

Qufu's Confucius Temple

A study on the visitor's experience

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Introduction

Confucianism has a long history in China, and its reach continues to grow.¹ Confucianism is the practice of following the ideology of Confucius (551 B.C. – 479 B.C.), who was a Chinese philosopher and teacher. In memory of him, the many Confucian temples in China not only display the importance of Confucius and his philosophy but also teach visitors about Confucius and Confucianism. These are temples where people can pay their respects to Confucius, honor him, and learn more about his life and thoughts. The Confucius Temple in Qufu was built a year after Confucius' death, in 478 BC, at the location thought to have been his residence.² The Temple is advertised in many tourist guides as the largest and most famous Confucian temple in China, and as one of the three greatest ancient building complexes in the country.³

Even outside the borders of China, Confucianism is propagated by the Chinese government. Many Confucius Institutes exist, and because of Confucian propaganda the institutes have become politicized. The Confucius Institute makes Chinese language lessons for the general public accessible, and by doing so also promotes the Chinese culture. The Institute is responsible for facilitating a better cultural understanding of China. Because Confucianism is so widespread, it is interesting to focus on the importance of Confucianism in contemporary China. However, in this thesis, I do not examine the political influence of Confucianism but rather investigate the influence of the Confucius Temple in Qufu.

1 Bilioud, 2015.

2 There is a lot about Confucius and his life that cannot be said with certainty, because there is not much documentation.

3 <https://www.topchinatravel.com/china-attractions/confucian-temple.htm>

This thesis studies the impact of the Confucius Temple in Qufu in contemporary China on its visitors. Confucianism is the most famous philosophy in China and has spread to many parts of the world: there are 480 institutes over six continents.⁴ This is not only because it is attractive to many people but also because the Chinese Government uses Confucianism as a political subject; it uses Confucianism to justify its political actions.⁵ Confucius has been propagandized as China's old hero.

After Xi Jinping came to power (March 14, 2013) as president of the People's Republic of China,⁶ the Chinese government's advocacy of Confucianism became apparent. Qiou (2016, cited by Jiang, 2018) claimed that Xi Jinping performed three actions to indicate that he promoted Confucianism.⁷ The first was that in 2013, Xi Jinping visited Qufu in Shandong province, the location of the biggest and most famous Confucian temple in China, and the area where Confucius presumably lived. While he was here, Xi Jinping praised Confucius' teachings. The second action was that Xi Jinping visited a renowned retired scholar and president of the Chinese Confucian Academy, Professor Tang Yijie, on the 94th birthday of the May Fourth Movement, also in 2013. Xi Jinping's third action was his keynote speech at the international conference in memory of Confucius' assumed 2565th birthday in 2014.⁸

Another point mentioned by Michael Shuman, correspondent for *Time* and *Wall Street Journal* covering Asia and the global economy, was that it is now much more convenient

⁴ <http://www.confucius.ucla.edu/about-us/confucius-institutes-worldwide>

⁵ This started with the notion of "harmonious society" as a socioeconomic vision that was announced in 2004 by then President Hu Jintao. This harmonious society concept is a key value of ancient Confucianism and has been regarded contradictory to the Communist principle of class struggle. In the same year, the program of Confucius Institutes around the world was initiated by a non-profit organization under the sponsorship of the Chinese government.

⁶ I hereby refer to China as the People's Republic of China, since Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao are not included in Xi Jinping's presidency.

⁷ Jiang, 2018, 170.

⁸ Jiang 2018, 169-170.

to travel to Qufu than it used to be. The high-speed train from Beijing to Shanghai and back again makes a stop in Qufu. As Shuman puts it, this is a sign that the government has decided to promote Confucius.⁹

To narrow down this broad topic, I examined the impact of the most famous Confucian temple in China. A few researchers have studied this temple, including its icons, paintings and other decorative ornaments (Li Jing¹⁰; Julia K. Murray¹¹) and the associated cult. Li Jing, an archaeologist of Chinese cultural relics, analyzed eleven samples of decorative painting, all gathered from the Confucius Temple in Qufu. Her work suggested improved methods for conservation and restoration of the pieces she analyzed. Murray, a professor of art history at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, examined the significance of the physical and visual quantities of the icons that represent Confucianism in many temples, including the Confucius Temple in Qufu.

On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius, a book edited by Wilson, shows that Confucianism contains all the qualities of a religion – without defining what is meant by “religion.”¹² Three chapters in this book discuss the Confucius Temple; these chapters were written by other authors. The first was Deborah Sommer, a former professor of Confucianism at Vilnius University, Lithuania, and current associate professor at the Department of Religion at Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania. Sommer focuses on the visual depictions of Confucius and why they are being destroyed, and then examines the religious aspects of this phenomenon, which includes the

⁹ Shuman, 2015 386.

¹⁰ Li, 2014, 86–89.

¹¹ Murray, 2009, 371–411.

¹² Wilson, 2002.

Confucius Temple in Qufu.¹³ She discusses the visual and somatic significance of the statues and other depictions in the temples.

The second author in Wilson's book is Huang Chin-Hsing, former director of the Institute of History and Philology and current vice-president of Academia Sinica. He wrote a chapter about how the Confucius Temple reformations – which he calls “institutionalizations” – are important to the ritual changes in Confucianism.¹⁴ He concluded that the Yongzheng Emperor (1678–1735) “used the Confucian cultural heritage as a means of reinforcing his political legitimacy.”¹⁵ In addition, he stated that the Confucian temple reforms were ordered by the Yongzheng Emperor himself, so that scholar officials lost some of their independent authority and power.¹⁶

The last author in Wilson's book, regarding the Confucius Temple in Qufu, was Wang Liang, a journalist. His chapter describes the story of the events that took place during the Cultural Revolution in Qufu, the county that was home to Confucius and thus an obvious symbol of ancient culture.¹⁷

Although Wilson's collection suggests that Confucianism qualifies as a religion, Anna Sun investigated its lack of religious status according to the Chinese government. Sun is an associate professor of sociology and Asian studies at Kenyon College. She examined how it is possible that Confucianism is seen as one of the largest religions of China and possibly even in the world, while the Chinese government does not recognize it as a religion at all. She acknowledged two main reasons why it is hard to describe Confucianism in the

¹³ Sommer, 2002, 95-133,

¹⁴ Huang, 2002, 267-296.

¹⁵ Huang, 2002, 293.

¹⁶ The Yongzheng Emperor reigned as the fourth Emperor of the Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911) and the third emperor to rule over China from 1722 – 1735.

¹⁷ Wang, 2002, 376-398.

traditional language of religion. The first reason is the absence of any conversion rites, such as baptism in Christianity and 皈依 *guīyī* in Buddhism.¹⁸ The second reason is that Confucianism lacks any form of official religious organization. Sun points out that there are many Confucian temples across China, but these do not function as churches do for Christians.¹⁹ The Confucian temples in China serve more of a cultural and political role. Although they provide a space to practice Confucianism, they are also places that promote Chinese culture. However, certain philosophers, historians, and other academics believe that Confucianism ought to be a major religion in China, even if the Chinese government does not recognize it as such.

Another book that discusses the Confucius Temple by James Flath, an expert on historical culture and heritage conservation sites.²⁰ He examines – among other things – the Temple as a structure and as a space; and how the Temple deals with modern politics of culture, and how heritage and preservations of monuments have influence through contingency. He finds that the role of the Temple changed often over time, and the Temple now regained its prominent state, but also becoming a popular tourist and heritage site. He finds that the role of the Temple changed often over time, and the Temple now regained its prominent state, but also becoming a popular tourist and heritage site.

Research question

The above section has offered a brief overview of available literature. It illustrates that although research has been done on the architecture, visuals, and layout of the Confucius Temple, to date no study has examined the impact of the Temple on its visitors. This

¹⁸ Sun, 2013, 3.

¹⁹ Sun, 2013, 4.

²⁰ Flath, 2016.

impact is important, because assessing it will enable assessing whether and how Confucianism still inspires people. The location of the Confucius Temple in Qufu was, according to legend, Confucius' home; it was where he taught his disciples, and where he was buried. Questions that arise are as follows.

- What does this temple mean to people?
- What does Confucianism mean to people today?
- What kinds of rituals are practiced there?
- What is the function of the temple?
- What kind of people does the temple attract; is it just a tourist spot or much more than that?

By answering these questions, I wanted to answer the following main research question: "How does the Confucius Temple in Qufu impact its visitors' experience in the Temple?"

Methodology

To gain representative data regarding the question of how visitors to the Confucius Temple experience their visits, I designed a questionnaire. The questionnaire was largely based on the methodology of Baarda et al. in *Basisboek Enquêteren (Survey Handbook)*.²¹ The reason for choosing a questionnaire as my methodology was the desire to gather information about the attitudes, intentions and opinions of visitors to the Temple.

I wrote two versions of the questionnaire, one in English for non-Chinese visitors, and one in Chinese for those who can speak and read Chinese.²² Both versions appear respectively in Appendix A and Appendix B. The goal of conducting the survey was to explore first-

²¹ Baarda et al, 2015.

²² This Chinese questionnaire was originally meant for Chinese visitors, but as it turned out, there was a small number of non-Chinese visitors who preferred to answer in Chinese over English

hand how visitors to the Confucius Temple experienced the Temple, and how they felt about the ambiance of the Temple. I also wanted to explore more broadly how they felt about Confucius and Confucianism. With this information, I hoped to determine whether the Confucius Temple still has an impact on people's understanding of Confucianism and how it affects its visitors.

I administered the questionnaire with 62 individuals, based on the method of Baarda et al.,²³ Gillham,²⁴ and Morrow et al.²⁵ (in their Chapters 14 and 21). The techniques and step-by-step plans formed the basis for my questionnaire and their advice was incorporated into the questions. I used both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The reason was that multiple-choice questions are easy to analyze but do not give abundant information. The pre-determined answers show what the researcher thinks are the most common responses to the questions; as Gillham explained, this makes the element of discovery small and the reasons for people's responses remain unknown.²⁶ These problems can be minimized by presenting an "Other" option in the answers. This was done in my questionnaire, but during the trial survey I found that this option was seldom used. Therefore, I included open-ended questions as well. These questions are harder to analyze, but they give more insight and were thus useful for my research. Open-ended questions gathered information about why visitors felt the way they did, and why – for example – they would recommend the Confucius Temple to friends and family.

