

Who Takes Leadership and What Role does ANGIS Play in Emerging Global History?

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Abstract

The most conspicuous development in historical studies is the emergence of so-called global history. Whereas the world history deals with human history, global history locates human being as a part of the globe or the earth. Not only the environmental factors such as land surface, climatic changes, cropping pattern, or natural resources but also the human factors like health, life duration, human bodies, diseases etc. have become research targets.

To deal with such wide range of interests in global history, we need particular sort of framework, and the GIS tools just fit to this requirements.

This is more so when many of the institutions in western countries are competing very hard with each other to take leadership on global history. There is acute awareness of global historians of the west to reconsider and rewrite history by facing the structural change of global economy from the middle of the 20th century.

This awareness has urged historians to review the global history and to gather, accumulate, analysis, and present historical information especially from Asia. This means really a great chance for all of us to put forward Asian perspectives. However, the problem we face at the moment lies in the level of systematic gathering and accumulation of historical information. While in Europe a huge number of information on various aspects of human history for several centuries has been systematically gathered, accumulated, processed, and presented in a very plain way, in Asia, on the other hand, such attempts are very rare and sporadic. Here again lies a great chance we the historians working with GIS have. The spatio-temporal framework of historical GIS and the GIS' technological equipment a great potential to gather, accumulate, analysis, and present our past in a feasible way

Since its foundation in the year 2012 ANGIS has been functioning as the meeting point for those working on historical GIS in Asia. We have met in several places including Tokyo, Kyoto, Bangkok and here in Taipei for the fourth time. ANGIS have

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also published JANGIS E-Journals on the web-site. In coming years we will hold the meetings in Manilla, Hanoi, Delhi, and other Asian cities. In a way ANGIS is already in a stable truck.

At this juncture we have to think further steps in our second stage.

I and Prof. Fan, the President of Academia Sinica, discussed about this matter recently and agreed to utilize this opportunity to prepare possible joint projects that are to be participated by members across Asia. I very much appreciate your positive suggestions and ideas.