI partnered again in October of 2010, holding a similar event at MS 345 CASTLE Middle School, this time in honor of Confu-

cius's birthday. In the spirit of his teachings, this time the students planted a tree on their school grounds, honoring teachers and students, as well as the profound relationship they share.

Pace CI staff volunteer frequently at AmeriCorps events, and AmeriCorps often shares their volunteers with Pace CI. The friendship continues to grow, as new events are constantly being planned and new ways to collaborate are always being explored.