

## Confucius Makes A Quiet Comeback

When Mao Tse-tung launched his Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, Red Guards marched into the town of Qufu, the birthplace of **Confucius**, to topple his family's gravestones and deface his temple with revolutionary slogans. From then until Mao's death, the philosopher whose teachings once provided the foundation of Chinese civilization was pilloried as the archenemy of the people's socialism. But Confucianism now seems to be making a quiet comeback in China—condoned if not exactly encouraged by Deng Xiaoping's government.

The Confucius temple in Peking reopened this month after a fifteen-year hiatus, and other temples dedicated to the fifth-century B.C. sage are already tourist attractions. But the revival is particularly evident in Qufu, a sleepy town in Shandong Province. Fully one-fifth of Qufu's 50,000 residents are again proudly claiming descent from Confucius. His impressive temple and the family's manor house have undergone more than \$300,000 in renovations and are slated for \$1.3 million more. And fresh mounds of earth in the cemetery indicate recent burials in the old Confucian tradition—despite Peking's official promotion of cremation to save space.

**Behavior:** Confucius's teachings, which laid down rigid rules of conduct for almost any occasion, are slowly re-emerging in the Shandong Province schools under the new guise of "Socialist Civilization." Chinese authorities now see merit in more polite student behavior, such as aiding classmates with poor grades and fetching food for neighbors. "We encourage students to do good deeds," says the Communist Party branch head at a local high school. "And by our statistics, 60 percent of them do."

But China is still a long way from embracing full-blown Confucianism, which includes ancestor veneration. Publicly, at least, no one has yet started burning the traditional incense at his temples. "We respect Confucius highly," says Kong Chincheng, a 75th-generation descendant. "But we do not worship him." Confucius himself would undoubtedly understand. As he once said: "The cautious seldom err."

EILEEN KEERDOJA with KIM FOLTZ in New York  
and MELINDA LIU in Qufu