

## **Kip Hutchins**

Mellon Foundation Area and International Studies Fellowships for Incoming Graduate Students  
Submitted: September 22, 2015

Receiving a Mellon award allowed me to travel to and around Mongolia to conduct pre-dissertation research and re-establish contacts with local scholars and musicians for around 6 weeks in the summer of 2015. While in Mongolia I conducted research on traditional music education. In particular I studied the transmission of a two-stringed bowed fiddle known as the *morin khuur* or "horse-head fiddle." While in Mongolia I was able to observe lessons of the instrument in rural and urban contexts, as well as continue to study the instrument myself. I was also able to conduct interviews with teachers and performers of the instrument.

The Mellon grant was vital in my ability to return to Mongolia before conducting my dissertation fieldwork, as the price of travel to and in Mongolia is prohibitive without support. I spent most of the beginning of my trip in the country's capitol, Ulaanbaatar. In the capitol, I conducted research and took lessons at a national conservatory, while discussing issues related to musical education and the transmission of traditional musical practice with local musicians, music teachers, and instrument builders. In particular I spoke with people about what it means to be Mongolian in an urban context and how ideas about heritage and tradition are transmitted through music education.

In July during *Naadam*, the biggest national celebration, I traveled to a rural county in a central province of Mongolia to take part in a regional celebration. At this celebration I was able to observe musical practice and talk to rural musicians and event planners about traditional music, patriotic music, and national sentiment. I traveled with Mongolians from the city, so in addition to discussing music with rural Mongolians I was able to discuss Mongolian identity with urban Mongolians as they reflected upon their lives in relation to the lives of the rural Mongolians we were celebrating with.

Towards the end of my stay I traveled to a rural part of a province in the Gobi desert. While in the Gobi I reconnected with extended contacts that I have built throughout the area, and worked with three pre-eminent rural-based traditional musicians and music teachers. All three of these teachers are specialists in a particular type of singing known as *urtiin duu* or "long-song," a style of singing that was one of the first elements to be included on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list for Mongolia.

During this trip I was also able to make connections with various professors at universities in Mongolia, including the dean of the School of Music at the National University of Art and Culture. I will draw upon these connections to work with Mongolian scholars in conducting dissertation research, writing my dissertation, and future scholarship. I have already started following up on two projects with Mongolian professors that I arranged over the summer, a project on translating contemporary Mongolian literature and a project to collect and translate the folk legends that accompany and are associated with various traditional Mongolian students.