

Work Report of the Confucius Institute at Geneva University

January-December 2016

In 2016, under the supervision and guidance of the University of Geneva, Renmin University of China, and the Confucius Institutes Headquarters, the Confucius Institute at Geneva University continued to work on its overall goals of communicating contemporary Chinese culture, developing cultural exchange between Switzerland and China and actively promoting the construction of a modern China. It has made persistent effort, made steady progress and fulfilled its work plans for 2016 with great success, receiving extensive recognition and very positive reception.

1. Teaching of Chinese language and culture

In 2016, the teaching of Chinese language and culture continued to be an active domain of work of the Confucius Institute. All together, 3 cultural courses and 7 Chinese language courses (beginners', intermediate and advanced) were offered, with nearly 335 students (not including participants in the lectures at the School of Continuing Education and the training classes and seminars for Chinese teachers). Established at a high starting point, the classes are incorporated within the University's ECTS credit system. In the summer vacation, the Institute provided a four-week intensive Chinese language class and a series of public lectures about Chinese culture targeting the general public, which is part of the work of the University's Department of Continuing Education, and the most straightforward way for the Institute to connect with the local community. Besides, 8 public lectures were organised during the year as part of the Continuing Education program during the year. The Institute also actively helped students of the University of Geneva in applying for Hanban's scholarships for summer school and long-term programs, by which it has contributed to fostering cultural exchange on both sides. In 2016, 11 students of the University of Geneva got scholarships from Hanban and 3 got scholarships from Renmin University of China to attend the summer school at Renmin University. Ever since the Institute was established, we have actively encouraged the students to take part in the Chinese Bridge competition and given them whatever help we can offer. For the last two years, the first prize of the competition in Switzerland has gone to Ph.D students of the Institute.

In addition, the Institute carried forward the Chinese language class at the Global Studies Institute at the University first opened in 2015. Credits earned from this class are also incorporated within the University's ECTS credit system. In the autumn semester of the academic year 2016-2017, 42 students have registered in this class.

2. Main events in 2016

On Feb. 9, the Institute hosted the Spring Festival reception. More than 60 locals, students and professors from the University participated in the event tasting authentic Chinese cuisine, who got greatly interested in the rich, colorful and deep Chinese culture with the introduction of the traditional culture and typical cuisine of the Spring Festival given by the staff of the Institute.

On Feb. 16, famous French writer Cyrille Javary was invited to deliver a public speech on the topic of "Yin Yang", which was the fourth lecture of the series lectures on "Chinese culture" organized by the Institute. With images familiar to the public, Mr. Javary helped the audiences

cross cultural obstacles and led them into the Chinese culture. The lecture was a huge success with over a hundred attendees.

On March 5, the Institute organized the “One Day in China” event, which attracted about 30 participants.

On March 19, the Institute organized the HSK and HSKK tests. Altogether 141 people took the HSK and 7 the HSKK.

On March 22, the Institute organized a lecture on the topic of “Mo Yan and the Communication of Chinese Literature in the World”. Professor Zhang Yinde, director of the Center of Comparative Studies at University of Paris Sorbonne was invited to deliver the lecture. He analyzed the process of communication of Chinese literature in the world, expounded on the close relationship between Mo Yan and the local literature of his hometown Gaomi in the Northeast of China and revealed the correlation between modern Chinese literature and popular literature. Nearly 70 audiences, from both the Department of Asian Studies of the University of Geneva and outside the University came to the lecture.

On April 12, the Institute organized a lecture delivered by Doctor Antoine Kernen of the School of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Lausann on the topic of “China in Africa: Threat or Opportunity?”. Doctor Kernen held that what China had brought to Africa was more of opportunity and hope in spite of the problems in the cooperation between China and Africa. More than 50 audiences were present.

On April 26, Zhao Xiurong, Deputy Director of the Institute delivered a lecture on the topic of “Understanding of Suicide in Modern Chinese and English Cultures – from the Perspective of a Historian”. In the lecture, Professor Zhao compared and contrasted the characteristics and causes of suicide in modern China and Britain, drawing the conclusion that suicide is a long standing and complicated phenomenon, and that though the number of people committing suicide is relatively small in any society, the social implication it reflects is significant.

On 30 April, the Chinese Bridge Competition of Switzerland was held in the Chinese Embassy in Bern. The Institute actively took part in the preparation work, encouraged the students to take part in the competition and gave them help that they needed. A Ph.D student of the Institute got the first prize, who got high praise from the judges and audiences for his Chinese proficiency, knowledge about China and martial art demonstration.

