

Work Report of the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva

January-December 2017

In 2017, with the support of the Confucius Institutes Headquarters and the state government of Geneva and under the supervision and guidance of the University of Geneva and Renmin University of China, the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva 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 2017 with great success, receiving extensive recognition and very positive reception.

1. Teaching of Chinese Language, Cultural Lectures and Chinese Bridge Competition

In 2017, the Institute provided 6 Chinese language classes for the University of Geneva. Two of those classes especially catered to the need of students of the Global Studies Institute, and a course of contemporary Chinese society was set up to go with those language classes as required by the university's academic administration. To the graduate students of the Department of Asian Studies and the resident Chinese teachers, the Institute offered the course "Chinese Linguistics and Chinese Teaching". All the above-mentioned classes are incorporated within the University's ECTS credit system, and were open both to students of the university and the general public. In addition, through the University's Faculty of Continuing Education, the Institute offered 7 Chinese classes and 3 HSK preparation classes of different levels, and a four-week intensive summer school which included 80 class hours of Chinese language courses and four lectures on Chinese culture. Besides, the Institute organized 7 public lectures on Chinese culture during the semester with a total number of participants of more than 400. The Institute also actively helped students of the University of Geneva to apply for Hanban's scholarships for summer school and long-term programs, by which it has contributed to fostering cultural exchange on both sides. In 2017, 10 students of the University of Geneva got scholarships from Hanban to attend the summer school at Renmin University. The Institute actively encouraged the students to participate in the Chinese Bridge Competition and went all out to help them with the preparation. This year, two students from the University of Geneva got the third and fourth place respectively in the competition in Switzerland, and the third place winner went to China to observe the final competition in the place of the second place winner. Besides, the Institute coached a middle school student contestant who won the first prize in the Chinese Bridge Competition for Middle School Students. Based on the Institute's rich experience in the organization, arrangement and coaching of the Chinese Bridge Competition, Chinese teacher Bao Yinhui was chosen to be the directing and accompanying teacher of the Swiss contestants who took part in the final competition in Kunming, and Director Basile Zimmermann one of the judges at the competition.

From the time when the Institute was established to 2014, the Institute had a mailing list of more than 200 people. To July 2017, this mailing list increased to 850, marking a new height of local influence the Institute has attained.

2. Ph.D Program

With the support of Hanban, the New Sinology Ph.D Program at the University of Geneva has been in a good development track. The three Ph.D students have taken relevant courses and actively participated in academic activities related to their subjects of research. The Institute has also tried to provide them with conditions for the convenience of their work and research. At present the program is progressing methodically as planned. Pascale Bugnon, based on the training requirements of Ph.D students at the University of Geneva, has passed her pre-doctoral defence and is now doing her one-year study in China. Ozan Sahin's Ph.D research focuses on multiculturalism in relation with internal migrations in China. In the summer of 2016, he did two months of field work in China and began his one-year study there in October 2017. The last registered Ph.D student, Pierrick Porchet has managed to fulfil all sorts of course requirements and the work in the Institute that is part of his responsibility as a research assistant. He has been working on three publication plans: 1) "Circulation of kinesic practices and representations of Chinese martial arts" (research report for the Blog Scientifique) 2) "Interpretation of Chinese martial arts" (event report for the Blog Scientifique) 3) "Defining Wushu today: confronting popular and institutional discourse" (scientific article, in collaboration with Basile Zimmermann).

3. Academic Research

The Institute now hosts 6 academic research projects:

- 1) An analysis of the electronic pollution map of China
- 2) Chinese-French translation of literary works
- 3) An analysis of the difficulties of French speaking students in learning Chinese
- 4) Practice of Wushu and its kinesic presentation
- 5) Communication expertise, form and imitation game: social integration of the migrant population in Beijing
- 6) A nation state's memory of its ancestry: an analysis of the cultural heritage in ancient Chinese tombs

Of the six projects, the last three are the Ph.D dissertation projects of the three Ph.D students of the Institute who are sponsored by the Confucius China Studies Program of Hanban, which are progressing well in accordance with the time schedule of the students' study. Their eventual completion will be landmark achievements of the Confucius China Studies Program, offering a feasible model for cultivating Ph.D students studying China outside the country.

