As an effort to build safeguarding measures and to develop an element's value as shared ICH in Asia, ICHCAP, in cooperation with Dangjin City of the Republic of Korea, has designed a survey study plan to collect information and related materials on various tug-of-war traditions in the Asia-Pacific region. The Field Survey Project on the Traditional Tug-of-War in South-East Asia has started to accelerate its onsite field research as ICHCAP has signed contracts with three ICH organisations, one each in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam.

At the initial stage of establishing the project plan, ICHCAP focused on the importance of justifying the need for the project. Tug-of-war traditions, concentrated in Asian countries and enacted as rituals related to rice farming cultures, have diverse and common aspects worth in need of comparative research. However, rapid urbanisation and industrialisation are jeopardising the transmission of tug-of-war traditions in many regions, so there is an urgent need for researching and safeguarding this fragile ICH element.

Given the situation, the three ICH institutions have started to collect existing information and conduct field studies on their respective tug-of-war traditions. The research survey is being carried out through a questionnaire prepared by ICHCAP. Many traditional tug-of-war festivals being held this year in several regions in each country will be filmed, recorded, and studied by local research teams organised by the three institutions. The researchers will also interview people closely related to the transmission of the traditional tug-of-war to collect and record in-depth knowledge of each tradition.

At the end of this project, ICHCAP will share necessary data with relevant organisations in Member States to set the foundation for comparative studies on the various tug-of-war traditions in the region. Furthermore, the results of the project will be presented at the International Symposium titled ‘Diverse and Common Aspects of the Traditional Tug-of-War in East Asia’, which will be held from 11 to 14 April 2013 in Dangjin during the Gijisj Juldari (Tug-of-War) Folk Festival period.

Heejin Park (ICHCAP)
ICH Issues

ICHCAP Boosts ICH Safeguarding in Myanmar

Working Meeting on the ICHCAP-Myanmar Cooperation Project for ICH Safeguarding

Meeting with the Ministry of Culture of Myanmar © ICHCAP

Myanmar, known as the Land of Golden Pagodas, has recently started programmes to safeguard their abundant intangible cultural heritage. ICHCAP has been interacting with the Ministry of Culture for ICH safeguarding in Myanmar. Taking collaborating efforts a step further, an ICHCAP delegation visited Myanmar from 22 to 27 December 2012 to conduct a working meeting with the Ministry of Culture and to visit ICH-related organisations and communities. Having two rounds of intensive meetings, ICHCAP and the Ministry of Culture agreed to develop a cooperative ICH safeguarding project in Myanmar.

Led by Dr Seong-Yong Park (Assistant Director, ICHCAP) on 24 December, the delegation had the first working meeting on the ICHCAP-Myanmar cooperation project for ICH safeguarding in Myanmar. With the participation of Mr Yan Naing Oo (Director General, Fine Art Department), Mr Nyunt Win (Director, Fine Art Department), and Mr Ye Myat Aung (Director, Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library), the representatives gathered to discuss how the two organisations could collaborate on an ICH safeguarding project. Dr Park introduced the ICHCAP's previous activities and encouraged Myanmar to become involved in similar activities. Director Oo, as a representative of the Ministry of Culture, expressed their gratitude towards ICHCAP for its concerns and efforts to safeguard ICH in Myanmar.

On 25 December, the ICHCAP delegation had the second working group meeting with the participation of two directors of the Ministry of Culture (Mr Nyunt Win and Mr Ye Myat Aung). In this meeting, the representatives discussed the project details, such as commencing video documentation or publishing an ICH guidebook. Also discussed were the specific ways to increase participation in an expert-exchange programme through sub-regional network meetings and other programmes. Throughout the meeting, Myanmar representatives learned about video-documentation methods. In addition, Myanmar representatives asked about Korean policies and legal system, showing their great interest and strong will for developing their own ICH system.

Based on this visit, ICHCAP and the Ministry of Culture will prepare a project proposal and begin a cooperative project in 2013. To promote the project, another information workshop for the government administrators working in the ICH field is expected to be held in Myanmar in the near future.