The target population for this questionnaire was people who visit, or have visited, the Confucius Temple in Qufu. Before conducting the survey, I tried the questionnaire on a

²³ Baarda et al, 2015.

²⁴ Gillham, 2000.

²⁵ Morrow et al, 2015.

²⁶ Gillham, 2000, 2.

trial group. Initially this group was students of Shandong University²⁷ who had visited the Temple within the past two years. Students who visited the Temple longer than two years ago were left out of the trial group, since they were not able to remember details as well. I also talked to the participants and they were interested in why I wanted to research the Temple. They were willing to express their opinions regarding topics I had not asked about, giving me further information I had not initially thought about.

Apart from conducting a questionnaire, I also spoke with two people who were connected to the Confucius Temple through their employment. The first official I spoke to was employed at the Confucius Institute and was called Mr Kong – whose family name not coincidentally corresponds to that of Confucius (Kǒng Qiū 孔丘). This interview was held on May 28, 2018. I recorded my conversation with Mr Kong. We also had much contact through WeChat, a popular messaging service in China, before and after we met.²⁸ The interview itself was formal and lasted 22:43 minutes on tape.

Mr Kong is the director of the Confucius Foundation and vice-dean of the Confucius Research Institute. He had worked for the Confucius Research Institute for 16 years by the time of my study. He wrote a book about the different Confucius Institutes in Asia, specifically China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam.²⁹ The Confucius Institute and the Confucius Temple are related not only in name but also through overlapping goals. As discussed later in the thesis, goals that the Temple has set for itself include spreading the Chinese values and culture. According to Jeffrey Gil, senior lecturer in the College of Humanities,

²⁷ I was an exchange student at Shandong University in Jinan during my research at the Confucius Temple.

²⁸ WeChat is the most popular and most commonly used messaging app in the Peoples Republic of China. Apart from making its users able to text other people and post pictures and short stories, the app can also be used to pay in stores, order food, rent a bike, and so on. This is all made possible by the ability to scan QR codes. It is connected to third parties in order to provide these services.

²⁹ Kong, 2011.

Arts and Social Sciences at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, the goals of the Confucius Institute include making Chinese language lessons accessible for the general public. The Institutes do so by, among other things, providing teaching materials, support and assistance for language courses that exist already. The Institute is also responsible for facilitating a better understanding of China, especially culturally, abroad.³⁰

The second official whom I interviewed was employed by the Confucius Temple itself. He wished to stay anonymous and is named “Kimi” here. He had worked for the Confucius Temple for almost 10 years and was responsible for – among other things – communicating the above-mentioned activities to the public. Apart from assigning his employees to interviews with newspapers and philosophy-oriented magazines, he was writing his own pieces for publication in those newspapers and magazines. Furthermore, he travelled to other Confucius Temples to ensure that the activities they organized corresponded with the vision of the Temple in Qufu.

Additionally, Kimi would speak with researchers and students who wanted to know more about the structure of the Confucius Temple. He did not agree to have the conversation recorded, but he provided me with information about different aspects of the Temple. For example, he explained how certain parts of the Temple were (in his view) used in Confucius’ time; what the historical highlights are; and why they are important for the Confucius Temple, Confucianism and Chinese society. We met three times. The first time was when I went to Qufu to visit the Temple as a tourist. The second and third times, we met when I went to Qufu specifically to conduct my research and administer my questionnaire. Our conversations were more informal than the interview I conducted

³⁰ Gil, 2017, 98.

with Mr Kong; mostly we spoke over lunch and during a short tour in the Confucius Temple. Although the setting was not formal, Kimi was aware that I was asking him questions for my research, and he agreed to having his answers used and analyzed for that purpose. We had further contact through WeChat after I went to Qufu for the last time.

I conducted these two interviews based on the techniques of Popping³¹ and Magnusson et al.³² I wanted to study what the Confucius Temple staff do to broaden the experience of the visitors, other than merely gauging how the visitors experience their visits. Both interviews were semi-structured, which meant I wrote a list of questions to start the interview but I allowed room for other topics and follow-up questions. Not all the questions I prepared were asked or answered. The benefits of this method, according to Patton, is that it leaves space for the personal and situational differences of the interviewees while also providing a structure to guide the interview. This allows new topics to be explored when they are mentioned by the interviewees; at the same time, the focus is on the main questions that need to be answered. The disadvantage of this kind of interview is that analysis can be challenging because the topics discussed may differ across interviewees.³³

However, because I only conducted two interviews, both with different goals in mind, I did not use the same standardized list of questions for both interviews. The interviewees guided the conversations towards the topics they found interesting.

The data analysis method is loosely based on a grounded theory approach. The survey started with hypotheses, which the answers of the questionnaire were supposed to

³¹ Popping, 2015.

³² Magnusson et al, 2015.

³³ Patton 2002, 342-346

(dis)prove. As will become clear, topics emerged – e.g. architecture – that proved to be important for the visitors of the Temple, which were not implemented in the questionnaires. However, since the architecture was important for their experience in the Temple, it became a rather big part of the analysis. I decided not to code the data, because the posed questions served as a coding system. This means that I categorized the themes beforehand and the questions are modelled accordingly. While analyzing the data, I tried finding correlations between the answers the participants gave me on certain questions. This means I analyzed the results thematically.

Regarding the limitations of this study, I am aware that the research could have gone a different way if I had asked my questions to a larger group of visitors or if I had chosen other participants. Due to the limitations of a master thesis, I was required to keep the scope of this study small. Nonetheless, I believe that the research I conducted, with the answers I received, is representative. The main reason is that the answers I obtained were rather monotonous. The topics that came up during the survey using the questionnaires, which were not prepared, were quite similar for most of the respondents. I am convinced this would still have been the case if I had questioned more visitors; that is, there would not have been many additional new answers.

Chapter outline

In this study, I first introduce Confucius and Confucianism in Chapter 1. In this chapter, I provide information about Confucius' life and the religion or philosophy that made him famous. Furthermore, I explain the basic principles of Confucianism. Finally, I offer an introduction to the book attributed to Confucius' ideas, *The Analects (Lúnyǔ 论语)*.

In the second and third chapters, I discuss the Confucius Temple of Qufu. I present two sections on this subject, namely the architecture (Chapter 2) and the activities that the

Temple staff organize (Chapter 3). I do so by evaluating the conversations I had with the two officials of the Confucius Temple and the Confucius Institute regarding how the Temple presents itself to its visitors. Hence, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 provide descriptions of how the Temple is portrayed to visitors.

In the last chapter, Chapter 4, I provide a detailed analysis of the questionnaire responses regarding the experience of 62 visitors to the Confucius Temple. I also focus on how visitors perceive the Confucius Temple. I do this by introducing the participants of the survey and then presenting my findings from the analysis of their answers. I divided the questionnaire data into four themes, based on the answers of respondents. These were 1) information concerning the Temple as a building; 2) information concerning the religious and philosophical aspect of Confucianism; 3) issues about the cultural and historical impact; and 4) information about their reasons to visit the Confucius Temple, and the feelings and experience they had while visiting the Temple (or afterwards). Finally, I summarize my findings in the conclusion. As a final point, I discuss the limitations of this study and possible directions for future research.

Chapter 1: Confucius and Confucianism

In this chapter, I describe who Confucius was and what Confucianism is. I do not touch on the interesting but complex discussion about whether Confucianism is a religion or a philosophy, which is raised by Anna Sun.³⁴ Instead, I explain the main principles in Confucius' thought, to offer a perspective of what was important to Confucius – and what, according to the texts, he taught his disciples. I discuss his ideas of moral cultivation (*xiūyǎng dàodé* 修养道德), rituals (*lǐ* 礼), learning (*xué* 学), music (*yuè* 乐), and filial piety (*xiào* 孝). I explain these ideas based on *The Analects*.

I also explain why Confucianism is still is recognized as important and influential. In doing so, I want to provide more background information, so that the cultural and philosophical basis on which the Confucius Temple operates becomes clear.

Confucius (551 B.C. – 479 B.C.) or Kǒngzǐ 孔子³⁵ was born in the state of Lu, which is now the province of Shandong, during the Zhou dynasty (1046 B.C. – 256 B.C.). As reported by Karel van der Leeuw, former professor of philosophy at the University of Amsterdam and specialist in Confucianism, Lu was the state in which the traditions of the Zhou culture were best preserved.³⁶ Confucius saw the traditions of the Zhou as an example of how society should be.³⁷ Confucius' father died when he was young, which caused his mother

³⁴ See Introduction: Research Question above.

³⁵ Confucius is the Latinized name of Kǒngzǐ 孔子 that is most known in Western countries. In this thesis, I use the westernized name to address him. Kǒngzǐ 孔子 is not his given name, which is Kǒng Qiu 孔丘, but his posthumous name.

³⁶ Van Der Leeuw, 2011, 35.

³⁷ Traditions of the Zhou dynasty refer to the idealized peace of this period, which was very important to Confucius.

to experience financial difficulty and she worked many menial jobs.³⁸ Nonetheless, Confucius was well educated.

Confucius lived a few centuries after the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty, during a period in which the traditional Zhou culture had started to falter and the kings of Zhou Dynasty were losing their power over the land they ruled. He tried to make sense of everything that happened during this period and he found an audience in interested rulers who wanted to conquer others. Confucius' ideas are based on morals and how to cultivate them. The rulers were responsible for, among others, the population of their kingdoms; the inhabitants should obey their ruler. Other than advising rulers how to govern their kingdom, Confucius was also a teacher. He was perceived as a wise man, and his disciples approached him with diverse questions. Confucius travelled and his students followed him, yearning to learn everything he knew.

The Analects was the result of conversations Confucius had with his students. The book presumably contains the knowledge he spread and taught to his students, and what he told the rulers who asked for his help, all in the form of conversations. Although most of the conversations start with a question, Confucius did not feel the need to explain his wise words. There are barely any arguments in *The Analects*, mainly because Confucius was not often confronted with philosophers who had contrary ideas.