On May 10, the Institute organized a lecture delivered by Professor Xavier Bouvier of Haute école de musique Genève – Neuchâtel on the topic of “Process of China’s Modernization in the First Half of the 20th Century – with an Example of Music”. After the lecture, a lot of the audiences thought that the mutual infiltration of Chinese and Western music is another successful case in the cultural communication between China and the West.

On May 18, the Institute organized a lecture on the cursive style of Chinese calligraphy. Centering on the features of cursive Chinese calligraphy, Mr. Wang Fei from the Department of Chinese studies in the University of Geneva expounded on the transition from practicality to art and from emotion to the heart of this style of calligraphy. Afterwards, Mr. Jiang Shoutian from “Herald of Calligraphy” delivered a lecture on the topic of “Cursive Style of Chinese Calligraphy and Modern Western Art” explaining the influence of the cursive style of Chinese calligraphy on modern Western art and analyzing its striving for a free state, its deep digging into human nature and its abstraction of artistic forms.

On May 30 and 31, the Institute successfully held a two-day Chinese language teacher

training for local teachers of Chinese. The theme of the training was “The Teaching of Chinese Vocabulary”. More than 30 local teachers of Chinese from Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Bern and the French places nearby took part in the training. Deputy Director Xie Honghua organized the training and served as one of the trainers as well.

On June 10 and 11, the Institute organized a symposium on the topic of “Religions in Pluralistic Societies – A Comparison between China and India”. There were four forums in the symposium: Religious Pluralism – Relation to the Collective and the Individual, the Sacred Common Heritage, Common Cultural Origin and Regional/Ethnic Change and, Religious Professionals and Division of Labor in Rituals. Eleven experts from all over the world, including Renmin University, Harvard, CNRS, Cambridge University, MPI Göttingen, EPHE, University of Edimburg, University of Lausanne and the University of Geneva delivered speeches in the symposium. This event was one of the most important and most successful events of the year 2016 for the CI.

On July 29, the four-week summer school program of Chinese language and culture provided by the Institute came to an end. In the four weeks, there were altogether 80 class hours of Chinese language learning and 4 lectures on Chinese culture on the topics of “Homosexuals in Ancient Chinese Literature”, “Chinese Buddhism”, “Modern Chinese Popular Culture” and “Chinese Cuisine Culture”. Those lectures were designed to help the learners get a preliminary understanding of the history and status quo of China and further arouse their interest in Chinese culture.

On September 12, the Institute organized a get-together event for Swiss alumni from the French speaking areas who used to study in China. Chargé d'affaires Gu Hui and Education Counselor Xi Ru of the Chinese Embassy, Gérard Bérout, Président de la Section romande de la Société Suisse-Chine and Membre du Comité directeur de la Société Suisse-Chine, Ms. Beatrice Ferrari of SWISSNEX, Mr. Gautier Chiarini, former director of the section of culture of the Swiss Embassy in China, Mr. Pascal Prapian, director of the Alumni Office of the University of Geneva and more than 40 other alumni came to the event.

On 15 September, the first Chinese teachers’ meeting of the Institute was held. With the increase of the courses and teachers at the Institute, it has become an important issue on the agenda of the Institute as to how to perfect its Chinese teaching, improve the teaching quality and solve the problems in the teaching.

On 12 and 15 September, Lukas Lohove came to visit the Institute. Mr. Lohove graduated from the University of Geneva and is now a Ph.D student at the University of Oxford doing research in Contemporary China. He developed a Chinese character learning software and has agreed to offer free trial use to the students at the Institute. The Institute has decided to cooperate with his team and improve the software so as to make it more applicable to the teaching and student learning at the Institute.

From 16 to 18 September, Deputy Director Xie Honghua attended an international seminar about the Professional Development of Teachers of the Chinese Language held at the Confucius Institute in the University of Basel. She also made a presentation on the Relationship between the Confucius Institute and the Professional Development of Teachers, elaborating on what the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva had done in this aspect ever since its establishment and analyzing how to maximize the positive role of the Confucius Institute in the professional development of teachers of the Chinese language.

On September 27, the Institute organized a lecture on the topic of “Patriotism and Nationalism in Ancient Chinese Poems” delivered by Professor Nicolas Zufferey, Chairman of the Department of Chinese studies at the University of Geneva. About 50 people participated in the lecture.