Minyung Jung (ICHCAP)

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Director’s Note

Dr Lee interviews with UNESCO © ICHCAP

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the 2003 ICH Convention, and the number of Member States that ratified the Convention has reached over 150, which is a remarkably successful result.

Owing to this Convention, the term intangible cultural heritage is now spreading like a gospel—good news for culture and development—and many governments are making new laws and implementing ICH safeguarding systems.

However, some countries and local communities are concerned solely about nominating their elements to the UNESCO Representative List as a way of gaining national prestige and commercial benefits. This has led to an increase in submissions and has created a sense of competition in inscribing elements to the lists, which goes against spirit and objectives of the Convention. Now, however, the number of submissions allowed per cycle is being limited.

During discussions at the 2012 Intergovernmental Working Group, questions and doubts were raised about the right scale and scope of inscribing elements on the Representative List, specifically regarding the too broadly defined generic criteria of representativeness.

In the Operational Directives, Article 1.2 defines only three main points: 1) visibility and raising awareness for ICH, 2) widest possible participation of the community, and 3) inclusion of national inventories. These criteria and conditions can apply to hundreds of elements in every country. And some countries have already made inventories that include over a thousand elements.

If we were to inscribe all kinds of traditional songs, dances, skills, crafts, and local festivals that meet the three stated criteria, the Representative Lists would include several thousand elements within next ten to twenty years, and the UNESCO Representative List’s significance would decline.

We need to seriously reflect on the criteria of Operational Directive 1.2 and ask what ICH representativeness should mean, and why any given element is being recommended for inscription. Without creating a hierarchy of values, some other concrete criterion that has a sense of value judgement may be necessary if we are to maintain the dignity and honour of Representative List of the ICH of Humanity. One more criterion could be added: outstanding communal value, which would function for ICH as outstanding universal value does for tangible heritage.

Samuel Lee (Director, ICHCAP)
Design intervention has been an established initiative of development projects initiated by governments and NGOs across the world as a means to enhance market reach and the livelihood of traditional craft communities. However, innumerable instances have been cited on the ethics of engagement where design development has ended by benefiting the interests of designers and commercial enterprises while craftspeople have continued to remain unnamed and unknown.

In the design world, practitioners are well aware of the issues and rights governing the copying and infringement of design and brand identities. This same level of rigor, however, does not seem to always apply when designers deal with traditional craft communities, with an almost marked absence of charges on copying associated with the many hundreds of indigenous crafts and textiles.

Mainly located in rural areas, the craft sector in India provides employment to many millions of people, an overwhelming majority belonging to the weaker, more vulnerable sections of society. It is an accepted truth that craft communities are the holders and bearers of tradition, of skills and techniques, acquired through an inter-generational oral transmission and sharpened through apprenticeship and long practice.

Designers and manufacturers are alert to the values inherent in craft products, differing as they do from other goods. Endowed with symbolic meanings, these craft genres are clearly delineated brand identities and yet seem to have no popular conversations on design and brand.

An additional challenge faced by craftspeople is the ubiquitous availability of replicated and fake craft products marketed in high street stores in India and across the globe under the name of the craft cluster. Factory printed Bandhini, the traditional tie-dyed textile of Rajasthan and Gujarat, plastic reproductions of the Kolahpuri sandals of Maharashtra, and hand block printed textiles available in cheap screen-prints to the famed hand-woven brocades of Banaras replicated on the power loom are only a few such examples. This all-pervading availability of fakes and ‘borrowings’ has hit craftspeople hard, not just economically by depriving them of the benefits of their traditional community knowledge but also socially, deepening the perception of inequality and unfairness.

Measures to protect the moral right and intellectual property of craft communities over their millennia-old creations and the potential economic benefit arising from it has been the subject of international debate since at least 1982. “Measures to protect the moral right and intellectual property of craft communities over their millennia-old creations and the potential economic benefit arising from it has been the subject of international debate since at least 1982.”