In the past year, 8 scientific blog articles were published on the scientific blogging site of the Institute, which has become a site to offer relevant academic ideas and perspectives to our colleagues inviting very positive feedbacks.

In the past year, the following papers and books were published by the teachers, researchers and Ph.D students of the Institute:

- Tarantino, M. and B. Zimmermann. (2017) "Database Green: Software, Environmentalism and Data Flows in China". *The China Quarterly*. 3-2017.
- Tarantino, M. and G. Aiello. (2017). "Introduction: Communicating the City Between Centre and Margins". In G. Aiello, M. Tarantino, K. Oakley (eds.) *Communicating The City: Voices, Spaces, Media*. Peter Lang, Berlin.
- Tarantino, M. and C. T. Cheng. (2017). "How Screens Shaped the Village: Leisure Space in Daning, Guangdong". In G. Aiello, M. Tarantino, K. Oakley (eds.) *Communicating the City: Voices, Spaces, Media*. Peter Lang, Berlin.
- Halabi, A., B. Zimmermann and M. Courant, "Conflict in a digital place." with Ammar Halabi and Michèle Courant. *First Monday*, December 2017.
- Porchet, Pierrick. (2017) "Circulation of kinesic practices and representations in Chinese martial arts". Blog Scientifique de l'Institut Confucius. Link: <http://ic.unige.ch/?p=1005> This paper was also presented at the *3rd Martial Arts Studies Conference*, Cardiff University, in 2017.
- Porchet, Pierrick. (2017). An interpretation of Chinese martial arts. Blog Scientifique de l'Institut Confucius. Link: <http://ic.unige.ch/?p=1092>
- Poizat-Xie, Honghua. (2017). À la recherche d'un titre littéraire idéalement traduit --- le cas du chinois vers le français. *Meta* Volume 62 No. 2: 368-395.
- Halabi A. and B. Zimmermann. (2017). 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) (Online, First View).
- Bugnon, Pascale. (2017). Territorial and Identity Negotiations in Xinjiang (China): The Case of the Cultural Heritage Process of the Tombs of Muslim Saints. *Revue Autrepart* 65.
- Bugnon, Pascale. (2017). The art of accommodating the ancestors of the nation: Analysis of the heritage process in China through the category of Muslim ancient tombs. *Tsantsa* 23.
- Aiello, G., Tarantino M. and Oakley, K. (2017). *Communicating the City: Voices, Spaces, Media*. Peter Lang, Berlin.
- Xie, Honghua. (2017). (ed.) *A Research on the Errors and Difficulties of French-Speaking Students of Chinese*. Paris Editions You Feng.
- Xie, Honghua. (2017). Vocabulary Expansion and Word Formation. In *Applied Chinese Language Studies VIII*, edited by the British Association of Chinese Teaching.
- Xie, Honghua. (2017). Translation of Common Nouns in Chinese Literary Works into French. *East Journal of Translation*. 2017-12.

4. Main Events in 2017

From 15 to 18 in January, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Switzerland. Before his visit, a series of events of cultural exchange between the two countries were launched. As the first Confucius Institute in Switzerland, we actively organized

our students to take part in those events, including the launching ceremony of the China-themed book global exhibition and the unveiling ceremony of the first China library center in Switzerland. The students also played a very important role in those events, receiving high praise from the organizers.

On 8 February, the Institute hosted the Chinese New Year Thank You Party. More than 60 people from the University of Geneva and the local community came to the party.

On 21 February, the Institute organized a public lecture on the topic of “Love for Antiques in Chinese Arts”, which was delivered by Helen Loveday, lecturer in Chinese and Japanese art at the University of Geneva and curator of the Baur Foundation, Museum of Far Eastern Art, Geneva. About 50 people came to the lecture.

On 8 March, the Institute administered the HSK tests, which were taken by 156 examinees.

On 23 and 24 March, the Institute received a delegation from Renmin University led by Professor Zhang Jianming, Executive Vice Chairman of the University Council. The Institute helped set up a meeting between the delegation and the leadership of the University of Geneva. The purpose of the visit was to enhance the academic exchange and education collaboration between the two universities and discuss the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute, among other issues.

On 6 April, the Institute organized an internal Chinese teaching workshop.

On 11 April, the Institute organized a public lecture on the topic of “Matteo Ricci – A Messenger of Cultural Exchange between the East and the West” delivered by Francois Hominal, Director of the Ricci Institute of Paris. More than 30 people participated in the lecture.

