

US-China Collaboration on Landslide Research and Student Training

Week 5 Report (July 2 – July 8)

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Week 5 marked the conclusion of the two-week Chinese Language and Culture class at China University of Geosciences in Wuhan. It also marks the beginning of the students' time in Zigui.

July 2

Today, under the guidance of several China University of Geosciences (CUG) volunteers, University of Houston students visited several well-known destinations throughout Wuhan. In the morning, students visited the Yellow Crane Tower located on the eastern bank of the Yangtze River. The Yellow Crane Tower has existed in several forms since AD 223. Its current state, rebuilt in 1981, offers stunning views of Wuhan in all directions. For lunch, the group traveled to Hubuxiang, a famous walking food street in the city. Upon finishing lunch at Hubuxiang, the group proceeded to take a local ferry across the Yangtze River in order to get to Hankou. Hankou is home to the longest walking-commercial street in all of China, Jiangnan Road. Here, students were able to explore the wide variety of Chinese and international commercial business and break for dinner. Lastly, the students returned back to the CUG campus via subway. Overall, the day was full of scenic sites and memories. The only regret is that the day-lasting overcast prevented ideal photograph conditions!



(Left) Group photograph taken in front of the Yellow Crane Tower. (Right) Beautiful painted mural displayed on the ground floor of the Yellow Crane Tower.



Panoramic photograph taken atop the Yellow Crane Tower facing westward toward the Yangtze River and Hankou.



Assorted pictures of students trying local Wuhan cuisine at Hubuxiang.



Partial view of Jiangnan Road.

July 3

After a heavy day of traveling yesterday, University of Houston students were once again in the classroom to continue studying Chinese language and culture. The morning lecture predominantly consisted of learning how to describe one's family and relatives in Mandarin. In addition, fundamental grammar rules for sentence construction was discussed. To practice the new vocabulary and grammar, the group pretended to be one family. Each student was given the opportunity to describe each 'family' member in detail.

In the afternoon, the group attended a Chinese seal cutting class taught by world-renowned professor Dr. Bin Song. Seal cutting is a traditional form of art that originated in China during the Zhou Dynasty. The art form combines artistic ideals from calligraphy, paint and engraving. At the beginning of the class, Dr. Song gave a brief lecture on the basic fundamentals and tools in seal cutting. The students were then able to recreate a seal for themselves utilizing the concepts outlined by Dr. Song. Near the end of the class, Dr. Song graciously invited the group to his apartment, which also doubles as a museum for all of the professor's personal artwork. Dr. Song's resident artwork consisted of seals, calligraphy and other forms of Chinese art.



(Left) Dr. Song demonstrating the art of Chinese seal cutting to students. (Right) Students alongside Dr. Song presenting their seals made during the class.



Panoramic photograph of one of many shelves of Dr. Song's personal artwork located at his residence.

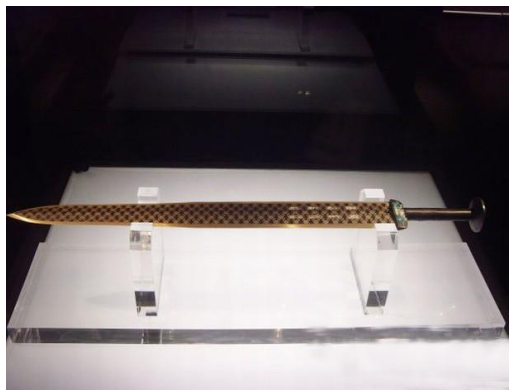
July 4

Today, University of Houston students had the opportunity to visit two distinguished museums in Wuhan: Hubei Provincial Museum and Hubei Museum of Art. Guided by CUG volunteers, the students first arrived at the Hubei Provincial Museum in the morning. The museum, established in 1953, houses a large amount of Chinese historic and cultural relics. Upon arrival to the museum, students were given free rein to explore the museum's many galleries. Of the many pieces on display, the two most interesting pieces were the Sword of Goujian and Bianzhong of Marquis Yi of Zeng. Once done at the museum, the students traveled briefly via bus to a local shopping mall to eat lunch and relax.

After the brief stop for lunch, the group preceded to visit the Hubei Museum of Art. The museum offered artistic works dating from Imperial China through Modern China (1912-Present). As many of the artwork descriptions were written in solely Mandarin, interesting conversations arose about the meanings of the paintings. Overall, the museum offered something for everyone's artistic taste.



Exterior of the Hubei Provincial Museum.



Encased Sword of Goujian.



Encased Bianzhong of Marquis Yi of Zeng.



Contemporary artwork pieces on display at the Hubei Museum of Art.

July 5

Today marked the last day of lectures for the two-week Chinese Language and Culture course at CUG. In the morning, a majority of the students performed an Eight-Step Tai Chi piece that they had been diligently practicing for the past week. In addition, the students also displayed their previous calligraphy works. Upon returning to lecture after the performance, students learned new vocabulary and phrases regarding shopping. Students were able to practice the new material by writing a script in which one student was an owner of a shop and the other being a customer. For the most part, the written scripts turned out to be quite humorous. Unfortunately, due to unfair weather conditions, afternoon activities at East Lake and Moshan Mountain were canceled.



University of Houston students performing Eight-Step Tai Chi with instructor Xiaochun Lai.

July 6

Today, July 6, marked the end of the two-week Chinese Language and Culture course at CUG. This milestone was marked with a closing ceremony in the morning. During the ceremony, Lorena Ramirez gave a speech commemorating the group's time in Wuhan. In addition, both CUG volunteers and University of Houston students alike were given certificates for completion of the course. Lastly, students once again performed an Eight-Step Tai Chi piece. Students were then given free time to relax in the afternoon and pack for the next destination, Zigui.



Students and CUG volunteers posing for a final picture during the closing ceremony.

July 7

In the morning, students said their goodbyes to Wuhan, temporarily, and boarded a bus headed for CUG's field campus in Zigui. Accompanying the students was Dr. Hanwen Zhou, whom will lead students in fieldwork in the coming days. Along the approximately six-hour journey, several stops were made to stretch and buy food. Upon arriving at Zigui, students were warmly greeted by the staff and ushered to their new residences. The rest of the day was spent exploring the new surroundings and preparing for tomorrow's field activities.



View of Zigui out fifth floor balcony.

July 8

Today represented University of Houston students' first day of geological fieldwork in Zigui County. The two major focuses of today's fieldwork were 1) identify the principal lithologic groups of the Three Gorges Reservoir region and 2) understand the basic geologic history and structural deformation of the region. Throughout the day, under the guidance of Dr. Zhou, students investigated several outcrops around Zigui County. Upon returning for fieldwork, students enjoyed dinner in the canteen and went to further explore the city. Tomorrow, the students will further explore the sedimentary sequences around the Three Gorges Dam.



Students identifying lithologic units during field work.



Students examining granite outcrop at Xiaani Quarry.