In the absence of appropriate institutional and legal protection, the Craft Revival Trust has been advocating for a new code of ethics that would govern interaction between the designers and traditional craftspeople. Published with the support of UNESCO in 2005, Designers Meet Artisans, edited by Ritu Sethi, provides various case studies and good practices of collaboration between designers and traditional artisans communities across the world. Eight years later, a revised version of Designers Meet Artisans is being prepared to reflect the rapid growth in the world market and the need for a stronger awareness-raising and guidelines for protecting moral rights of the traditional crafts communities. It is hoped that this publication will provide the first step to reposition the setting between the craftspeople and designers.

1. WIPO-UNESCO model provision law for folklore
2. Craft Revival Trust online free encyclopedia (www. craftrevival.org) documents more than 950 different craft forms across India
The snake often evokes strong negative images because of its appearance. However, this animal symbolises positive cultural values, especially in Asia, where people consider snakes to be transmitters of good fortune. Asian snake beliefs can be traced back to ancient India from where the beliefs spread to China (where the snake evolved into a dragon) and later to Korea.

In Korea, snakes arouse positive imagery in people, who believe snakes are immortal. This belief comes from the snake’s winter hibernation and from its ability to shed its skin when it sheds.

In Korea, snakes arouse positive imagery in people, who believe snakes are immortal. This belief comes from the snake’s winter hibernation and from its ability to shed its skin when it sheds. Also they never killed grey coloured snakes because these snakes were known to have Chagwi spirit. However, these kinds of rituals related to snake belief have been fading out of practice, now mostly remaining only in shaman song. Normally, snakes in shaman songs appear as guardian deities of property, which is similar to the beliefs on the mainland. In Hwangdo, snake deities are also related to a good catch of fish.

There is a traditional folktale telling about how snake deity came to be a village guardian in Hwangdo. Long ago, the people of Hwangdo were mainly supported by fishing. However, a big snake in the sea, created monstrous tidal waves that made fishing very difficult for the people. One evening, an old man went bed, and the snake appeared in his dream. The snake introduced itself as a snake king, and gave the old man a painting of a snake deity. The snake king told the old man that the villagers should build a shrine and hang this painting in it. In addition, the snake king said that if villagers offered a ritual to the deity, there will be no more marine accidents. The next day, the old man told everyone about his dream, and people erected shrine in honour of the snake. Since then Hwangdo people have performed a sacred ritual to the snake deity.

To this day, on the second day of the first lunar month, people in Hwangdo perform Boonggi Poongeoje, the shamanic ritual described in the folktale.

Windows to ICH

Oral Traditions and Practices Related to Snakes

Windows to ICH provides an introduction to examples of intangible cultural heritage practices throughout the Asia-Pacific region in relation to specific themes presented in the issue. This issue takes a look at snake tales represented in oral traditions and social practices. In these examples from Republic of Korea, Bangladesh, Laos, and Uzbekistan, you can see the various forms of snake folktales as well as their influence on traditional beliefs.

Republic of Korea The Snake, a Guardian to Protect Villagers

Jongdae Kim (Professor, Department of Comparative Folklore, Chung-Ang University)
Bangladesh Behula-Lakhinder: The Most Popular Snake Folktales

Mahmud Selim (Director of Music & Dance, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy)
Md. Tazuddin (Programme Officer, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO)

Bangladesh, situated on the tropic of Cancer and due to its close proximity to the Bay of Bengal, has hot and humid weather throughout the year, except for a brief, moderate winter. These climatic conditions have made Bengal an ideal habitat for hundreds of venomous snakes, such as the king cobra. The high number of deaths caused by snakebites instilled a sense of helplessness in the people, compelling them to worship gods and goddesses for protection against snakes. Before converting to Islam, the people of Bengal were devoted to Hinduism, which has 330,000,000 guardian gods and goddesses. And Manasa, the snake-goddess, is one of the most potent members of the Hindu pantheon.

The cult of Manasa has historically been most prevalent in Bengal, where she has been ceremoniously worshipped in temples, particularly at the onset of the monsoon season when snakes are most active. Since Manasa has been such an important part of the people, there are many folktales involving snakes and the snake goddess, the most popular being the legend of Behula-Lakhindar.

