Dear friends and colleagues,

Please consider the following opportunity and help us distribute this information to any of your colleagues who may benefit from it.

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We are pleased to introduce the Third Annual Nishan Confucian Studies Summer Institute at the Nishan Birthplace of the Sage Academy in Shandong, China, July 6 to August 3, 2013.

This month-long training program for teachers of Chinese culture will be led by professors Roger T. Ames (University of Hawaii), Sor-hoon Tan (National University of Singapore) and Tian Chenshan (Beijing Foreign Studies University), with a special series of lectures by Henry Rosemont, Jr. (Brown University), Zhang Xianglong (Beijing University), and Hans-Georg Moeller (University College Cork). Our time together will revolve around careful and critical readings of classical texts and contemporary commentaries, seminars, discussion groups, cultural events and activities, and a number of field trips.

Given China’s rapid political and economic rise, anticipating the weight and measure of China’s growing influence has become a serious academic concern. To meet this urgent situation effectively, scholars must not only be aware of current affairs, but must also be sensitized through exposure to canonical texts and their interpretive contexts to take Chinese culture on its own terms. The purpose of this program is to read such texts carefully and make them our own.

Because Chinese works have so often been read through the lens of western presuppositions, careful attention to the linguistic, cultural, and philosophic context in which the classics were written is key to understanding what makes these works distinctively Chinese. The challenge is to develop an interpretive approach which allows western scholars and students to recognize the common sense of ancient China, and yet does not subsume Chinese thinking within the familiar categories of western discourse. Beyond the technical questions of scholarly engagement, gaining familiarity with the deep cultural background enables us to better comprehend contemporary China and its social and political ambitions.

Our unique location beside Mt. Nishan, the birthplace of Confucius, affords us a great opportunity to immerse ourselves in the study of ancient Chinese thought. At the forefront of the burgeoning revival of traditional culture, the newly built Nishan Birthplace of the Sage Academy sits just one thousand meters from the ancient Confucian Academy where over the centuries scholars, officials, and emperors came to pursue knowledge and wisdom and pay respects to the Great Sage. This area has been known as a holy place of learning for many generations, and we are pleased to carry on this educational tradition.

This year we will spend our first week of the Institute at Beijing Foreign Studies University. This will enable us to take advantage of the historical and cultural bounty of the capital city through field trips and guest speakers.
For the first time, in parallel with the program for teachers there will be separate classes for undergraduate students who want to earn college credits. Teachers who enroll several students in the undergraduate program may receive significant discounts on their own program cost. Please contact us for more information.

The fee to attend the Institute is $3,000 USD, which includes room and board, transportation within China, books, and classes. Some scholarships are available for those who cannot obtain institutional support.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in attending. The deadline for applications will be April 1, 2013, but advance notice is much appreciated.

We welcome and encourage teachers of Chinese philosophy, language, literature, religion, history, business, politics, and more to join us this Summer for a unique and enriching educational experience right at the heart of traditional Chinese culture.

For more information please contact us at:

Phone: 86-10-8881-5305

Email: nishansummercewrbw@gmail.com or cewrbeiwei@bfsu.edu.cn

Address: Center for East-West Relations
Beijing Foreign Studies University
2 Xisanhuan Beilu, Haidian District, Beijing, 100089
China

Website: http://cewren.user.d-jet.com/list.aspx?cid=12

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