

**ADDRESS TO AUDIENCE AT CONFUCIUS DAY CELEBRATIONS
ON 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2017**

AT THE NAANA OPOKU-AGYEMANG AUDITORIUM, UCC

By Prof. Ishmael Mensah (Ghana Director)

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished invited guests,

Friends from the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Board, Directors and Staff of CIUCC, I humbly welcome you to the 2017 Confucius Day Celebrations

Confucius Day is held annually on Confucius' Birthday (September 28) to pay homage to Confucius, China's 'First Teacher.' Confucius was a sage, scholar, and philosopher who was passionate about education. He was a philosopher whose sound bites of wisdom became China's handbook on governance and its code of personal morality for thousands of years. He earned a number of accolades including a posthumous award of "Supreme Teacher", an imperial decree deeming him a "Grand Master", and the bestowing of the title of "Prince of Culture" on him.

His teachings focused on creating ethical models of family and public interaction, and setting educational standards. His social philosophy was based primarily on the principle of "ren" or "loving others" while exercising self-discipline. He believed that ren could

be put into action using the Golden Rule, "What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others." He believed that a leader needed to exercise self-discipline in order to remain humble and treat his followers with compassion. In doing so, he would lead by positive example. According to Confucius, leaders could motivate their subjects to follow the law by teaching them virtue.

His philosophy of education focused on the "Six Arts": archery, calligraphy, computation, music, chariot-driving and ritual. To Confucius, the main objective of being an educator was to teach people to live with integrity.

We at the Confucius Institute at the University of Cape Coast are using this period to showcase the Chinese Culture. This we have dubbed 'a Chinese Cultural Experience'.

Today, you will learn more about the following:

- **Calligraphy** – the traditional art of writing the Chinese characters.
- **Jianzi** - a traditional Chinese national sport in which players aim to keep a heavily weighted shuttlecock in the air by using their bodies (ball juggling)
- **Chinese painting** - is one of the oldest continuous artistic traditions in the world and involves painting in the traditional style.

- **Chinese paper cutting** - The art of Chinese paper cutting has been prized for many thousands of years. Paper cuts are used for decoration, given as gifts, and are regarded as lucky. Traditional paper cuts often showed celebrations, weddings and feasts, but now all sorts of motifs are used.
- **Tai Chi** – a type of martial arts which is also used for stress reduction and a variety of other health conditions.
- **Mooncake** - a Chinese bakery product traditionally eaten during the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Our decision to provide this Chinese cultural experience is imperative because the mandate of CIUCC is to promote the Chinese language and culture. In pursuit of this, we have rolled out a number of Chinese Language and culture programmes. However, most of our programmes have been confined to the lecture room. This year's Confucius Day Celebration is 'off-the-beaten-track'. As we seek to provide our students and the entire university community with an opportunity to have a first-hand experience of the Chinese culture and for them to immerse themselves in it. This we believe will enhance students' appreciation of the Chinese culture.

Let me also seize this opportunity to appeal to our Chinese friends to also learn aspects of the Ghanaian culture whilst they are here in the true spirit of Confucianism and for cultural exchange which the Confucius institute seeks to achieve. In the words of Confucius,

"Acquire new knowledge whilst thinking over the old, and you may become a teacher of others."

To my Ghanaian friends, there is a lot that we can learn from the Chinese especially with regards to China's recent meteoric economic rise which is deeply rooted in its culture and the moral teachings of Confucius including sound moral values such as harmony, benevolence, righteousness and courtesy.

Confucius, in many ways epitomized the Chinese Culture and worldview. It is therefore not out of place to showcase the Chinese culture on a day set aside to honour him. What we are doing today coincides with his popular saying:

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

Today you will not only be hearers of Chinese cultural practices but also seers and doers so you can remember and understand.