

The IATL funded project titled “**Engaging students in research into Chinese culture through fieldwork at the historical site of Montargis**”, led by Dr Zhiyan Guo and Dr Cathy Hampton and participated by SMLC finalist of Chinese. More details about the project are [here](#):

**The summary report:**

The project ran successfully during this first visit to the *Musée historique de l'amitié franco-chinoise* in Montargis, on 10-12 Jan. 2020, although it had to be shortened due to the transport strike in Paris then, so that we could catch the only train back from Montargis to Paris.

The participants expressed their satisfaction over the visit and believed that they learned a tremendous amount within such a short period of time. The Museum provides a unique collection of artefacts and materials about Chinese communist pioneers during early 1900s. Students were engaged in the whole process including the preparation, the visit, feedback, and evaluation. The project achieved the intended outcomes.

As one of the main outcomes, the Franco-Chinese Internship was developed successfully out of the trip, with the SMLC students of BAML (BA in Modern Languages, studying one or two European languages with Chinese) taking the internship from Jan. 2022, thanks to Dr Cathy Hampton and Dr Zhiyan Guo's perseverance. It will be a fantastic opportunity for students of several languages to work within a Chinese cultural environment, even if they are unable to spend time in China. It is wonderful to have been able to build this internship into a regular scheme for the SMLC Year Abroad. See the details of the internship in the link: [The Chinese Internship in Montargis \(warwick.ac.uk\)](http://warwick.ac.uk).

Fulfilling the planned objective of the project, participants translated the Museum's brochure from French and Chinese into English and submitted them to the Director of the Museum. She was delighted with the results and appreciative of the help students provided, stressing the importance of adding the English translation to the brochure for the long-term development of the Museum.

The visit also initiated the translation project on the book *'En quete de reve a Montargis: Coment la Chine est entrée dans l'histoire de Montargis'* (*'Seeking Dreams in Montargis'*) originally published in French by Maison d'editioin populaire du Hunan in 2019. Translating from French to English offered valuable opportunities for BMAL students to gain practical experience prior to their postgraduate study in Chinese studies (MA in Chinese Studies, SOAS) and in translation (MA in translation, Warwick). Their translation was completed by the end of November 2020. We then have been seeking more funding to support its publication through a formal channel.

Many thanks to the IATL for the funding support to make the above achievements possible.

**Feedback from participants** (quoting students' evaluation below):

*What do you think of the visit to the Museum overall?*

- I thought that it was fascinating. It looks at a part of Chinese history that seems to be undervalued.
- The museum was very interesting and detailed, and the personal tour was very engaging.

- I think that the museum was really worthwhile and gave lots of insights into the relationship between France and China. I think that, although we had problems with strike action, we made the most of the time available and saw all the key sights in Montargis.

*What have you learned from the visit?*

- Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping themselves studied and worked in France. 2) The Chinese worker-students were in many more locations than just Montargis. 3) China took inspiration from France's revolutions for its own popular movement. 4) There were women prominent in the programme. 5) There was a successful tofu business in France.
- I learned about the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, about the history of Chinese people in France during the republican period, the cultural influence of France on China, the reason for the strong diplomatic relations between the two, and also about key aspects of the lives of CCP leaders, such as Deng Xiaoping.
- I learned about the historical background of prominent Chinese politicians such as Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. I think learning about their formative years in France is key to understanding the formation of the Communist Party in China.

*In what way did the visit inspire you about your own learning?*

- It inspired my research as it showed that useful and interesting information can be found in unexpected places. It is worth turning over every stone to uncover the stories that are important in understanding our world today.
- The visit inspired me to learn more about the history of China during the republican period, which is a time period that I had not studied too deeply before.
- The visit inspired me to continue reading into the French and Chinese political relationship. As a student of both languages it was really engaging to read texts in both languages, as well as having the opportunity to translate. It also inspired me to consider how Europe in general has had a changing relationship with China and how it has evolved into its current state.

*To what extent did the visit encourage your multilingual approach to culture learning?*

- Speaking English, French and Chinese alternately throughout the trip was challenging but an interesting exercise. The connections between cultures are unique and languages are often the best way to discover these in more depth.
- The fact that the visit was in both French and Mandarin ensured that I had to listen and practice both of those languages concurrently.
- It absolutely encouraged a multi-lingual approach as the museum was displaying information in French and Chinese but not English so we had to use both languages to get the most out of the museum - moreover I think exploring the Franco-Chinese relationship as well as Sino UK in class offered a new and interesting perspective.