Shandong puts ancient philosophers into tourism draw

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Who is the most well-known ancient Chinese person in the West? The answer is probably unanimous — Confucius (551 BC–479 BC).  
The great philosopher, teacher and political figure who was born in Shandong province and died at the age of 72, has left the most enduring and profound legacy over Chinese culture, society and governance in history.  
Almost 2,600 years later, his hometown province is determined to make the best use of its cultural heritage, along with its efforts to refine its economic structure, strengthen technology and innovation and accelerate the transformation of its business and trade patterns.  
On July 31, Shandong sent a delegation of business representatives and government officials to the Bay Area to promote its potential as one of China's economic powerhouses and attract American capital and talent to its 22,000-square-mile territory, which is roughly the size of West Virginia.  
Yang Yihang, economic counsel at the Chinese consulate in San Francisco, greeted the delegation by saying their visit had "significant meaning, given the uncertainty caused by the ongoing US-China trade conflicts".  
He added that the so-called US trade deficit was the result of market forces and business rules. "The US business community is the main beneficiary of and contributor to China-US economic relations. If there were a trade war, they would take the brunt," he said.  
Delegation leader Lyv Wei, deputy director-general of the province's department of commerce, said her members resembled the actual economic composition in Shandong — a stable, moderate and competitive business climate that cultivates not only traditional sectors such as food, metallurgy, textiles, household appliances, chemicals and construction materials, but also emerging sectors including automotive, high-speed trains, marine science, electronic information, biopharmaceuticals and new materials.  
Del Christensen, chief of global business development at the Bay Area Council, said Shandong remained one of his frequent stopovers during many of his China trips.  
"We received delegations from many places in Shandong. We have signed a memorandum with the city of Zibo," he said, emphasizing the vitality and vigor of China-California business exchanges benefit both sides. "Throughout my life, I haven't seen the possibility that California could live without China.  
"We encourage American friends to discover the home of Confucius," Lyv said, adding that this trip mainly focused on cultural trade as well as promotion of the high-quality outsourcing services.  
"The US remains our largest source of outsourcing services. In 2017, we received $1.37 billion in service outsourcing from the US, an increase of 40 percent over last year," she said.  
Shandong is one of the cradles of Chinese civilization and abounds with tourism attractions. Besides Confucius, Mo Zi (470-391 BC), the founder of Mohism, and Zhuang Zhou (369-286 BC), the key figure of Taoism, were also born in Shandong.  
Four World Heritage sites — Mount Tai, a place of worship for more than 3,000 years, the Confucian Compound, the Great Wall of Qi, and the Shandong section of the Grand Canal — draw throngs of visitors worldwide and have expanded people-to-people friendship to people worldwide.  
As far as cultural trade goes, Shandong in recent years has brought many cultural masterpieces, such as doctrinal wisdom of the ancient philosophers, outside of China and helped them take root in the world.  
Meanwhile, money has been injected into the production of blockbuster movies and TV series that are sold to North America, Europe and some neighboring Asian countries.  
Confucius once said: It remains unknown whether someone can achieve great things if he never keeps his promises.  
Could he have foreseen how profoundly his thoughts still influence the offspring of his birthplace thousands of years later?

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