

《Confucius family tree gets Big Data remake》

Confucius, who was born in 551 B.C. in Qufu, Shandong Province, is one of China's leading philosophers. He espoused a code of ethics for the nation's rulers and encouraged filial piety.



He stood as a father-figure for the Chinese and raised a family that had produced 83 generations of descendants to this day. According to family tree records, more than 2 million people can claim Confucius as their blood ancestor.

The Chinese surname (family name) of Confucius is Kong. Those with a Kong surname can discover any links they may have with the Chinese philosopher by logging on to a Big Data digital storage space on the Internet.

The lineage of Confucius is fully-digitalized making it the world's largest of its kind. The original digital version was introduced in 2009, but new upgrades have been installed.

Revising the thumb drive

In 2009, original paper documents were compiled of a listing of 2 million descendants with 20 million Chinese characters. The collection was 43,000 pages long and 80 volumes.

Admirers of Confucius saw a necessity to digitize the database to make it simple to add new names of descendants. Kong Xiangsheng, a 75 generation descendant of Confucius and curator of the family archives,

supported the project.

"The digitalized version makes revisions, searching, verification and census easier," Kong told Xinhua.

The latest updates of the family registry will include the names of descendants who are ethnic minorities, women and those living overseas, particularly in Hong Kong and Taiwan regions, and also in South Korea.

The first large-scale revision of the Confucius family tree can be traced back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Initially, the plan was to revise every 30 years and overhaul it in 60 year cycles.

Search engine upgrades

The Confucius family tree digital version will have embedded search bars, diagrams and analytic functions to sort out demographics and statistical information. It's revamped with Big Data performance.

The chief compiler, Kong Deyong, 77th generation descendant, said, "editors can make changes on a computer and then send the updated packages to users via the internet."

Software engineers designed a tree-shaped viewing system for the program.

"Enter a name in the search bar and you can get the complete hierarchy of the family tree with only one click," said Wei Jie, head of the digitization project, told China Daily.

Wei added, "It takes only a second to identify a Kong-surnamed person's immediate family members, as well as their extended family and location."

Digitizing the long list of names of Confucius descendants demonstrates that many Chinese are showing greater appreciation for the nation's ancient cultural values.

Restoring a rich heritage

When Westerners are asked to identify major cultural figures of Chinese history, they are likely to place Confucius on top of the list. The ancient Chinese philosopher has given wise sayings to the world in the book, Analects.

Confucius serves as a symbol of pride for the Chinese and his direct descendants should be more than pleased they can look up their family tree in a digital version.