

## CONFUCIANISTS IN CHINA ISSUE THEIR FIRST EVER STATEMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

TRONDHEIM: July 24, 2013 On Friday afternoon, China's most ancient philosophical system named Confucianism (after its founding figure, the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC philosopher Kong Qui/Kong Fuzi/Confucius) will formally announce its first ever statement on the environment.

There are 500 Confucian temples in China, a focus for 10s of millions of people, particularly young people around exam time.

The statement is a key part of its joining the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), founded by HRH Prince Philip in 1995 as part of his work as International President of WWF.

It will be issued on the occasion of the second international meeting of the green pilgrimage network, in Trondheim, Norway. This is a network of significant pilgrim destinations, including Canterbury, St Albans, Jerusalem, Amritsar, Mexico City (Our Lady of Guadalupe) Trondheim, Ujjain (a Kumbh Mela destination), and others, wanting to join forces to become more environmental.

In a letter of greeting to the Confucianists, on the eve of the birth of his great grandson, HRH Prince Philip said he was "delighted to know that the International Confucian Ecological Alliance is joining the Alliance of Religions and Conservation as the twelfth tradition... I am confident that the ancient wisdom preserved by the International Confucian Ecological Alliance will help to shape a better future."

The new alliance is headed by the internationally renowned Confucian scholar, Professor Tu Weiming of Peking University and Harvard. And as Prince Philip said in his greeting: "It is particularly significant that Professor Tu is leading this initiative and demonstrates the seriousness of the commitment."

The Confucian statement on the environment draws upon many of the greatest philosophical minds of China over the past 2,500 years. It presents a vision of humanity working as the main partner with both Heaven and Earth, and beautifully captures Confucius' teachings that only through full self-awareness of our place within the universe and the concomitant responsibilities to protect all life that come with that can we be fully and truly human.

It advocates a simpler life (as Confucius said):

"Even though you have only coarse grain for food, water for drink, and your bent arm for a pillow, you may still be happy. Riches and honours without justice are to me as fleeting clouds."

And that a good life requires taking responsibility for the world around us, and seeing all things as one.

That the great man can regard Heaven, Earth and the myriad things as one body is not because he deliberately wants to do so, but because it is natural to the humane nature of his mind that he do so.”

Based on their draft Eight Year Plan and their commitment to the Earth Charter, the Confucianists will now discuss a number of developments, in eight different areas, that they can make to protect the environment. These actions are on the plan.

The values and plans for ecological action that the Confucianist alliance is developing offers perhaps the most important way forward for a restoration of traditional values and protection for the fragile environment of contemporary China.

“Those of us who have been fortunate enough to study the writings of Confucius are delighted to hear the echoes of this wise, humane, tradition in the words of the new Premier of China, Premier Xi, and others in the government,” said ARC secretary general Martin Palmer. “This is remarkable, given that only 40 years ago, Confucius was considered to be a “bad influence” and during the Cultural Revolution his teachings were derided.”

“The recognition by the Chinese government of the moral, ecological and social values inherent in Confucianism is what makes this new commitment and partnership with us in ARC so exciting,” Palmer said.

## **Contact**

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## **Links**

ARC: [www.arcworld.org](http://www.arcworld.org)

Green Pilgrimage Network background

[www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=521](http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=521)

Trondheim meeting [www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=595](http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=595)

Confucian statement [www.arcworld.org/downloads/Confucian-Statement-on-Ecology.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/Confucian-Statement-on-Ecology.pdf)

Confucianist background [www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=182](http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=182)