On September 29, to celebrate “Confucius Institute Day”, the Institute organized a seminar on the creation and appreciation of Chinese oil paintings. Professor Wang Hongjian from the School of Fine Arts at Tsinghua University and Ms. Karine Tissot, Director of the Contemporary Art Centre at Yverdon-les-Bains presented a visual feast of oil paintings to the audiences and a wonderful communication of Chinese and Western thoughts on the theme of the seminar.

On October 3 to 5, the Institute organized a round-table symposium on the theme of “Research and Practice of Mental Health – Comparison between China and Switzerland”. Eleven experts, including four Chinese experts representing the Institute of Mental Health at Peking University, the Sixth Hospital of Peking University, the National Office of Mental Health Projects and the Mental Health Center at China’s Center of Disease Control and seven experts representing Geneva University Hospitals (Department of Mental Health and Psychiatry, Division of Medical Informatics), Collaborating Center on Mental Health of World Health Organization, World Health Organization for eHealth and Telemedicine, UNESCO Telemedicine and Multidisciplinary Teaching and World Psychiatric Association (WPA) delivered speeches and discussed on different topics of mental health in the symposium. During the event, Chinese experts also paid visit to the Department of Mental Health and Psychiatry of Geneva University Hospitals.

On October 6, three professors from the Center of European Studies at Renmin University and the Chinese Director of the Business Confucius Institute in Copenhagen visited the Institute. Future cooperation between the three organizations was fully discussed and communicated during their visit.

On October 18, the Institute organized a lecture on the topic of “Friendship in China and the West”. Professor FrérPric Wang from the School of Asian Languages and Culture in Paris delivered the lecture. Professor Wang analyzed and summarized the similarities and differences between China and the West in how friendship is treated, and patiently answered the audiences’ questions.

On November 4 to 6, the Institute organized a public conference and a training on Chinese martial arts. On 4th, Professor Wang Gang from Wuhan Sport College delivered an academic lecture on the topic of “The Interpretation of Chinese Martial Arts”; On 5th and 6th, Mr. Liu Lianjun from Cangzhou, Hebei gave demonstrations and supervision of the style Bajiquan. The event attracted about 40 participants. Through the lecture and the two-day training, they got a better understanding of the Chinese culture involved in Wushu, mastered the basic movements of Bajiquan and got to know some friends who have the same interests, which made them feel that the whole event was a valuable experience.

On November 22, the Institute organized a lecture on the topic of “Fundamental Theories, Diagnosis and Treatment in Chinese Medicine” delivered by Eric Marié, professor of the Medical School of Université de Montpellier, France and chairman of the Academic Committee of Chinese Medicine in France. More than 130 people came to the lecture, which showed the deep interest in traditional Chinese medicine on the part of the Westerners, especially the Swiss.

On November 25, the Institute, in collaboration with the Institute for Information Sciences and the Geneva-Tsinghua Initiative, organized a workshop called “Information and

Communication Technologies in Europe and China”. Sixteen academics, professionals and Ph.D students from Tsinghua University, the United Nations’ International Telecommunication Union, the Catholic University of Milan, the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs of Beijing, the Graduate Institute of Geneva and Switzerland’s main telephone company Swisscom discussed how information and communication technologies can help Chinese and European authorities, city planners and citizens to better understand and govern social problems.

On November 26, the Institute organized the fifth seminar on the teaching of the Chinese language. Attendees had a round-table discussion on the following topics: Chinese Proficiency Test in the United Nations, Competence in the Chinese Language of French Middle School Graduates – Learning Methods and Evaluation, the New Chinese Proficiency Test and Standard of International Chinese Competence, Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the Treatment of Chinese Characters at the A1 and A2 levels in the CEFR, the Guiding Effect of the Form of Oral Test and Its Assessing Standard. More than 30 resident Chinese teachers from Switzerland and France attended the seminar.

On November 28, the Institute welcomed a delegation from Jinan University.

On December 1, the Institute welcomed an official visit from the Chinese Ministry of Education, the Education Section of the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland and Professor Zhao Yonghua of the School of Journalism at Renmin University.

On December 4, the Institute organized a badminton competition for Chinese and Swiss students at the University of Geneva, in collaboration with the Department of Sports.

On December 9-10, Professor Wang and Professor Zimmermann participated in the Confucius Headquarters annual conference in Kunming, China.

On December 20, Professor Zimmerman gave a public lecture at the University of Geneva to commemorate the five-year anniversary of the Confucius Institute which was founded on November 8, 2011.