Joel Kupperman, professor in philosophy at the University of Connecticut, wrote that Confucius was concerned with human moral psychology and its political arrangement.³⁹ According to Confucius' thinking, moral cultivation was the way to create order in chaos. He distinguished between a gentleman (*jūnzǐ* 君子) and a "petty man" (*xiǎo rén* 小人). Van

³⁸ Van Norden, 2011, 19.

³⁹ Kupperman, 2007, 170.

Norden, translator of Chinese philosophical texts and scholar of Chinese and comparative philosophy, explained that being a gentleman is not about social class but rather about someone who is benevolent, wise, and reverent. A petty man is typically cruel, foolish, and arrogant.⁴⁰ Chan, an employee at the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Hong Kong, argued that Confucius knew his ideal version of the world could not be fully realized; this would require “that sages or gentlemen be in power, but these people are rare in the real world.”⁴¹ It is also stated in *The Analects* that Confucius had “no hopes of meeting a sage” or “a good man”.⁴²

In addition to trying to create order in chaos, Confucius attached importance to rituals. Van Norden argued that Confucius believed that rituals should be adopted in religious ceremonies, but also in matters of everyday chores like greeting other people and the appropriate manner to address others. He explained that “rituals can help humans form and maintain genuine communities, in which people care for and respect one another.”⁴⁵ From this perspective, rituals can also help to control the chaos that exists in society.

Another crucial point for Confucius was filial piety. This term essentially means that children should obey their parents or superiors:

The master said, “When your parents are alive, comply with the rites in serving them; when they die, comply with the rites in burying them; comply with the rites in sacrificing to them.”⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Van Norden, 2011, 20.

⁴¹ Chan, 2014, 4.

⁴² Lau, 1979, 89. (*The Analects*, 7.26)

⁴⁵ Van Norden, 2011, 27.

⁴⁶ Lau, 1979, 63. (*The Analects*, 2.5).

Music serves the purpose of “securing social harmony and order,”⁴⁷ which, as illustrated above, is also important in Confucian thought.

The Master said, “Be stimulated by the Odes, take your stand on the rites and be perfected by music.”⁴⁸

The final point was the importance of learning. Confucius himself was fond of learning, but as he became a teacher he also expected much from his students. Thinking is an important factor in the process of learning; one should always apply both learning and thinking in any process:

The Master said, “If one learns from others but does not think, one will be bewildered. If, on the other hand, one thinks but does not learn from others, one will be in peril.”⁴⁹

Confucianism is still an important aspect of Chinese culture.⁵⁰ All the above-mentioned aspects of Confucian thought are still reflected in Chinese society, as illustrated in Chapter 4. As discussed in the following chapters, rituals remain crucial in daily life. This centrality is evident not only in the rituals performed in the Confucius Temple but also in everyday life. Most rituals that prove to be important are those that pay respect, which means they occur in temples, whereas the rituals performed most often are simple tasks that no-one thinks about. This point is important, because it means that rituals are executed not because they are rituals but because they are part of life; they stand for actions that can make life organized.

⁴⁷ Huang, 1963, 51.

⁴⁸ Lau, 1979, 93 (*The Analects* 8.8).

⁴⁹ Lau, 1979, 65. (*The Analects*, 2.15)

⁵⁰ Tang, 1995, 269.

Apart from rituals, studying is a large part of Chinese life. Chinese students work extremely hard, not only because competition is fierce in China but also because the emphasis on good education is strong. Furthermore, as will become clear in Chapter 4, filial piety is strongly apparent in Chinese culture and shapes the way young Chinese people think and act.

The process of moral cultivation is not highly visible in society. However, if one looks closely at how people interact, it becomes clear that people almost always try to do the right thing. This does not mean there are no people who do undesirable and wrong things. Klamer, professor of cultural economics at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, explained that no-one systematically tries to do the wrong thing, but people try to do the right thing to reach a certain goal by following a value-based approach.⁵¹ This is not something that happens only in China but occurs everywhere in the world. Some people like to think that it is Confucius' influence, although they realize rationally that not everything is impacted by the way Confucius saw the world. However, morals remain an important aspect of Confucian thought.⁵²

To conclude this chapter about Confucius and Confucian thought, the crucial elements are summarized so it is clear why the Confucian Temple organizes itself the way it does. The essential parts of Confucian thought, which are mentioned above, include moral cultivation, rituals, learning, music and filial piety. All those aspects feature in *The Analects*, which shows that these were subjects that Confucius talked about, explained, and taught – if indeed this book contains the conversations of Confucius. As the analysis of the

⁵¹ Klamer, 2017, 220 – 221.

⁵² This came forward in a conversation I had with a small group of the participants while conducting the questionnaire with their friends.

questionnaires in Chapter 4 will illustrate, these are all subjects that are still relevant to everyday life.

Chapter 2: Confucius Temple: Architecture⁵³

In Chapter 1, I explained who Confucius was, and the important aspects of Confucianism. This information leads into a fundamental understanding of the Confucius Temple. In this chapter, I discuss the architecture of the Temple. It is important to draw a picture, literally and figuratively, of what the Temple looks like and what kind of functions the different parts of the Temple have served or currently serve. This helps in understanding the impact it has on its visitors. As Chapter 4 explains, the architecture has a deep impact on how visitors experience their visit. Flath wrote about how heritage and preservations of monuments exert an influence through contingency, as follows:⁵⁴

... it is not just the space or use of the temple but also the material and structure of the relic that either facilitates or frustrates its would-be agents. Ritual can be liquidated or appropriated, but the temple cannot be disassociated from its foundations and so continually creates both opportunities and problems for those who use it ...⁵⁵

According to Kimi, the location of the current Confucius Temple in Qufu was the place where Confucius spent considerable time of his life. Kimi believed that this was also the area where he educated his disciples. Although no direct evidence exists that the Temple was where Confucius taught his disciples, this idea is widely accepted. It is the oldest Confucian temple in the world and has a significant influence on other Confucian temples, both in China and abroad.⁵⁶

⁵³ The information provided about the Confucius Temple in this section is for the larger part accumulated through my conversations with Kimi on December 1, 2018 and February 28, 2019.

⁵⁴ See Introduction: Research Question above.

⁵⁵ Flath, 2016, 12.

⁵⁶ Kong, 2013, 1.

The Confucius Temple is part of the Three Confucian Sites (*Sānkǒng* 三孔). Apart from the Confucius Temple in Qufu (*Kǒngmiào* 孔庙), this includes the Cemetery of Confucius (*Kǒnglín* 孔林) and the Kong Family Mansion (*Kǒngfǔ* 孔府). The Cemetery of Confucius is the place where, according to tradition, Confucius as well as several of his descendants and some of his pupils are buried.⁵⁷ The Kong Family Mansion was the workplace and residency of the direct male descendants of Confucius.⁵⁸

The Confucius Temple has been destroyed and restored numerous times since it was built. Because of this, there have been concerns about the authenticity of the Temple. As Flath pointed out, complex things such as this temple cannot be put back together as they originally were, but conservationists may compensate for this by recovering the broken sections and reforming them into new forms that both “reify and efface the past.”⁵⁹ Flath believes this is what happened with the Confucius Temple, and the building thus reflects its historical importance. Since 1994, the Confucius Temple has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.⁶⁰

In the next section of this chapter, I discuss the key parts of the Confucius Temple and their functions, and how they are visually presented. These descriptions are based on what Kimi told me, and on the information signs that are spread in the Temple. The measurements of the buildings are mentioned in the description to give an impression of the size and magnificence of the constructions. The Temple consists of many buildings,

⁵⁷ UNESCO World Heritage Centre <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/704>

⁵⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Centre <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/704>

⁵⁹ Flath, 2016, 6.

⁶⁰ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s purpose is to declare peace and security. It is doing so by promoting international collaboration through education, culture, and science. Part of what they do is selecting landmarks or areas as having a significance in terms of either education, culture or science. To be selected, the area must signify a remarkable accomplishment of humanity.

but here I only describe those that were important to respondents of the questionnaire. These were the Dazhong Gate (*dàzhōng mén* 大中门), the Thirteen Stele Pavilion (*shísān bēitíng* 十三碑亭), the Gate of Great Achievements (*dàchéng mén* 大成门), the Apricot Platform (*xìngtán* 杏坛), the Main Hall of the Confucius Temple; the Hall of Great Achievements (*dàchéng diàn* 大成殿), and the Resting Hall (*qǐndiàn* 寢殿). This does not mean other parts of the Temple are not important or influential. However, when I conducted my survey, I found that the above-named parts of the Temple were remarkable in one way or the other for the respondents. Other parts of the Temple were mentioned by them but not in a way that was important for this research. Hence, I do not describe them in detail. Image 1 shows a map of the Temple for reference.