According to the legend, there lived a rich merchant named Chand Shoudagar who was blessed with six sons and lived in a lavish mansion surrounded by colourful gardens. Chand was a devout worshipper of Shiva, the supreme god of masculine vigour. At that time Manasa, a daughter of Shiva, had no earthly devotees even though she was a goddess. She was determined to have Chand worship her. She ordered Chand to offer worship to her, but he did not comply. Rather he insulted her calling her names, which infuriated Manasa and sparked a feud of truly epic proportion.

In retribution, Manasa plotted against Chand. She destroyed his beautiful gardens and tormented him by killing his six sons by snakebites. She even sank his merchant ships laden with valuable goods. She left him penniless. However, with great perseverance, Chand rebuilt his fortunes and regained his former eminence. He remarried and had a son named Lakhindar.

Lakhindar grew up to be a kind, handsome young man, who everyone loved. Chand sought a suitable bride for Lakhindar. He chose a lovely girl named Behula, the daughter of the landlord of Ujaninagar. The wedding date was fixed. However, Manasa, who had not yet given up her resolve to subdue Chand, heard of the wedding and approached Chand. Again, she demanded to be worshiped. Chand refused, again. Manasa threatened to kill Lakhindar by snakebite on his wedding night. Chand, not one to be intimidated, hired an architect to build a room made of iron so that nothing could enter. Hearing this, Manasa ordered the architect to leave a hole for a snake to enter or to face death.

After the ceremonies and celebrations were over, the couple were led into the metal chamber, and Chand locked the door from outside. Soon after, Lakhindar and Behula fell asleep. A snake named Kalamgini slithered through the hole the architect had left, and the snake bit Lakhindar, and Lakhindar died.

It was a custom to place the deceased who had died from a snakebite onto a raft in the hopes that an expert snake charmer would notice and bring the dead back to life. So the dead body of Lakhindar was set afloat on a raft. Out of profound love, Behula boarded the raft and promised that she would not return if she could not bring her husband back to life. The raft drifted down the river for days. One day, Behula saw that a flower at the effigy of Manasa with his left hand in uncontrollable devotion. Manasa, pleased even with this, revived the dead body of Lakhindar.

Behula had to satisfy the gods by dancing in front of them to get back her husband’s life, but the final condition was that Behula had to convince Chand to offer worship to Manasa. Chand, faced with the chance to bring back his beloved son threw a flower at the effigy of Manasa with his left hand in disdain. Manasa, pleased even with this, revived Lakhindar and Chand’s other six sons and returned all his previously lost wealth. Manasa’s fame was established, and she became a goddess to be feared and revered.

Today, the millions of Hindus in Bangladesh and India still worship Manasa.

“Manasa has been such an important part of the people, there are many folktales involving snakes and the snake goddess, the most popular being the legend of Behula-Lakhindar.”

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Laos Mythical Legend of Fifteen Naga Families in Luang Prabang
Bounkhong Khouthao (Deputy Director, Luang Prabang World Heritage Department)

“Ai-Lao people widely admired or worshipped the Naga in many important rites and tattooed Naga symbols on their arms and body. In Luang Prabang, the people refer to the Naga in the local dialect as ‘Ngeuak’, which means ‘water snake’.”

Lao, having existed for thousands of years, is among the most ancient nations of the world. Chinese historical documents indicate that the original settlement of the Lao nation was in the region of the Ai-Lao Mountains along the River Mekong in what is now called Sichuan County. The region where Ai-Lao tribe lived was called Kao Long. This name was later changed to Kio Long Kieng, which means the river of nine Nagas—the territory of the nine snakes who were known as the authentic and original family of the Lao nation. Therefore, due to their origins, Ai-Lao people widely admired or worshipped the Naga in many important rites and tattooed Naga symbols on their arms and body. In Luang Prabang, the people refer to the Naga in the local dialect as ‘Ngeuak’, which means ‘water snake’.

