

Our Introductions and Internship Experiences

By: Yeshang Zhang and Jian Li

Editor's note: The following article was co-authored by Jian Li and Yeshang Zhang as guest researchers at CERC during the fall of 2003. They are happy to present this article for introducing their city and province and reflecting on their experiences here. They also wish to express their heartfelt thanks to CERC and the other nice Americans who have made them feel welcome during their visit.

Personal Introductions

Jian Li works in the Shandong Institute for International Technology Economies (SIITE) as a vice-director. SIITE is a research institution subordinate to the Investigation and Research Office of the Shandong Provincial People's Government. Its principal mission is to conduct research on strategies, policies, measures, experiences, and lessons of the development in science, technology, and the economy abroad, and in the light of the concrete conditions of the province, to advance proposals for consultation to the provincial government in formulating policies. Meanwhile, SIITE recommends technological projects to foreign experts, and seeks funds for the research institutions and enterprises in the province. The research results of these projects are provided to the government decision-makers who deepen reform, opening wider to the outside world, and encouraging the development of science and technology.

Yeshang Zhang works in the Historical Record Office of the Shandong Provincial People's Government as a director of the research division. His main task is to research the political, economic and social policies and contemporary history of Shandong province. The research results provide consultation for the government decision-makers in social and economic development.

Home Introduction

Shandong Province, with a land area of 156 thousand square kilometers and more than 90 million people, is a significant coastal province in East China. Through history, Shandong has produced many celebrities who have greatly influenced on Chinese culture

and the world history. The most famous is Confucius, the philosopher, thinker, educator and politician honored as a sage, born in Qufu City, Shandong province more than 2,500 years ago. Confucianism is still pivotal to Chinese culture. The belief has a global influence and he is considered to be one of the world's greatest thinkers.

The capital of Shandong Province where we live is Jinan, with 8,277 square kilometers and a population of 5.69 million, is a metropolis, one of China's economic and cultural centers. As a famous cultural city with more than 2,600 years of history, Jinan has been selected in the primary batch of excellent tourist cities in China. With 72 famous springs throughout the city, such as Baotu Spring, Jinan is renowned as the "City of Springs".

Recently, Jinan has increased the pace of construction toward a modernized capital city. As a result, the city's comprehensive economic power has been strengthened, city appearance has achieved great change, investment environment and conditions have become more and more convenient and modern. For example, continued steady growth has been witnessed in transportation, postal service and telecommunications. By the end of 2002, the total number of telephone subscribers and mobile telephone users numbered 1.56 million (1.32 million in 2001) in Jinan. Meanwhile, Jinan is challenged by some developing problems such as air pollution and a shortage of water resources. The government is paying more attention to addressing these situations.

At the dawn of a new millennium, Jinan's government carries out an outward-oriented strategy in broader scale and with great courage. Jinan sincerely welcomes friends from all around the world to make investment, establish enterprises and trade relations or be tourists. More and more foreign-owned companies are entering Jinan. Now, Jinan has established good contacts and cooperative relationships with more than 140 countries and regions and 2,000 enterprises. Most pleasantly, within recent years, a batch of famous consortiums and transnational companies such as Panasonic, Casio, and McDonald's, has landed in Jinan and employed local workers. The fruits of cooperation have taken shape, which facilitates Jinan's adoption of international economic practice.

Observations on Connecticut and America

America is the most advanced and strongest country in the world. Connecticut was ranked the “Smartest State” in America. High quality of life, high employment rate, high percentage of population with health insurance, high per capita income, high educated and productive workers, and low poverty and crime rate make Connecticut a desirable environment for business expansion and entrepreneurial activity. There is a strong business atmosphere in America and Connecticut. Connecticut is the home of worldwide organizations such as Xerox, G.E., Uniroyal, G.T.E., Olin, Champion International, and Union Carbide. We think paying more attention to education and improving workforce’s skills is the most important factor that makes Connecticut thrive.

Comparison between China and U.S.

The U.S. is the most advanced and strongest country in the world while China is the most populous country in the world. They also play important roles in the world affairs. The U.S. and China should enhance cooperation and understand each other. There are some similarities between China and the U.S., such as appreciating education and workforce training, advocating ethics and the law, and encouraging harmonious development between human beings and the environment. Most of the people in China and the U.S. are patriotic and responsible for countries and families. We think the main differences between China and the U.S. are as follows: The U.S. is a developed country while China is a developing country. There are many gaps between economic and social development levels in China and the U.S. While the U.S. works toward solving urban citizen poverty, China works toward how to convert more farmers to urban citizens. China pays more attention to governmental function, and the U.S. pays more attention to playing individual and business function. China appreciates collective benefits and function, the U.S. appreciate individual benefits and function.

As a whole, our nearly six months has been a valuable experience. We have further increased our comprehension of American politics, economy, culture and society. We have learned advanced knowledge and conceptions about business management and public management. We have developed new recognition about how to execute

governmental functions and how to deal with the relationship between government, enterprises, and individuals. We learned valuable research methods and skills of economic development strategies from Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC). These strategies will be a benefit for our government to institute and implement long-term and short-term economic and social development strategies. All of these are benefits for promoting Chinese economic and social development.