孔庙平面示意图

THE MAP OF CONFUCIAN TEMPLE

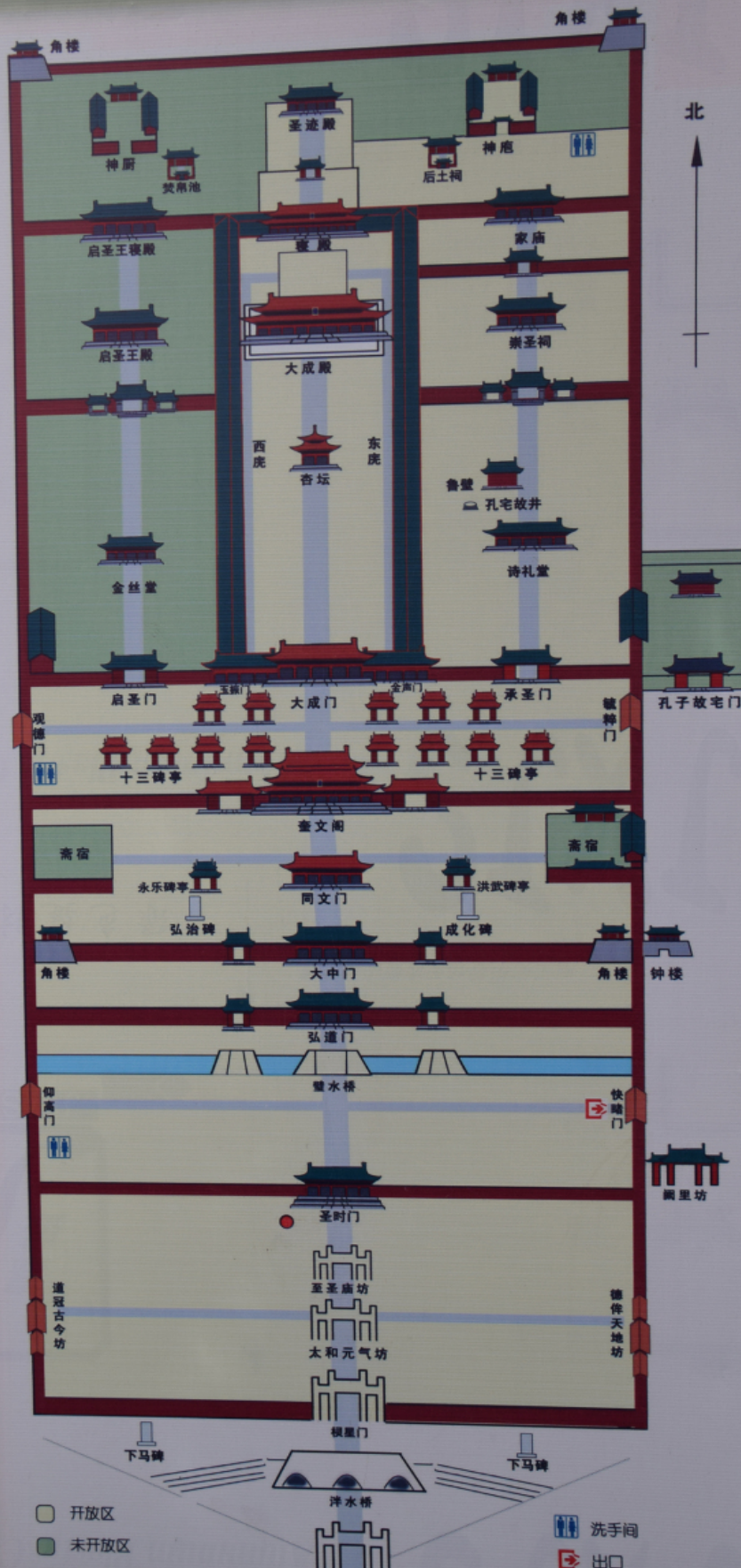


Image 1 Map of the Confucius Temple. Source: Kimi.

2.1 Dazhong Gate 大中门

The founding year of the Dazhong Gate is unknown; all that is known is that the gate was rebuilt during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368–1911). The plaque on top of the gate was inscribed by the Qianlong Emperor (*Qiánlóng Huángdì* 乾隆皇帝) (1735–1795).

Originally, the gate was named “The Zhonghe Gate” (*zhōnghé mén* 中和门), which refers to the Confucian tradition of seeing the unbiased as the doctrine of the mean.⁶¹ This basically means that *hé* 和 in this context means “harmonious” or “on good terms.” The name was later changed to its current name, Dazhong Gate. This can mean two things. First, it may refer to “greater China.” Second, it may refer to “a great middle way.” The first reference originates from the abbreviation of *Zhōngguó* 中国, which means China. *Zhōng* 中 thus refers to China. The second interpretation corresponds to the meaning of the original name. Adding *dà* 大 (big) before *zhōng* 中 emphasizes the importance of Confucian ideas about moderation.

The gate is 9.42 m high, 20.44 m long and 7.49 m wide. There is a green tile corner building on each side of the large and middle doors, each of which has three flat composing rulers. The gate is built on a square platform, and the inside of the platform has a road for travelling up and down. The two towers, together with the northeast and northwest towers of the Confucius Temple, form a large rectangle for guarding purposes. This corner building was built partly as an imitation of the corner building of the Imperial Palace of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Image 2 shows the visuals of the Dazhong Gate. Kimi

⁶¹ For more information about the usage and meaning of *zhōng* 中, I refer to the article of Keqian (2012).

believes this is one reason to view the Confucian Temple as being as dignified as the Imperial Palace.



Image 2 Dazhong Gate, Source: Kimi.

2.2 Thirteen Stele Pavilion 十三碑亭

This pavilion is the sixth courtyard that was built in the Confucius Temple. In this narrow courtyard, there are 13 antique pavilions. See Image 3. The tall pavilions are arranged in two rows: eight towards the south and five towards the north. The middle two were built during the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368). The two on the sides of the pavilion were also built during the Yuan Dynasty and are the earliest existing ancient building of the Temple. The other nine pavilions are Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) buildings.

In the pavilion, 57 stone tablets were preserved during the 7th to 20th century in the Tang, Song, Jin, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties and the Republic of China. They were carved in Chinese, Basiba or Phagpa (Mongolian), Manchu, and other languages. The languages used

here are presumably those that existed in written form in China during the relevant periods. Most inscriptions are records of emperors' pursuits of Confucianism and their sacrifices and temples.



Image 3 Thirteen Stele Pavilion. Source: Kimi.

2.3 The Gate of Great Achievements 大成门

Behind the Thirteen Stele Pavilion is the fifth gate of the Confucian Temple, the Gate of Great Achievements. In the early Song Dynasty, it was called "*yí mén* 仪门," but in 1104 it was renamed the "Gate of Great Achievements" to correspond with the Hall of Great Achievements. The former meaning, *yí mén*, could refer to ceremonies that were held here, as *yí* 仪 means "ceremony". Kimi claimed that the ancients believed that Confucius was the great master of sages, so when the Confucius Temple was rebuilt in the Song Dynasty (960–1279), the gate of the Confucius Temple and the hall for offering sacrifices to Confucius, the *great* master, were replaced by "*Great Achievements (dàchéng 大成)*."

The original three doors were reconstructed into five doors that are 13.53 m high, 24.68 m long and 11.20 m wide. The gates were constructed from single eaves from Huangwaxie Mountain, seven purlins and three pillars of distracted wooden frame, five heavy-duty golden domes, golden dragons, and seal paintings. The first two stone pillars belong to the Qing Dynasty and the last two to the Ming Dynasty. The rest are octagonal pillars and small cloud dragons. See Image 4.



Image 4 The Gate of Great Achievements. Source: Kimi.

2.4 Apricot Platform 杏坛

When people walk through the Gate of Great Achievements, the golden characters “*xìngtán* 杏坛” immediately attract their attention. This is the place, according to ancient tradition, where Confucius’ lectures were given to his disciples.

Before the Song Dynasty, there was no Apricot Platform within the Confucian Temple; it was located outside the temple. The Apricot Platform is now located where the main hall of the Confucian temple existed before the Song Dynasty. The main hall was expanded and its position was moved back. In commemoration of Confucius' lectures, at the old site of the main hall, apricots were planted around the site, which was then called the "Apricot Platform,” which is now a place to honor Confucius’ lectures. See Image 5.



Image 5 Apricot Platform. Source: Kimi.

2.5 The Hall of Great Achievements 大成殿

Behind the Apricot Platform, a magnificent building on a high platform stands tall, with three striking golden characters "*dà chéngdiàn* 大成殿" written in the middle. This is the main building of the Confucian Temple, the Hall of Great Achievements. This hall is the central place for offerings to Confucius.

The main hall is 24.8 m high, 45.8 m wide and 24.9 m deep. It has nine ridges on the double eaves, and 28 carved dragon stone pillars – all carved from whole stones – surround the corridor. The 10 pillars on the front eaves are 6 m high and 80 cm in diameter. Each pillar is carved with two dragons. See Image 6. It is said that because the dragon pillars of the Dacheng Hall of the Confucian Temple were more elaborately carved than those of the Imperial Palace, the pillars were wrapped in yellow silk when Emperor Qianlong came to honor Confucius, to prevent him being angered.

The platform in front of the Hall is where Confucius was honored through dance and music. The Six Great Dances⁶³ are held here every year in honor of what is believed to be Confucius' birthday. In addition, this is where a 10-minute opening ceremony is held every morning.

⁶³ The Great Six Dances are part of the ritual ceremony to respect Confucius. In Ancient China these dances were performed at the royal court and temples, established during the Zhou Dynasty.



Image 6 Hall of Great Achievements. Source: Kimi.

2.6 Resting Hall 寢殿

At the back, along the corridor of Dacheng Hall, is another double-eave hall. This is the ancestral hall for worshipping Confucius' wife, who is considered the Most Sacred Lady of the Forefathers. There are numerous bedrooms, with yellow tiles on top and gold-makeup paintings. Purlin dragons and algae wells are all pasted with gold foil. In the corridor, 22 cornices are made of 8-edged terrazzo pillars, which are shallowly engraved with the pattern of Phoenix playing peony. All of them imitate the system of the Queen's Palace. Inside the temple are shrines, wooden carvings, dragons, flights and phoenixes, and shrines bearing wooden placards that say "The Most Sacred Lady of the Forefathers" (*xiānzǔ zuì shénshèng de fūrén* 先祖最神圣的夫人).

Confucius' wife died seven years before he did. Her life stories are rarely recorded in ancient books. However, after Confucius died, she and Confucius received the sacrifice together in the Confucius Temple in Qufu, according to Kimi. In the early period, there were statues in the Imperial Palace. After a fire, the statues were rebuilt, and carved tables with wooden shrines were placed in front of them. See Image 7.



Image 7 Resting Hall. Source: Kimi.

The entire Confucius Temple was admitted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. The reason lies mainly in the fact that people think the Confucius Temple contributes to preserving Chinese culture. They do this by educating about Confucius, what is thought to be the basis of the Chinese culture. The Temple has many different halls, gates, and courts, all with their own specific appearances and practices. As explained in Chapter 4, both the appearance and purpose of each part discussed above are important factors in the experiences of visitors.

In short, the architecture of the Dazhong Gate is modelled after the Imperial Palace of the Forbidden City in Beijing. The Thirteen Stele Pavilion holds the records of emperors' reverence for Confucius, and their sacrifices. The Gate of Great Achievements is where sacrifices for Confucius are made, and the Apricot Platform is the courtyard where

Confucius taught his students. The Hall of Great Achievements is the main building of the Temple and the central place for offerings. Finally, the Resting Hall is the hall in which people can worship Confucius' wife.

