# Ceremonies held to pay tribute to birth of Confucius

A grand ceremony was held to mark the 2,568th anniversary of the birth of Confucius in Quzhou, Zhejiang Province, on Sept.28.


Quzhou, a city in Zhejiang Province in southeastern China, holds a grand memorial ceremony to mark the 2,568th anniversary of the birth of Confucius on Sept. 28, 2017. The ceremony includes tributes and recitals. Born in 551 B.C., the great philosopher and educator provided concepts that are considered a principle philosophy in China for more than 2,000 years, and are also admired internationally. [Photo/China.org.cn]

Under the theme of "Happiness in the Family, Harmony with the Neighbors," the ceremony received visitors from home and abroad at the Southern Confucius Ancestral Temple, one of the two temples in China belonging to direct decendents of Confucius.

The annual memorial ceremony held in Quzhou has been selected as a China Intangible Cultural Heriatage since 2011, and it calls on people to commemorate Confucius in the contemporary China.

"The Chinese people have since ancient times attached great importance to family. For over 800 years, Quzhou has carried on this traditon from age to age," Kong Xingkai, director of the management committee of Quzhou Southern Confucius Ancestral Temple and the 75th generation in the lineal descent of

Confucius, said in his speech.

Kong also spoke about the expanded influence of Confucianism. “The thoughts and values created by Confucius still carry a profound impact on Chinese people’s way of life today and are closely related to the contemporary development. Therefore we should call on more people to participate in these cultural activities.”

Since 2012, Quzhou has put in a couple years of dedicated efforts to build its cultural industry park in a bid to carry on Confucinism teachings and lead the local economic transformation and advancement.

As the only state-level cultural industry trial park in Zhejiang Province, Quzhou has built many cultural establishments aimed at carrying forward Chinese traditional culture by teaching visitors about Confucianism and allowing them to experience the cultures of Ming and Qing dynasties.

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# Chinese scientists reveal mystery of Zika virus

[File Photo: sohu.com]

Chinese researchers said Thursday they might have solved the mystery of why the Zika virus causes microcephaly, a birth defect marked by small head size that can lead to severe developmental problems in babies.

In a study published in the U.S. journal Science, a team led by Cheng-Feng Qin of the Beijing Institute of Microbiology and Epidemiology reported that one single genetic change, likely acquired in 2013, gave the mosquito-borne

virus the ability to cause severe fetal microcephaly.

“Our findings offer a reasonable explanation for the unexpected causal link of Zika to microcephaly, and will help understand how Zika evolved from an innocuous mosquito-borne virus into a congenital pathogen with global impact,” Qin said.

Zika was first identified in 1947 in Uganda, and until its recent emergence in the Americas, was a little known one that sporadically causes mild infections.

Then, it rapidly swept through South and Central America in 2015, and due to its link to congenital brain abnormalities, especially microcephaly during pregnancy, the World Health Organization declared in early 2016 the current epidemics a public health emergency of international concern.

However, scientists remain unable to determine why the virus evolved into a pathogen triggering severe neurological syndromes.

By comparing contemporary Zika virus strains from the 2015 and 2016 South American epidemics with an ancestral Cambodian virus that was circulating in 2010, Qin and colleagues found one critical mutation that conferred the ability to cause microcephaly in mouse models of fetal infection.

That one change, S139N, which replaced a serine amino acid with an asparagine at the 139th position of a Zika protein called prM, also made the virus more lethal to human neuron precursor cells in culture compared with the ancestral form.

Zika accumulated numerous changes throughout its genome between 2010 and 2016, of which S139N caused substantially more severe microcephaly and embryonic lethality in mouse models.

Evolutionary analyses revealed that the S139N change likely arose sometime around 2013, which coincided with initial reports of microcephaly.

It was then stably maintained during subsequent spread to the America.

“The discovery should provide guidance for the study of pathogenetic mechanisms of the Zika virus and for the development of vaccines and treatments,” Qin said.

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# China expects travel rush during upcoming holiday

China’s transportation network is preparing for an expected travel rush during the upcoming eight-day combined National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival

holiday period.

Long lines of vehicles slow traffic at the toll gate of the Beijing-Tianjin-Macao Expressway. [Photo/China Daily]

From Thursday, railways nationwide will begin to receive around 130 million passengers during an 11-day period as Chinese visit tourist destinations or return to their hometown, according to the China Railway Corporation (CR).

The number of railway passengers is expected to peak on Sunday with 16 million tickets having already been sold, according to data released by CR.

The Mid-Autumn Festival falls on Oct. 4 this year, coinciding with the week-long National Day holiday, which adds an extra day to make eight days off work, starting Sunday.

From Oct. 1 to 8, around 710 million tourist trips will be made across China, according to predictions by China National Tourism Administration (CNTA).

Tourist attractions should manage traffic and entrance flows to receive visitors within their capacity, the CNTA said in a circular Thursday.

The CNTA also demanded local travel agencies pay close attention to safety conditions at tourist attractions and are prepared for emergencies.

The National Day holiday, which runs from Oct. 1 to 7, is one of China’s two “Golden Weeks,” during which passenger flow, tourism revenue and retail sales usually surge.

# Tibet has world's 1st atmosphere observation system

A sophisticated atmosphere observation system known as APSOS arrived in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region Thursday.

APSOS, or Atmosphere Profiling Synthetic Observation System, is the world's first ground-based facility for profiling atmospheric variables and multiple constituents in the neutral atmosphere, according to Pan Weilin, a researcher with the Institute of Atmosphere Physics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

It is capable of monitoring the atmospheric composition such as temperature, wind, ozone and carbon dioxide levels through remote sensing, said Pan.

The system was debugged in east China's Anhui Province by Huainan Atmospheric Physics Institute and was transported to Yangbajain International Cosmic Ray Observatory in Tibet for extended atmospheric observation.

The system will be operational in October after testing.

The program was launched in 2012 with an investment of 93 million yuan (14 million U.S. dollars) from the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

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# Spanish-born giant panda arrives in China

A giant panda born in Madrid Zoo in 2013 arrived in Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province Thursday.

The male panda will been quarantined for one month before meeting the public at his new home, Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, the base said.

Xing Bao, which means star treasure, was born on Aug. 30, 2013. He was the third cub born to panda Huazuiba and her mate Bing Xing.

Under agreements signed with international zoos, all pandas born overseas must come to China once they mature to take part in breeding programs.

Staff at the base prepared billboards introducing Xing Bao and gave out

postcards to celebrate his arrival.

China began cooperation with Spain in giant panda breeding research in 2007.