

South Korea Celebrates the 2560th Anniversary of Confucius' Birthday



South Korea commemorates the 2560th anniversary of Confucius' birthday. (Zheng Renquan/The Epoch Times)

September 28, 2009 marked the 2560th anniversary of Confucius' birthday. As has been customary now for over one thousand years, Seokjeon-daejae, the special event that pays tribute to Confucius, was held in Sungkyunkwan, now a renowned Confucianism research and education center in South Korea, to commemorate the anniversary.



Seokjeon-daejae, "Honor Confucius Day" is celebrated in South Korea on September 28, 2009. (Zheng Renquan/The Epoch Times)

According to records, ceremonies for commemorating Confucius in South Korea date back to 1600 years ago (AD 372), during the Three Kingdoms period (Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla). In South Korea, the Seokjeon-daejae is considered the largest grand ceremony for commemorating Confucius and other Confucian sages.



"Honor Confucius Day" is celebrated in South Korea. (Zheng Renquan/The Epoch Times)

For over a thousand years, Koreans have revered Confucius as "the Lord Propagator of Culture; The Ultimate Sage and Man of Great Accomplishment," "the Model Teacher of Myriad Ages." South Korea holds the Seokjeon-daejae every spring and autumn to pay tribute to the memory of Confucius.



Traditional ceremonies mark Seokjeon-daejae, "Honor Confucius Day" in South Korea. (Zheng Renquan/The Epoch Times)

Nearly 80 percent of South Korea's population believes in Confucianism or has been influenced by it. Confucianism still plays an important role in Korean people's daily lives. The reason Korean TV series like "Dae Jang Geum" (Jewel in the Palace) won the hearts of so many Chinese, Japanese and other Asian audiences is that the Confucian values of loyalty, filial piety, honesty, trustworthiness, propriety, righteousness, honesty, and shame presented in the program resonate with them.

Since 1960, South Korea has included courses on the Confucian code of ethics in its universities, secondary and primary schools.

South Korea not only has organizations such as Confucian societies and Confucian culture research institutes, but also offers courses studying Confucianism in over 20 universities, including the Sungkyunkwan University, the Hansung University, the Korea University and the Sejong University.

Located northeast to the Gyeongbokgung Palace, the ancient royal palace in Seoul, Sungkyunkwan was built in 1398. It is Korea's most authoritative research and education center of Confucianism. There is a large Confucian Temple inside, which has the sacred Hall of Great Accomplishment. The Hall houses the memorial tablets of 37 ancient sages including Confucius, Mencius, Yanzi, and Zengzi, and 36 Korean ancient sages.

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