Chapter 3: Confucius Temple - Activities

In Chapter 2, I described the architectural functions and visual aspects of the constructions of the Temple that emerged as having been important for the visitors I interviewed. The findings are further explained in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I discuss the activities that the Temple organizes to give its visitors a good experience. Certain activities occur every day, but some are only conducted on special occasions.

As mentioned, I conducted interviews with two officials. The first interview was held on 28 May 2018 with Mr Kong. From this interview, I gathered more information about Confucianism, but the main goal was to learn what the Temple does to attract visitors, how it inspires people, and how it represents itself. Mr Kong stressed that he believed the strength of the Confucius Temple lies in keeping Confucian thought alive. Mr Kong explains that although Confucian philosophy and ideology can be seen in China's daily life, that does not mean people are deeply aware of it. When people visit the Temple, they become more aware of Confucianism and might even be to spread it themselves. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, in practice this applies mostly to foreign visitors. The goal of the Temple is therefore to prevent Confucius' thought from bleeding out.

Mr Kong claimed that because of Western influences, Confucian thought has received much criticism. The reason for this criticism, he suggested, is that the West views Confucianism as something that "holds onto tradition and doesn't strive for development." Mr Kong argued that this is not the case. The nature of Confucianism today is certainly not the same as during Confucius' lifetime, and developments in society shape the voice of Confucianism. However, Mr Kong stated that the basic ideas of Confucianism remain the same, because "Why change a winning strategy?"

Mr Kong also explained the initiatives and activities the Temple organizes. One is the opportunity for visitors to enter the Confucius Temple for free. This activity is organized with the idea of encouraging people to read and understand *The Analects*. To gain a free ticket, people have the chance to try and recite five chapters of *The Analects*. If visitors can do this without mistakes, they enter for free. This does not attract as many people as the Temple wishes, but around 80 people attempt this every month and about half of them enter for free.

Another activity that the temple organizes is the opening ritual every morning. It lasts for about 10 minutes and features a musical session with dances and a short speech, which serves as a reminder of the importance of Confucianism. This activity always attracts great interest; no-one who visits the Temple during the opening ceremony can resist coming to see. The disadvantage of this ceremony is that it is only provided in Chinese and not in foreign languages. However, as seen in the description of the participants in Chapter 4, the vast majority of visitors are Chinese.

Other than the opening ceremony, the Temple also organizes a day of celebration on 28 September. This, according to tradition, was the birthday of Confucius. Activities include an opening ceremony with music and dance; the grand opening of the gates of the Temple, which only happens during this ceremony; food offering; incense offering; singing; and eating the wisdom cake. According to tradition, eating a piece of wisdom cake brings luck during studying. Every year, many students hope to get a bite of the cake.

The second person I talked to concerning the representation of the Temple was Kimi. Kimi also emphasized that the Temple in Qufu focuses on preserving the Confucius tradition. Regarding the Western criticism mentioned by Mr Kong, Kimi explained that it is precisely because of this criticism that the Temple should maintain its stance. If people give in to

the pressure to develop into something modern, the whole tradition that is the basis of Chinese culture would disappear. Kimi questioned why the Chinese tradition should change into something modern when other nations claim the right to be proud of their own traditions: “It that because the Confucian tradition is older than any other tradition, while this specifically makes us Chinese people so proud?”

Regarding the Temple’s international image, there are reasons to believe that its influence abroad is strong. The example that Kimi gave is that many Confucian temples exist in other Asian countries as well. According to him, this is because Confucianism has a deep influence on other Asian societies. Kimi explained that its influence on other continents is limited compared to Asia, but that does not mean it is entirely lacking. For example, there are Confucius Institutes around the world. The Institute and the temples have overlapping goals, mainly to advocate for Chinese culture. There is no direct evidence for this claim, but Kimi believes that the Confucius Institute was set up based on the ideology of the Confucius Temple. He specifically referred to the importance that both organizations place on preserving Chinese culture, rather than their similar names.

A summary of the main points provided in this chapter so far may consolidate the insight. The activities that the Confucius Temple organizes include the chance for visitors to gain a free ticket by reciting *The Analects*; the daily opening rituals; and the grand celebration of Confucius’ presumed birthday on 28 September every year. The Temple organizes these events because it wants to attract more visitors, but also to inspire the people who visit the Temple. For example, the opening ritual stresses the importance and essence of Confucianism, and by doing so it reminds spectators of what Confucianism means. Additionally, by attracting more visitors, it contributes to the Temple’s main goal of keeping Confucianism alive. Essentially, visitors learn about Confucius and Confucianism

by visiting the Temple. Abundant information is available. By walking around in the place that is said to have been Confucius' home, visitors are sure to encounter this experience.

Chapter 4: Confucius Temple - Visitors' Experience

In previous chapters, I discussed the architecture and organized activities of the Confucius Temple. With this information in mind, I now discuss the analysis of the questionnaire results. In this chapter, I first introduce the people I questioned, to provide an overview of these visitors. The conclusions I draw are only applicable to the visitors who participated to my survey and are not applicable to every possible visitor.

Second, I offer a detailed analysis of the questionnaire data. This analysis is divided into four themes: the Temple as a building; religious and philosophical aspects of Confucianism; cultural and historical impact; and the overall experiences of visitors. Each theme is followed by a summary of the main findings. These give a clear picture of how the visitors I spoke with had experienced the Confucius Temple.

I visited Qufu as a tourist during the summer of 2018. I realized that, apart from Confucian sites like the Confucius Temple, Cemetery of Confucius, the Kong Family Mansion, and the Confucius Institute, there is not much for tourists to see. I realized that this could mean that visitors to the Temple had travelled to Qufu specifically to understand Confucius or Confucianism, and did not merely see it as a “compulsory” tourist attraction or something to cross off their list of experiences in China.

Because the questionnaires were distributed in China, I used an online version that could be used by scanning a QR (Quick Response) code. Chinese technology is advanced, and this method has become part of everyday Chinese life.⁶⁴ I worked with a website that specialized in online questionnaires, Survio. This survey system was founded in 2012 and

⁶⁴ By scanning the code with their mobile phone, through WeChat, the visitors were able to immediately see and answer the questionnaires on their phones.

helps people to prepare questionnaires, collect data, and share surveys online.⁶⁵ I extracted QR codes for the questionnaires, which the respondents could scan using their phones through WeChat, so that they could answer the questions online.

The results of all the respondents were collected on the website of Survio. I then analyzed the data. However, the longer I used this online version of the questionnaires, the more I realized that people were not eager to scan any QR code they found. Mainly visitors who were older than 40 years told me they thought that “Scanning random QR codes, especially from a foreign girl, is not safe,” as one participant put it. I experienced this problem when I went to Qufu for the first time to conduct the survey on 1 December 2018.

Before that trip, I had contact with Kimi. He helped me to gain permission from the Temple to conduct my research there, approved the questionnaires beforehand, and showed me around before I started asking people questions. Because the Confucius Temple is a rather religious, philosophical, and political part of Chinese society, I needed to get permission to do my research. After it was approved, I could make an appointment with Kimi. He showed me the Temple, assigned me to a place where I could ask questions, and made sure no-one bothered me while conducting my research.

Regarding the difficulties with the online questionnaires, visitors aged younger than 30 did not have a problem scanning the code from my phone and answering the questions online. People aged between 30 and 40 were hesitant, but most agreed to scan the QR code anyway. People over 40 were reluctant; more often than not, they decided not to scan the code and thus did not answer the questions. I realized that I was missing much useful information, so I made a second trip on 22 December 2018. This time I took not

⁶⁵ <https://www.survio.com/en/>

only my QR code but also a paper version of the questionnaire, so that everyone had the chance to answer my questions. Things went more smoothly this time, because people had the choice. I received over 60 fully completed questionnaires; this figure includes questionnaires from 1 December and 22 December 2018.

To introduce the people who answered my questionnaire, a statistical overview of their demographics and answers is given here. In total, 62 people filled in the questionnaire, of whom 51.6% were female (32 respondents) and 48.4% male (30 respondents). Most participants (51.6 %) were aged between 18 and 25, which indicates that Confucianism is not just for the older generations and remains important for the younger generations. When I asked participants about this, they often responded along the lines of “Of course we are interested in Confucius, he built the basis of our society!” – as one participant explained. Figure 1 shows the age distribution of the respondents.

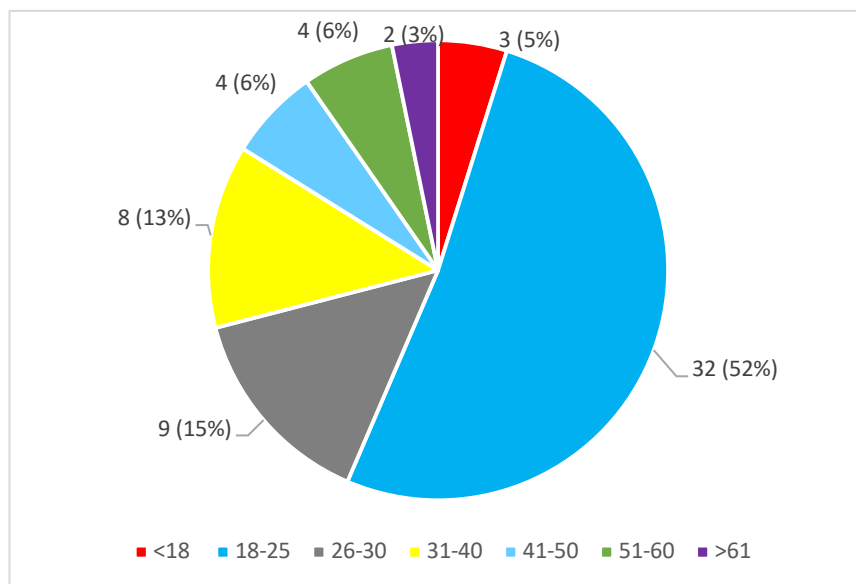


Figure 1 Age distribution

Among the respondents, 54 were Chinese; only eight participants had other nationalities, mainly of other Asian origin. This indicates the popularity of Confucianism in other Asian countries, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Just over half of the people (34 or 54.8%) were atheist, while seven participants said they identified as Confucian 儒家 (11.3 %). This distribution could have something to do with the fact that Confucianism is not always seen as a religion in China, as discussed in the Introduction.⁶⁶ Other religious orientations among the participants are shown in Figure 2.