On 12 May, the Institute organized an archaeological academic exchange event. Professor Lorenz Baumer from the University of Geneva and Professor Wei Jian from Renmin University of China delivered two lectures on the topics of “China and the Roman Empire – Archaeological Testimonies for Roman Contacts with the Far East” and “Shangdu – Ruins Embracing a Great Civilization”. More than 40 people participated in the lectures and the dialogues with the lecturers.

On 20 and 21 May, the Institute organized an international seminar of sociology of science. Nineteen sociologists from universities in China, Switzerland, the United States, Australia, Canada, Finland and other countries participated in the seminar. The participants discussed a variety of sociological issues concerning expertise and experience, including expertise and the administration of a democratic society, interactional expertise and moral imagination, how media professionals know their audiences, environmental citizen science and creating an IMGAME Method for field research on China’s floating population.

On 22 May, the Institute organized a lecture on the topic of “Ten Key Words in the Comparison of Chinese and Western Culture” delivered by John Blair, visiting professor of Trinity College, Dublin. More than 80 people came to the lecture.

On 22 May, the Institute received a visiting group from the Education Commission of the Beijing Municipality led by Zhang Yongkai, Vice Director of the Commission. The Institute set up a meeting between the visitors and Olivier Vincent,

Vice Director of the International Office of the University of Geneva, who gave a presentation of the University. After the meeting the two parties obtained preliminary consensus on future collaboration between the University of Geneva and the universities in Beijing.

On 8 and 9 June, the Institute hosted the 7th resident teacher training on the theme of “Cultural Teaching in Chinese Classes”. More than 40 Chinese teachers from Switzerland, France and Sweden took part in the training.

On 14 June, in collaboration with the Association for the History of Religions at the University of Geneva, the Institute organized a round-table seminar to discuss the well-known French sinologist Vincent Goossaert’s new book “Bureaucracy and Salvation: The Chinese Ways to Divinization”. Professor Goossaert, professors and Ph.D students studying ancient religions and China at the University of Geneva participated in the seminar.

On 16 and 17 June, hosted by the Unit of China Studies in the Department of East Asian Studies and co-hosted by the Institute, the international seminar on “Popular Literature in Modern China” was held at the University of Geneva. More than 30 scholars and Ph.D students from China, the United States, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Finland, the U. K. and other countries participated in the seminar.

On 29 August, the Institute hosted a gather-together for people who used to study in China and who now live in French-speaking Switzerland. More than 40 people participated in the event including Madam Xi Ru, Education Counselor of Chinese Embassy in Switzerland, Mr. Gerald Beroud, Director of the Swiss-Chinese Association in the French speaking parts of Switzerland and Madam Beatrice Ferrari, representative of the Center of Science, Technology and Culture of the Federal Government of Switzerland. The participants had a happy time talking about their study and life in China and their deep feelings for the country.

On 19 September, the Institute organized the first lecture on Chinese culture for the academic year of 2017-2018 on the topic of “Ancient Chinese Mythologies”, which was delivered by Remi Mathieu, emeritus research director at the CNRS. The lecture attracted more than 80 participants while it unveiled the series of events to celebrate the Confucius Institutes Day at the same time.

On 5 October, the Institute organized a Chinese teaching workshop for the resident teachers in Geneva to discuss the problems they had met in teaching.

On 12 October, the Institute joined the International Day event of the University of Geneva and launched a full-length promotion of the study programs and scholarships of the Institute, Hanban and Renmin University of China, during which the staff of the Institute answered in great detail questions of the students who were interested in learning Chinese and going to China as exchange students.

On 17 October, the Institute organized a public lecture on the topic of “The Development Model of China” delivered by Mr. Blaise Godet, Swiss Ambassador to China between 2008 and 2012. Nearly 100 people participated in the lecture.

From 3 to 5 November, the Institute organized a cultural exchange event of Wushu, attracting nearly 100 participants from Geneva and Lausanne. During the event, Professor Avron Boretz from the Chinese University of Hongkong delivered a

lecture on the topic of “Embodying Wu: The Martial as a Nexus of Chinese Cultural Production”, and Mr. Liu Lianjun and Ms. Miao Xiaolan from Cangzhou, Hebei in China coached the Wushu fans in Ba Ji Quan and Push Feet, two famous varieties of Wushu.