In addition to the aforementioned events, the Institute hosts a monthly Ph.D students forum and a monthly translation seminar.

3. Research work

The Institute now has three major research projects: “Redesigning the Concept of Culture”, “Analysis of the China Electronic Pollution Map” and “Error Analysis of French-Speaking Students Learning Chinese”. The first two projects are in the charge of Professor Basile Zimmermann and the third is led by Dr. Xie Honghua. The first project explores a new concept of culture and it includes a research on the notion of Chinese culture. In the second project, how humanities scholars approach the influence of contemporary technology (focusing on the China Pollution Map) on society is analyzed; Dr Matteo Tarantino also participates in this project. The third project is a book with the contribution of six authors, which will be published sponsored by the Confucius Institute Headquarters. In addition to the three major projects mentioned above, there are still a few minor projects under work, which are “Software-based Environmental Disclosure in China”, “Technology and Daily life in China”, “Open Source Software in China” and “Urban Space and ICTs in China”.

Papers by the staff of the Institute published in the past year:

1. "A Study of the Types of Confused Words in Intermediate Level Chinese Writing by French Speaking Students". *Teaching and Research of International Chinese*. 2nd Issue 2016, Pp 81-92.
2. "Some Thoughts about Literary Translation from Chinese to European Languages". *Etudes Asiatiques (Zurich)*, 2015, 69 (1): 1-17.
3. Governance Transmediale in Cina: Il caso di Under the Dome. *Orizzontecina*, No. 6-6, 2016. (in Italian)

Forthcoming papers and books :

1. Introduction: Communicating the City Between the Center and the Margins. In G. Aiello, M. Tarantino, K. Oakley (eds.) *Communicating the City*, Peter Lang, Berlin, 2017 (In press, W. G. Aiello).
2. How Screens Shaped the Village: Leisure Space in Daning, Guangdong. In G. Aiello, M. Tarantino, K. Oakley (eds.) *Communicating The City*, Peter Lang, Berlin, 2017 (In press).
3. Waves and Forms: Constructing the Cultural in Design, *AI & Society Journal of Culture, Knowledge and Communication* (special issue on Cultural Diversity and Community Technology Design), 2016 (accepted).
4. What Is Chinese Culture? *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* (submitted in 2016, under review).
5. In search of a literary title perfectly translated --- The case of translation from Chinese to French. *Meta* (Montréal, accepted).
6. Database Green: Software, Environmentalism and Data Flows In China. *The China Quarterly*. 2016 (accepted for publication).
7. *Communication and the City: Voices, Spaces, Media* (with K. Oakley and G. Aiello). Peter Lang Publishing , 2017 (in press).

Papers under work:

1. Instantiating Polluters Through Software: A Case Study in China
2. Data Effort in Navigating Multi-Standardized Data Bases: A Case Study from Chinese Environmental Information
3. How Urban Air Quality Information Is Instantiated in Mobile Applications in China (also presented at the ECREA 2016 International Conference, Prague)
4. Student Environmental Groups and Environmental NGOs in China: a Comparison in Communication Strategies (w. Serena Fossati, Catholic University of Milan)
5. Environmental Information Disclosure in China and South Korea: a Comparison (w. Pauline Plagnat, University of Geneva)
6. The Translation of Proper nouns in Titles of Chinese Literary Works (finished, under review)
7. The treatment of onomatopoeia in Translating Chinese Literary Works
8. The method "Snowball" and the morphology (Méthode "Boule de neige" et la morphologie)
9. TCSL in a Multi-Lingual Situation: A Case Study of TCSL in Switzerland
10. Inherited Morpheme and Vocabulary Teaching in Chinese as a Foreign Language

3. Institutional improvement

Since its establishment, the Institute has held yearly board meetings. With the Rector of the

University of Geneva being its chairman, the Board of the Confucius Institute examines the implementation of the activities, the budgets and final accounts of the Institute. Since 2010, the Rector and the Deputy Rector of the University of Geneva have both been on the board of directors.

In the past year, the Institute has made steady progress according to its established management system. There is a directors' meeting and a staff meeting every Thursday, the Institute's finance is fully transparent, and all the documents are available on a special synchronized platform (Dropbox), so that every employee has access to the financial situation of the Institute. Every employee registers his/her work time on Google Calendar, so everyone has access to his/her colleagues' schedule. Issues discussed at the directors' meetings and solutions agreed on as well as the daily tasks are registered on Evernote. All the administrative files are dealt with electronically.