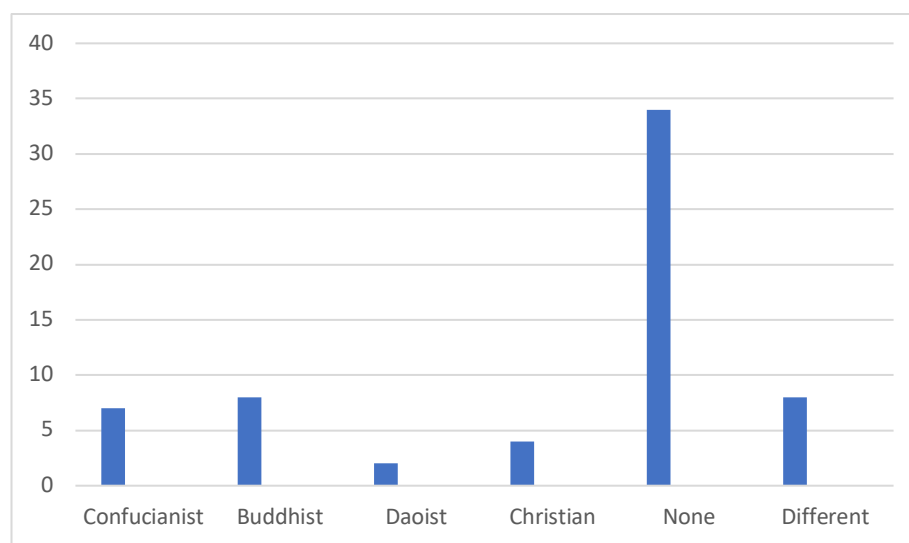


Figure 2 Distribution of religious beliefs

The column “other” included two mentions of the Communist Party of China (*zhōngguó gòngchǎndǎng* 中国共产党), four for Marxism (*Mǎkèsī zhǔyì* 马克思主义), and one for communism (*Gòngchǎn zhǔyì* 共产主义); that is, these respondents evidently considered communism or Marxism as their main religion, or they misinterpret the question. That column also contains a mention of 倪, which is a surname and hence difficult to explain as a religious belief.

⁶⁶ Sun, 2013.

A third of the respondents lived more than 500 km from the Confucius Temple in Qufu (20 respondents, 32.2%). These people had traveled far to visit the Confucius Temple, indicating that they felt it was worth covering many kilometers to visit the Temple and that they deemed Confucius and Confucianism worthy of doing so. An overview of distance from home appears in Figure 3.

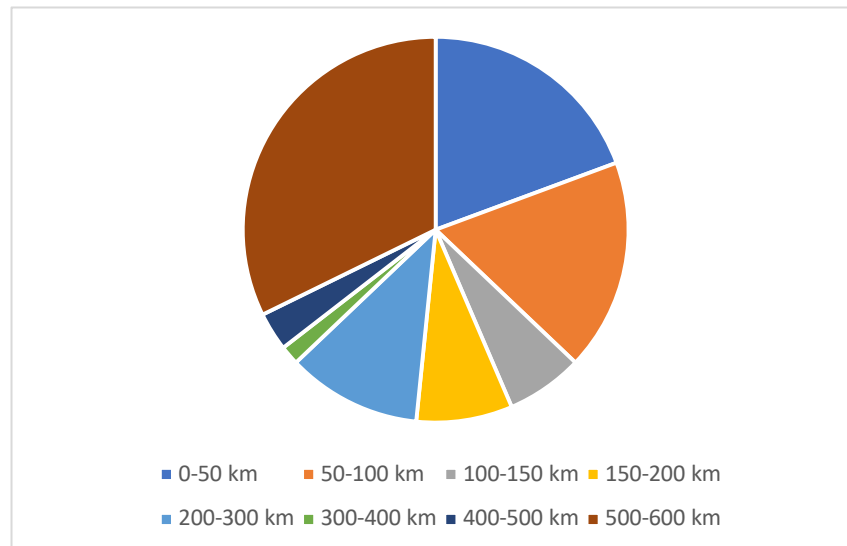


Figure 3 Where do they come from?

To keep track of the analysis, I divided the questionnaire data into four themes, based on the answers of respondents. These were: 1) responses concerning the Temple as a building, 2) responses concerning the religious or philosophical aspect of Confucianism, 3) responses about the cultural and historical impact, and 4) responses about their reasons to visit the Confucius Temple, and their feelings or experience while doing so (or after the visit).

4.1 The Temple as a building

The temple as a building was not the initial focus of my questionnaire, so I did not ask questions about it. However, the visitors praised the surroundings and the feeling the Temple gave them. Since this topic proved to be important, I discuss the relevant answers here.

I received answers concerning the temple as a building in response to question 21 in Part 2: “Do you have other remarks about the Confucius Temple in Qufu?” All the answers were highly positive. Some respondents commented on the architecture and how much they appreciated the style, and how it was recognizable from the Imperial Palace they had visited in Beijing. People also commented on this aspect while we talked after they had filled in the questionnaire. They said that the building gave them a feeling of authenticity; especially the group older than 40 appreciated this authenticity. There was a small group of people, aged around 50 years, who had come to the Confucius Temple because they had heard so many good stories about the architecture. The younger generation also noticed the architecture, but did not seem as impressed as the older generation. For them it was more about aesthetics.

Another point made about the Temple as a building was that when I asked the participants why they were more interested in one part than another within the Temple, they answered that the looks of the building attracted them. Thirteen participants answered that they had special interest in a particular part because they thought it was the most beautiful part of the Temple. Although younger respondents did not seem too impressed by the architecture, they identified a building as their favorite because it was the most beautiful they had seen.

The parts that were most often indicated as most interesting were as follows: the Hall of Great Achievements (26 respondents), the Apricot Platform (15), the Gate of Great Achievements (14), and the Thirteen Stele Pavilion (12). This question had a multiple-answer option. Interestingly, people who marked one of the above-mentioned sites as most interesting also marked at least one other from the same list. The reasons for perceiving these parts as most interesting varied from being visually the most appealing

to the most famous (mainly the Hall of Great Achievements), or having the biggest impact on Chinese and Confucian culture and history (mainly the Apricot Platform).

By contrast, almost half (29 of the 62 respondents) did not have a least favorite part, because “there is nothing that is not interesting” (*búhuì méiyǒu xìngqù* 不会没有兴趣).

This is a good sign for the Temple. However, among the 33 people who had stronger opinions about this, five stated that a specific part of the Temple was less interesting because the building or site was not particularly pretty or appealing.

To sum up the first theme “the Temple as a building”, the most important aspect was the architecture. The architecture of the buildings themselves gives visitors an authentic feeling. However, the appearance of the buildings was also an important factor for them to decide whether they classified it as interesting.

4.2 Religious and philosophical aspect of Confucianism

As stated earlier, only seven respondents considered themselves Confucian. Interestingly, four of them lived more than 500 km from the Temple. All seven of them had come to Qufu specifically to visit the Three Confucius Sites. Furthermore, they came to the Temple to pay their respects to Confucius. Naturally, other reasons were also mentioned, such as traveling, having an interest in Confucius’ life, the Chinese culture, and Confucianism. However, people who did not think of themselves as Confucian also showed interest in Confucianism and Confucius’ life.

All the Chinese visitors already knew the basics about Confucius and Confucianism, because it is part of the primary school program; they had visited because the topic continued to intrigue them. However, some of the visitors I spoke with had visited the Temple because it was on their travel route from the south of China to Shanghai or Beijing

(or the other way around). It was convenient to stop by, take a break from traveling, and enjoy the tranquility of the Confucius Temple while learning more about Confucius and Confucianism. “*It’s a win-win!*” (*shuāngyíng* 双赢), as one of the participants wrote in his questionnaire.

When I asked them if they were satisfied with their visit, six of the seven Confucian respondents answered that they were, because they had the chance to pay their respects to Confucius and visit his former home (*cháoshèng* 朝圣). The seventh participant was a little more hesitant. He explained that indeed he had paid his respects, but that he had expected more opportunities to worship Confucius. He was not disappointed, because of the chance to learn about Confucianism, Confucius and Chinese culture – but it was not what he had expected.

It is also worth mentioning that none of the Confucian respondents pointed at one of the buildings and said, “This is the least interesting in the Temple.” They all answered that there was nothing that was not worth visiting; everything was interesting or important. They found everything interesting and important for Confucianism, and thus for themselves personally too.

People all have their own interests. However, the information that is provided by the tour guide and by the signs (situated every few meters) contribute much to the understanding that visitors have of the Temple and of Confucianism. The visitors who identified as Confucians all arrived with the goal of paying their respects to Confucius and not necessarily to learn more about Confucianism. Others were more interested in learning about Confucianism than paying respects.

4.3 Cultural and historical impact

Clearly the visitors valued the cultural aspect of the Temple: 26 participants expressed that they came to the Confucius Temple to learn more about Chinese culture. Especially foreign visitors were keen to learn more about the history of Confucius and where his ideas originated, giving them a better understanding of Chinese culture. Most foreigners were travelers and they wanted to see as much of China as they could in a limited time. Two assured me that they were not visiting the Temple because it is a “must-do” when traveling in China; rather, the Confucius Temple to them was an opportunity to become familiar with what is considered to be, as the participants put it, “the basis of the Chinese way of thinking.”

