

Work Report of the Confucius Institute at Geneva University January-November, 2014

Focusing on the principles of promoting Chinese traditional culture, developing cultural exchange between Switzerland and China, and helping to establish a modern China, the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva has organized 32 cultural events as of 2014 which have already been reported 76 times by Chinese and international media, thus receiving great coverage and very positive reception.

1. Chinese teaching

From the start, the Confucius Institute actively developed activities on Chinese culture and Chinese language teaching. It now has three classes on Chinese Culture and four Chinese language classes. The teaching standards have been high since the beginning, and the number of students increased every year. There are now about three hundred students registered. The classes are incorporated within the University's ECTS credit system. On September 2014, together with the University's continuing education, we started implementing Chinese classes targeting general public as well as a series of public lectures about Chinese Culture. This is the most straightforward way for the Institute to connect with the local community. The Institute also actively helped students of the University of Geneva in applying to Hanban's scholarships for summer school and long term programs. By this means, the Institute contributed in fostering cultural exchange on both sides.

2. Main cultural events in 2014

On January 27th, for its New Year's "Thank you" party, the Institute invited Prof. Gu Zhengkun, a specialist of comparative literature at Peking University, to give a special lecture on « Confucianism Revalued with Regard to the Future of World Culture ».

From March 10th to March 12th, the Institute organized a sociology workshop. For this event, we invited Prof. Qiu Zeqi, researcher at Peking University's Center for Sociological Research and Development Studies and Prof. Harry Collins from Cardiff University's School of Social Science.

On March 15th, The Institute organized the HSK examinations, with a

new record of 213 participants and an increase of 59%. The Institute also organized for the first time the HSKK exam. We are now actively working on the implementation of the online HSK examination.

On March 27th, The Swiss National Science Foundation gave Director Basile Zimmermann a CHF 255'324 grant for his project on the "China Pollution Map".

On April 3rd, Mrs Xu Jinghu, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Switzerland and Mrs Sun Ling, counselor at the Education Department of the Embassy visited the Institute and praised the work carried out so far.

On April 4th and 5th, the Institute organized the 13th edition of the "Chinese Bridge" competition for students in Chinese language. With "My Chinese dream" as central theme, this edition was a great success, and helped to increase the recognition of Chinese culture.

On May 22nd and 23rd, the Confucius Institute organized a workshop and public lectures about "Religious Diversity & the History of Religions". The participants were Vincent Goossaert from EPHE and CNRS in Paris, Aurélie Névot from CNRS, James Robson from Harvard University, Philippe Borgeaud, Matthieu Bernhart and Daniel Barbu from Geneva University, Yang Huilin and Yang Qinzong from Renmin University. They discussed the interrelationship between religion, culture, economics, science, race, and other broad issues.

On May 26th, the Confucius Institute organized a Chinese teacher training entitled "Use of modern technology in Chinese language teaching". The training was given by Prof. Jiang Jianmin from East China Normal University and Zhu Qi, Dean of the Confucius Institute at Basel University.

On May 31st, the Confucius Institute organized a middle school Chinese teacher training. Four people gave trainings : Prof. Olivier Maulini from the Faculty of psychology and learning sciences in Geneva University, Prof. Arnaud Arslangul from INALCO in Paris, and others. They discussed actively how to develop the teaching of Chinese in high schools.

On June 19th, Madam Xu Lin, Chief Executive and Director of the Confucius Headquarters, Director General of the Hanban, together with the Deputy Director Tian Lei and Ms Liu Shu of the Hanban, visited and

inspected the Institute. Director Xu asserted the fact that Geneva's international environment was conducive to establish a Confucius Institute based on research, and that it must keep its peculiarities. During her visit, Director Xu met with the rector of Geneva University. Both parties then signed an agreement about providing financial support for doctoral candidates. Director Xu mentioned this was the first time Hanban gives support to such an important PhD program, outside of China.

On June 20th, the Confucius Institute organized a workshop entitled "Communication and spreading of medical knowledge in China and the West". We invited Mark Harrison from Oxford University, Zhang Daqing from Beijing University, Gao Xi from Fudan University, Micheline Louis-Courvoisier and Lucia Candelise from Geneva University, and Zhao Xiurong from Renmin University and the Confucius Institute also participated. The scholars shared their ideas regarding how to cooperate through Chinese and Western medicine on the topic of health and illness in a populated country such as China.

From June 30th to July 7th, the Confucius Institute organized its first workshop on mathematics. This was also the first time the Institute organized an academic workshop on natural science. Many scholars from all around the world participated, such as Prof. S.T.Yau from Harvard University who is acknowledged as one of the most influential contemporary mathematicians.

On September 26th, the Confucius Institute welcomed the delegation led by Prof. Yuan Xingpei from the China Central Institute for Culture and History. Prof. Fan Jinshi, researcher at the China Central Institute for Culture and History and Director of the Dunhuang Research Academy, came along with this delegation and gave a lecture about "The Mogao Caves and their cultural value". The Western audience was thus able to experiment the value and accomplishments of Chinese architecture, sculpture, painting and literature.

On September 27th, for the Confucius Institute Day, the Institute organized together with the Unit of Chinese studies the first Swiss competition of Chinese calligraphy. In the morning, Hu Chuanhai from the China Academy of Fine Arts and editor of the magazine "Shufa" gave a lecture on "Chinese calligraphy on fans". He gave the Western crowd a good insight on Chinese culture from an archaeological and artistic perspective. It was followed by a calligraphy competition in the afternoon. Enthusiasts from all around Switzerland took part in the

contest. Five first prizes, ten second prizes were awarded thus increasing even more the interest of the Swiss audience towards Chinese calligraphy. Most of the winners were participants from Geneva.

On October 14th, as part of its continuing education program, the IC organized a lecture entitled "Five happiness: Hidden messages in Chinese ornaments", given by Dr. Estelle Niklès van Osselt, deputy curator at the Baur Foundation. She gave the Western crowd a good insight on the richness of Chinese culture and folklore.

On November 1st, another teacher's training took place at the Confucius Institute, the training was about "Chinese characters teaching and class methods using games". Prof. Yao Meiling from Nanjing Normal University and Prof. Ding Anqi from Renmin University gave the training.

On November 10th, a delegation led by Mr. Xu Jialu came to visit the Institute. Geneva University's vice-rector Yves Flückiger also came to the Institute to meet with them.

On November 18th, the Confucius Institute invited former Director of the Davos Forum Dr Maria Cattai to give a lecture on "China's challenges for its economy".

On November 29th, the Institute organized the 4th training on Chinese language teaching. Its main topic was "Chinese teaching methods for the French speaking: A dialog between authors and users". Eight speakers from Swiss, French and Belgian universities discussed about teaching methods used in French speaking countries.

Every month, the Institute hold an interdisciplinary doctoral seminar with 19 PhD students registered.

3. Institutional Improvement

Since its establishment, the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva holds a yearly board meeting. The rector of the University of Geneva presides the meeting, which deliberates on the activities and the budget of the Confucius Institute. Since 2010, The Rector, as well as the vice-rector of the University of Geneva, have always taken part to the director council.

The institutional structure of the IC has already taken shape. Every

Thursday we hold a staff meeting, the Institute's financing 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. Every employee registers his/her work time on Google Calendar, so everyone has access to his/her colleague's schedule. The daily tasks are registered on Evernote. All the administrative files are dealt with electronically.