GHC Monthly report, 31 October 2015 Paris

I am Mandkhai Lkhagvasuren, and over the coming 6 months I will be reporting from Paris as a junior member of the Global History Collaborative project. I am based at École des hautes études en sciences sociales /Ehess/ in Paris under the supervision of professor Alessandro Stanziani who specializes in economic history of Russia, Europe and Indian Ocean between 17th to 20th centuries. My purpose of being here is to broaden the network of historians working in themes related to Global History by participating in discussions through seminars, workshops conferences organized by affiliated research institutions at Ehess and learn from it. I myself is currently in my second year of Ph.D at the University of Tokyo and my dissertation topic concerns administrative history of the Ilkhanate, the Mongol dynasty found in Iran during 13th to 14th centuries. I hope, by the end of my stay I will be better equipped with new and different methods and approaches of studying history in a global age.

The first event I was invited to participate soon after my arrival in Paris in the beginning of October was an annual festival of history called "Les Rendez-vous de l'histoire" organized in Blois since 1998, a city located an hour and a half train ride southwest from Paris. The purpose of this festival is to gather historians, researchers, teachers and students of different fields of history to discuss on a specific theme with participants from the public during several days. This year's theme was "The Empires", and professor Stanziani was invited to give a talk titled "Gouverner autrement, les leçons de l'empire" along with three other historians, Jane Burbank, Fredérick Cooper, Christian Grataloup. I was pleased to meet the two authors of the book "Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference" (Princeton University, 2010) of which I had an opportunity to read in the seminar given by professor Haneda Masashi at University of Tokyo. Apart from discussions, there were cinemas shown related to the topic, book fares, meetings with authors, casual conversations and site seeing tour. It was a perfect meeting ground for those who are in the related field of research, and also provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss and share their work with the general public and receive a feedback. This, I believe, has the merit of facilitating public interest to history and historical research in general but also offers an opportunity for the discussants to reflect on the relevance of their own topic to the present time and present it in a way that is understandable to those who are nonspecialists.

Second event I had the opportunity to participle was organized at the Paris 7 University, with the title of "Profession, Organization of Work, and Contract working - Historical Alternative to Mass Production in a Global and Comparative Perspective between 18th to 21st century" in collaboration with several research centers, among them was the Global History and Culture Centre at the University of Warwick. The session I participated was on the theme of East India Company and the problems it faced in the textile productions with professor Stanziani as discussant. Although I have to admit, the topic in itself was not closely related to my research, the Q&A sessions and comments was relevant enough to be reflected in the way I approach my topic. First point was the importance of local context and its change or development in which the actors, in this case the East India Company, engage when talking of any given subject matter in history. The second point had to do with the question of scale and how it should be observed to avoid the dichotomy between the ideal type and the historical reality of specific case, place, or actors. Both are important points to consider when researching history of any period and subject.

There will be two seminars related to Global History at Ehess starting from November that I will be attending. One is "Global History. Sources, methods, and purpose" given by professor Stanziani and the other is "Knowledge, Institutions, Economies. Connected Histories and Global Dynamics" given by several professors in relay. Both seminars will be taught in English. However, I also plan to attend other seminars that are of interest to me and I will be reporting on its progress during the following months.

Furthermore, the participating members of the GHC summer school organized in Tokyo, September 2015 are working together to prepare a special issue dossier with a global history theme within each of our own research topic. We had two conference calls so far to establish working groups along different themes and had contacted potential journal editors to present our ideas. We are also envisioning to organize a seminar before our submission to the journal to discuss and comment on each others work. We are all graduate students of various background and research topics, thus making this endeavor truly a global one. I will continue to update on our progress in my monthly report.

Between 4th to 6th of November, Ehess will organize a GHC workshop in collaboration with the participating universities. Stay tuned to next month's report. (Mandkhai LKHAGVASUREN)



One of the venue of Les Rendez-vous de l'histoire, Royal Chateau of Blois, 2015



Alessandro Stanziani, Christian Grataloup, Laurent Testot (moderator), Jane Burbank, Fredérick Cooper at the History festival, Blois, 2015



Public audience at the History festival, Blois 2015



Seminar info at Paris 7, October 2015.