Among the eight non-Chinese people whom I surveyed, four were living and studying in China and could speak basic Mandarin. They were all visiting the Temple individually. Notably, they all acknowledged that the information they gathered at the Temple confirmed what they saw in daily life. Specific examples given were the principle of filial piety (*xiǎo 孝*)⁶⁷ and the concept of music (*yuè 乐*).⁶⁸

As mentioned earlier, the principle of filial piety is that children should obey their parents.⁶⁹ This point is well explained in the Temple. The foreign visitors all stated that their Chinese friends, if they had any, strongly depended on what their parents thought. For example, they would not participate in an activity organized by their university if their

⁶⁷ For more an explanation on how filial piety works for Confucius (and Mencius), please see for example Schrecker (1997). For a practical example of how filial piety works in contemporary urban China, please see Lin (2014).

⁶⁸ Please see Kim (2011) for more information about the origin and usage of the concept of music in the Confucian thought.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 1 above.

parents told them not to, despite no longer living at home and not legally needing their parents' permission to participate.

The foreign visitors also saw the correspondence between music, as explained in the Temple, and their Chinese friends' activities. As explained earlier, music is important for Confucianism because it contributes to the harmony and order in society. Without exception, their Chinese friends knew how to play a musical instrument or how to dance.

The historical importance is evident in that most visitors did not plan to visit another Confucius Temple, or had never been to another Confucian temple. The reason was that they believed the Temple was at Confucius' previous home and was where – according to tradition – he taught his apprentices. This is the only place where ordinary people can gain a feeling of how it was to be one of Confucius' disciples. In addition, the belief that Confucius lived here makes this Temple the most famous Confucian temple in the world. In the words of one interviewee: “The other Confucius Temples will not be able to meet the standards that the Qufu Temple set.”⁷⁰

However, visitors who had been to other Confucian temples expressed that they wanted to visit those temples out of interest in Confucius and Confucianism. They were satisfied at those temples as well. Nonetheless, they all felt that the historical background was more profound at Qufu, mainly because this was his home and it provides the basis for the other temples. One participant commented, “What can the other temples offer more than Qufu's Confucius Temple?”

Another reason was that the Confucius Temple in Qufu offers good tour guides. These guides are professionally trained and can tell visitors everything about the Confucius

⁷⁰ This is a direct quote from a visitor I spoke while she was filling in the questionnaire.

Temple. For example, participants who had also visited the temples in Nanjing and Taiwan claimed that the temple in Nanjing did offer guided tours but these were not conducted in person. One could buy a recording and listen to it while walking through the temple. The temple in Taiwan, on the other hand, is smaller than that at Qufu and did not offer a tour service. Providing a tour service gave the visitors a better perspective of what Confucianism is and what impact it has had on the Chinese culture, and what it meant historically. Eleven people (17.7%) planned to go to another Confucian temple and they explained that this fitted into their travel plans. They wanted to see what other Confucian temples had to offer, and they wanted to compare the temples. Alternatively, they were genuinely interested in Confucius and wanted to learn everything about him that China had to offer.

Interestingly, no-one desired to visit a Confucius Temple abroad, for example in Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia, or Korea. They felt this would not explain Confucius' influence on Chinese society, but was rather about Confucian influence on the society of the country in question.⁷¹ Hence they chose to visit the Confucius Temple in Qufu.

When I asked which part of the temple was least interesting, the most frequent response was the Resting Hall (12 respondents). The reasons cited were as follows: people did not remember seeing this part of the Temple; the information provided was not enough; or they did not recognize the resting hall for Confucius' wife as being important to Chinese culture. This finding indicates that visitors did not visit the Temple for the "side parts," as one participant told me, but rather spent their time "wisely and learn about the Sage."

⁷¹ For more information about the Confucius Temples abroad, please read Kong (2013).

The most important points to remember from this theme was that participants in my survey came to this particular Confucius Temple because of its famous historical background. The fact that it is believed to be the place where Confucius taught his disciples, and spent his last years, makes it more attractive than other Confucian temples. The location of the Temple also contributes to the choice to visit, since the site lies conveniently on the high-speed train route between the south of China and Shanghai or Beijing. Furthermore, the tour guides, who offer information about the historical background, enrich the experience. Additionally, Confucius' ideas are considered the basis of the Chinese way of thinking, and Confucian concepts are still visible in Chinese daily life, which makes it part of Chinese culture.

4.4 Worth a visit?

I wanted to know if the participants felt that visiting the Confucius Temple was worth it. I did not directly ask them this in the questionnaire as I did not want to bias their answers. I asked if they were satisfied after visiting (question 4 of part 2) and if they would recommend a visit to the Temple to their friends and family (question 14 of part 2). Hence, the participants only gave me reasons why they thought a visit was or was not worthwhile.

Concerning the question about satisfaction, 45 out of 62 people answered they were satisfied; four said they were not satisfied, and 13 had no clear opinion. The most common reason for people to be pleased with their visit included the extent to which their knowledge about Confucius as a person, or Confucianism, or Chinese culture, had improved (14 respondents). One satisfied visitor had been to this Confucius Temple four times, and "I still learn something new every time I am here."

Eight people thought the Temple was interesting because of their own interests. Three of the eight had a general interest in Confucius, because of his influence on Chinese society;

two had an affinity for Chinese history; two others studied comparative philosophy; and one studied sociology with a focus on China. These responses indicate that there is still academic interest in Confucius and Confucianism.

Lastly, 13 visitors were satisfied but without a particular reason. One said, “It is more a kind of feeling” during our conversation. This illustrates the authentic feeling of the Temple, already identified as important.

The reasons why people were not completely satisfied with their visit mainly related to the absence of certain features. Examples were too few rituals; too little information about Confucianism; or that too much had been restored in a not-so-authentic manner, hence a lack of genuine antique materials.⁷²

Regarding the question about whether they would recommend the Temple to others, 54 of the questioned visitors would do so (87%), two would not, and four people would consider who they were speaking with. The most frequent answer (20 respondents) to “Why would you recommend the Temple to others?” was that basic knowledge of Chinese culture and society is part of general knowledge, and the Confucius Temple seems the perfect place to gather such knowledge. This answer highlights the importance of knowledge about Confucianism. It shows that not only are people concerned with the amount of information about Confucianism but also that they consider this information to be essential. Other common answers were that information provided by the Temple is interesting; it is an historical place; one should go in memory of Confucius; and one has the opportunity to pay respects to him here. One participant had visited because of her

⁷² For more information about conservations and restorations on the Confucius Temple, please see Li , 2014, 86–89; and for more information about the significance of physical and visual quantities, please see Murray, 2009, 371–411. See Introduction: Research Question above.

studies. Another respondent answered that the Temple's philosophy charmed [him], and [he] wished everyone could experience the same.

The two people who said they would not recommend the Temple to their friends and family had straightforward reasons. One was not particularly interested in Confucius, and said, "when you are not interested in a subject, then going to a museum about it doesn't make sense. But my boyfriend really likes history, so here we are!"⁷³ The second person stated that the Temple was not without interest, but that one did not spend much time in the Temple, and apart from the Three Confucian Sites there was little for tourists to do in Qufu. This argument was given many times, also by people who would consider who they were talking to. Several visitors made statements such as the following: "Yes, I would recommend the Temple, because Confucianism is important for the Chinese culture, but if people are not interested in Confucius then I would not recommend it. There is not much else to do here."

In conclusion, most respondents were satisfied with their visit to the Temple. Among other points cited, they had a chance to pay their respects, learn more about Chinese culture and history, and they obtained a good feeling from the environment. However, the four visitors who were not impressed complained about the lack of authenticity and information. The short opening hours and the fact that it is "just another ordinary Chinese temple" (as one participant put it) were further reasons for visitors not to be completely satisfied. Nonetheless, the overall opinion was that seeing the Confucius Temple is definitely worth it. The Temple is part of Chinese culture and is therefore important; it is also interesting historically.

⁷³ Oral conversation with a visitor after she completed the questionnaire.

Conclusion

In this final section of the thesis, I present my findings, starting with a summary and an answer to the research question. Thereafter, I explain the difficulties I encountered while doing this research. I then discuss the main limitations of the study and suggest how the knowledge gaps can be filled.

This thesis has examined how the Confucius Temple in Qufu shapes the experience on its visitors. To answer my research question, “How does the Confucius Temple in Qufu impact its visitors?”, I conducted two in-depth interviews and administered 62 questionnaires. The interviewees were two officials who had personal or professional ties with the Confucius Temple in Qufu, namely Mr Kong and “Kimi.” Both these interviews showed how the Temple is presented to visitors, and thus how the Temple tries to influence people. For example, the Confucius Temple organizes rituals such as the daily opening ritual and a festive day to celebrate Confucius’ presumed birthday. Furthermore, the Temple gives visitors the opportunity to enter the Temple for free, by asking them to recite five parts of *The Analects*.

When I talked to the visitors, it became clear that they appreciated how the Temple presents itself. The rituals formed a large part of what Confucianism represented to them, and seeing the Temple conduct some rituals was inspiring. Even though the number of rituals were limited in their eyes, it did enrich their experience. Furthermore, the architecture of the Temple was extremely important to the visitors’ experiences. The architecture not only gave a feeling of authenticity, but the way the Temple was designed also presented specially assigned locations for offerings and sacrifices.

Confucianism is still very much alive in China today. The fact that this Temple is said to be where Confucius lived and taught his disciples makes a visit more interesting, because it

becomes another way to experience Confucianism. The tour guides at the Temple contributed to enhancing the visitors' knowledge about Confucius and Confucianism. All the above-mentioned aspects offered by the Confucius Temple contributed to the experience gained by the visitors during their visit to the Temple.

The research that led to these insights was not without struggle. My assumption that everyone in China would be willing to scan a QR code proved to be wrong, which complicated the process of conducting a survey. The second time I went to Qufu, I was better prepared as I took printed copies. However, this tested my ability to read Chinese characters in handwriting; not every participant took the time to write neatly (as I am accustomed to). It also gave me more work in terms of preparation, because I had to manually capture the answers from the paper questionnaires in Survio before I could analyze the data. However, this effort was not wasted because it enabled me to look through the answers before analyzing them, which gave me the opportunity to form a preliminary answer to the research question.