On 15 November, the Institute organized a public lecture on China’s media delivered by Professor Natascha Gentz, Deputy Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh and Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Edinburgh. Nearly 80 people came to listen to the lecture.

On 16 November, the Institute received Professor Gan Lu of the Communication University of China and helped her with her survey for her research on the communication between China and Europe, its effects and countermeasures, which is a project sponsored by the China National Social Science Fund.

On 22 November, the Institute received the visit of a delegation from the State Department Counselor's Office of China, who had come to investigate the development, difficulties, problems and suggestions of the Institute.

On 24 November, the directors and Chinese teacher Bao Yinhui took part in the seminar of sinologists in Switzerland held by the Education Section of the Chinese Embassy.

On 25 November, the Institute organized the “China in One Day” event, which was composed of four public lectures on the theme of “Relations between China and Switzerland”. The titles of the lectures are “Relations between China and Switzerland – from the Time of Recognition to the Present”, “Climate Change and Environmental Challenge – What can China and Switzerland Learn from Each Other?”, “Comparison between Chinese and Swiss Families” and “Chinese Teaching and Learning in Switzerland”.

On 1 December, the Institute held the 8th Chinese teacher training on the theme of “Chinese pop songs - a mirror to understand the social changes in China, a window to explore the Chinese emotional world”. Professor Wang Renzhong of McGill University in Canada introduced the training of song culture course design and teaching methods to local teachers by introducing the types and methods of culture courses.

On 2 December, the Institute held the 6th Chinese Teaching Symposium on the theme of “Chinese Teaching in the E-Times”. Six speakers delivered speeches on the topics of “Developing Innovative Language and Cultural Activities and Enhancing the Students’ Cross-Cultural Exchange Consciousness in Chinese Classes”, “Chinese Teaching in the Multi-Media and Internet Contexts”, “Interactive Exercises on the Internet and the Design of Games”, “What Language Skills of Chinese Learners Can Be Optimized by CALL?”, “Critical Links in the Computer Assisted Teaching of Listening in Chinese”, and “The Use of Modern Teaching Tools in the Teaching of Chinese. After the speeches, a round-table seminar was held.

On 6 December, the Institute received a visiting group from the China Publishing Group and helped them with their survey of the use of Chinese textbooks in Swiss schools and the demand for Chinese books in Switzerland. The Institute also invited administrators and teachers from the local Chinese schools to the meeting.

On 12 December, the Institute co-organized a conference on the theme of "How China Is Changing the World" with the the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce (French Section) . Mr. David Aikman, Chief Representative and Managing Director of the World Economic Forum's China Office and Mr. Olivier Schwab, Head of Business Engagement - Member of the Managing Board of the World Economic Forum Geneva spoke at the Conference.

On 12 December, the Institute organized a public lecture titled “Confucius: Old Wise or Present Master?” delivered by the writer Cyrille Javary.

In addition to the aforementioned events, the Institute has hosted a multi-disciplinary monthly Ph.D students forum with about 10 Ph.D students participating each time and six translation seminars. From September, the Institute has hosted a monthly Chinese teaching workshop with the purpose of offering a platform for the resident Chinese teachers to exchange problems they have met in teaching and to learn from each other.

5. Serving the Universities and the Local Community

Besides teaching modern Chinese, organizing academic exchanges between China and Switzerland and doing research on contemporary China, the Institute has actively served the University of Geneva and Renmin University of China contributing its strength and intellectual resources. Deeming it as its own responsibility to bridge the two universities in terms of academic exchange and teaching and research staff communication, the Institute has successfully promoted the collaboration and exchanges in the fields of archaeology, sociology, demography, economics and administration.

With the support of the Cantonal Government of Geneva, the Institute has enjoyed unique office conditions. In return for that, the Institute has warmly accommodated some events and meetings of some faculties of the University of Geneva and some public organizations and has offered support of human resources within its means, receiving extensive favorable comments from all parties concerned.

6. Institutional Improvement

Since its establishment, the Institute has held yearly board meetings. With the Vice-Rector of the University of Geneva being its Director, the Board of the Confucius Institute examines the implementation of the activities, the budgets and final accounts of the Institute.

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 of the secretaries are registered on Evernote. All the administrative files are dealt with electronically.