This study investigated the impact of the Confucius Temple on its visitors, but the scope of the research did not allow for an in-depth analysis of how the architecture of the Temple affects the visitors' experience. Because the architecture was not an initial focus point, I did not probe this topic while conducting the survey and interviews. However, it might be worthwhile to investigate this topic more deeply. Controversial theories exist about the relation between architecture and the cohesion and control of historical sites. For example, Frances Yates researched the role of space in organizing memory. She argued that the way in which architecture is presented is important in how buildings create memories. She examined the techniques for memorizing antiques, and provided a methodology to trace the influence of classical ideas in religious buildings (among

others).⁷⁴ This means that the architecture influenced people's memories. Conversely, as Maurice Halbwachs suggested, social cohesion and the control that buildings exert over people comes from collective memories.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Pierre Nora examined how reconstructed remains from the past – history that belongs to everyone – influence the memories of people, which differ across groups.⁷⁶ It might be valuable to examine how the memory of Confucius and Confucianism has shaped the functions of the Confucius Temple in Qufu. As Frederick Mote wrote, history is not a building, and restorations should not affect the memory of a historic event, as long as the functions of the building are preserved.⁷⁷ This point could be of interest regarding the Confucius Temple, which has been destroyed and reconstructed many times.

This research succeeded in finding reasons for the attraction of many visitors to the Confucius Temple, and in understanding what exactly the Temple does to attract its visitors. Nonetheless, the Confucius Temple remains an infinite source of fascination. This is not only because it is a place where many answers are to be found, but also because – as shown in this work – the Temple is still considered a sacred place and the home of Confucius.

⁷⁴ Yates, 1966.

⁷⁵ Halbwachs, 1980.

⁷⁶ Nora, 1989.

⁷⁷ Mote, 1994.

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Appendix A: English version of the questionnaire

Questionnaire Part 1 – General Questions

Please answer the following questions. They are only meant to give a general picture. Your privacy is guaranteed.

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age?

- <18
- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61>

3. What is your nationality?

- Chinese
- Foreign

4. What is your confession?

- Confucianism
- Buddhism
- Daoism
- Christianity
- None
- Other:

5. How far is the temple away from the place where you live?

- 0-50 km
- 50-100 km
- 100-150 km
- 150-200 km
- 200-300 km
- 300-400 km
- 400-500 km
- >500km

6. Did you come here only to visit the temple, or do you have other sightseeing sights in your initiary?

- Yes, I'm here just to visit the temple
- No, I'll also visit:

Questionnaire Part 2 – Questions about the Confucius Temple

Please answer the following questions regarding the Confucius Temple.

1. How often have you visited the Confucius Temple in Qufu?

2. How did you know about the Temple?

- Travel guide
- Internet
- Traditional media (TV, newspaper etc.)
- Other people shared their experience
- I've been to another Confucius Temple before
- I heard about it by chance
- I actively searched for it myself
- Other:

3. What is the reason you visit the Temple?

- Travel
- I'm interested in Confucianism
- I want to learn more about Confucius' life
- I want to pay respect to Confucius (拜孔子)
- I want to learn more about Chinese culture
- I came across it by chance
- It was recommended by other people
- Other:

4. Do you feel like the Temple satisfy you in your reason to visit? (*Please specify why*)

5. Have you been to another Confucius Temple before?

- No
- Yes, namely:

6. Why did you visit the other Temple?

7. Comparing this Confucius Temple to the one(s) you visited before, what do you feel is the biggest difference?

8. Are you planning to go to another Confucius Temple after the one in Qufu? *(Please specify which temple you intend to visit)*

No *(go to question 10)*

Yes, namely:

9. Why are you planning to go to another Confucius Temple?

10. What part of the Confucius Temple in Qufu was the most interesting for you?

Lingxing Gate (棷星门)

Shengshi Gate (圣时门)

Hongdao Gate (弘道门)

Dazhong Gate (大中门)

Thirteen Stele Pavilions (十三碑亭)

Dacheng Gate (大成门)

Kuiwen Hall (奎文阁)

Xing Tan Pavilion (杏坛, Apricot Platform)

Liangwu (两庑)

Dacheng Hall (大成殿)

Resting Hall (寝殿, dedicated to Confucius' Wife)

Other:

11. Why does/do this/these part(s) of the temple appeal most to you?

12. What part of the Confucius Temple in Qufu was the least interesting for you?

Lingxing Gate (棷星门)

Shengshi Gate (圣时门)

Hongdao Gate (弘道门)

Dazhong Gate (大中门)

Thirteen Stele Pavilions (十三碑亭)

Dacheng Gate (大成门)

- Kuiwen Hall (奎文閣)
- Xing Tan Pavilion (杏壇, Apricot Platform)
- Liangwu (兩廡)
- Dacheng Hall (大成殿)
- Resting Hall (寢殿, dedicated to Confucius' Wife)
- Other:

13. Why does/do this/these part(s) of the temple appeal least to you?

14. Would you recommend a visit of the Confucius Temple in Qufu to other people?

- Yes
- No

15. If yes, what is the reason for the recommendation?

16. If no, why would you not recommend the Temple?

17. What do you think is the most important aspect of the Temple?

18. How often do you read about Confucius or Confucianism?

- Never
- Once a year
- Once per half a year
- Once a month
- Once a week
- More often

19. What kind of material do you read?

- The Analects of Confucius
- Commentary on Confucianist writings
- Academic work
- Life guides with Confucianist wisdom
- WeChat and/or Weibo articles
- Other:

20. What reading(s) appealed most to you?

21. Do you have other remarks about the Confucius Temple in Qufu?

Questionnaire Part 3 – Statements

Circle the number that fits with each statement for you.

1 = *completely disagree*

2 = *disagree*

3 = *neither agree nor disagree*

4 = *agree*

5 = *completely agree*

Visiting the Temple is something any tourist in China must do.

1 2 3 4 5

Visiting the Temple is only for Confucianists.

1 2 3 4 5

Visiting the Temple helped me to enrich my knowledge in Confucianism.

1 2 3 4 5

Visiting the Temple helped me to enrich my knowledge in Chinese culture.

1 2 3 4 5

Visiting the Temple enriched my travel experience.

1 2 3 4 5

It is important to have knowledge about Confucius before visiting the Temple.

1 2 3 4 5

The Confucianist background of the Temple is important.

1 2 3 4 5

Visiting the Temple changed my view of Confucianism.

1 2 3 4 5

22. In what way has the Temple changed your view of Confucianism?

Appendix B: Chinese version of the questionnaire

问卷第一部分 - 普通的问题

请回答下面的问题，用嚟提供概貌。我尊重个人隐私。

1. 性别

- 男
- 女

2. 年龄

- <18 岁
- 18-25 岁
- 26-30 岁
- 31-40 岁
- 41-50 岁
- 51-60 岁
- 61> 岁

3. 国籍

- 中国人
- 外国人

4. 你住的地方离曲阜的孔庙多少公里？

- 0-50 公里
- 50-100 公里
- 100-150 公里
- 150-200 公里
- 200-300 公里
- 300-400 公里
- 400-500 公里
- >500 公里

5. 你信奉什么？

- 儒家
- 佛教
- 道教
- 基督教
- 没有
- 其他的：

6. 你只为了孔庙来曲阜吗，还是也打算去别的旅游景点？

- 我只要观览孔庙
- 我也要观赏：

问卷第二部分 - 问题关于曲阜的孔庙。

请回答下面的问题关于孔庙。

1. 你几次观览了曲阜的孔庙？

2. 你怎么听说孔庙？

- 旅游便览
- 网络
- 传统媒体（电视、报纸等）
- 别人分享他们的经验
- 我去过了别的孔庙
- 我偶然听到了
- 我自己主动寻找
- 其他的：

3. 你为何观览曲阜的孔庙？

- 旅游
- 我对孔子思想有兴趣
- 我想理解孔子的生活
- 我想拜孔子
- 我想理解中国文化
- 我偶然碰到了
- 别人推荐了
- 其他的：

4. 你觉得孔庙满足你的要求吗？（请解释为何）

5. 你以前去过别的孔子庙吗？

- 没有
- 有，我去过：

6. 你为何去过那座孔庙？

7. 你以前去过的孔庙与屈服的孔庙比起来，你觉得最大的差别是什么？

8. 你打算去观览别的孔庙吗？（请明确什么孔庙）

- 我不打算
- 我打算去：

9. 你为何打算去别的孔庙？

10. 对你来说，曲阜孔庙的最有意思的部分是什么？

- 棂星门
- 圣时门
- 弘道门
- 大中门
- 十三碑亭**
- 大成门
- 奎文阁
- 杏坛
- 两庑
- 大成殿
- 寝殿
- 其他的：

11. 你为什么对这个部分有兴趣？

12. 对你来说，曲阜孔庙的没有意思的部分是什么？

- 棂星门
- 圣时门
- 弘道门
- 大中门
- 十三碑亭
- 大成门
- 奎文阁
- 杏坛

- 两庑
- 大成殿
- 寝殿
- 其他的:

13. 你为什么对这个部分没有兴趣？

14. 你要向别人推荐曲阜的孔庙吗？

- 要推荐
- 不要推荐

15. 你为何要推荐曲阜的孔庙？

16. 你为何不要推荐曲阜的孔庙？

17. 对你来说，孔庙最重要的方面是什么？

18. 你几次看关于孔子或者孔子思想的书类？

- 从来没有过
- 每年一次
- 每半年一次
- 每个月一次
- 每个星期一次
- 比一个星期一次多

19. 你看怎么样的资料？

- 论语
- 儒家文评论
- 学问
- 生活指南包含孔子的智慧
- 微信或者微博
- 其他的：

20. 你喜欢什么读物？

21. 你还有别的评语关于曲阜的孔庙吗？

问卷第三部 - 语句

请选最合适的答案

1=完全不同意 2=不同意 3=一般 4=同意 5=完全同意

每个游客应该观览曲阜的孔庙

1 2 3 4 5

观览孔庙仅供儒家

1 2 3 4 5

观览孔庙丰富我的入学学问

1 2 3 4 5

观览孔庙丰富我的中国文化学问

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观览孔庙丰富我的旅游经历

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在观览孔庙之前了解孔子是很重要的

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孔庙儒家的背景很重要

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观览孔庙改变了我对儒家的看法

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22. 观览孔庙怎么改变了你对儒家的看法？

谢谢你的帮助和合作！