Fifteen Naga Families
The Legend of the Mekong tells us that the Naga of Nong (Lake) Sae had dug several rivers from the north down to the south. A long time ago in the city of Naga, located in the Mithila region (now called Yunnan Province, China), there was one lake with a fourteen yot1 perimeter, and to the south within a one-month walking distance, there was another lake with an five yot perimeter. Further south within a two-and-a-half-month walking distance, there was another lake one-half yot wide and three yots long. Within this lake, there were two Nagas: the first named Sisatta Naga, who possessed troops seven kots2 strong, and another named Nahoutta Naga, who was powerful in Nong Sae. The two Naga kings were dear friends, and both dug canal from River Mahi (the fourth of the Five Great Rivers), creating waves streaming down to a big lake called Nong Sae Luang (Kasae Luang, which the Chinese called Hong Kieng; the Vietnamese called Xong Keuy, and the French called Red River). Then, they both continued digging from the big lake to connect to another lake called Nong Sae Noi (the Vietnamese called Xong Bo; the northern Lao called Mae Muang; and the French called Black River).

One day, Sisatta Naga caught an elephant for his food and he shared the animal’s meat with Nahoutta Naga. Later, Nahoutta Naga caught a porcupine and shared this with his dear friend. However, when Sisatta Naga saw the big porcupine spines and little meat, he thought that his friend treated him unfairly, so Sisatta Naga mobilised the people to attack. In Sisatta Naga’s defeat, he led the people to dig canal up to Nong Sam Yot, but there was not enough space for them to stay, so he continued to dig, connecting to a river that flowed from north-east. This river, known as the River Ou (later as the River Ou), was full of turbulent waters. So the Nagas dug a canal to the south where there was a calm and abundant lake. This lake of temporary accommodation was called the Anglong Lake (at the mouth of the River Ou). Then, all the Nagas continued digging for fifteen nights, staying in different places as the Luang Prabang people had told in an aphorism.

From this story, the Luang Prabang people say that theirs is the city of fifteen Naga families. As was written in the tale about King KhounBoulform Rajathirath in the episode of two hermit brothers appointed by the king to govern Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong:

“…then appointed the king of Xieng Dong Xieng Thong Meuang Sua City. After that, before leaving, the hermits went to sit in Pakham (tamarind trees) to invite all the male Nagas to come for the meeting. All fifteen Nagas appearing to see The great hermits said to the Nagas this meeting at KonKaFä under Thong Tree. The Nagas bending, listening to what the hermits said: The Xieng Thong is exceptional place.”

1. 1 yot = 16 km
2. 1 kot = 10 million
Uzbekistan Serpent Image in Ancient Beliefs of Uzbekistan
Khamidulla Karamatov (Researcher Consultant, National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO)

Throughout history, various amulets and talismans portraying animals have been associated with astrology and religion. Ancient beliefs in Uzbekistan were no different. According to some of these beliefs, serpents were guardians of humans, so amulets and talismans portraying serpents were seen as peace-making totems. Archaeological discoveries in Uzbekistan over the past several decades have revealed many samples depicting serpents as beings of worship and appreciation.

An amulet-signet dating back to the second millennium BCE at the Sopollitepa site of the Surkhandarya region was discovered in 1987. This piece portrays serpents and other animals considered symbols in animal-astral beliefs. Closer analysis and interpretation reveals interesting ideas about it—namely, the dual role of the serpents. On one side of the amulet-signet are four serpents crawling towards four different directions, symbolising the sacred areas of Earth that were also considered protective poles for humans. Serpents are symbols of the universe and the ability to guard human beings. On the other side are four animal heads—lion, mountain goat, griffin, and hog. This addition also indicates that the amulet-signet was also a lucky trinket for successful hunting.

Another example is a fragment of a ceramic vessel found in Surkhandarya (South Uzbekistan), dating back to the eighth to seventh centuries BCE. The fragment includes a distinctive wavy serpent image. This same image appears on a cauldron that dates to the ninth to tenth centuries CE. This serpent image guarded food against evil spirits and symbolised abundance in the household. The longevity in usage tells us how important it was to ancient life.

Wall paintings in one of the Sogd settlements contain an image of a goddess astride a dragon; there is a spotted serpent in her head dress. Archaeologists also made similar discoveries at the Dalvarzintepa site in southern Uzbekistan, including an image of goddess flanked by a priestess who is wearing with a snake-like bracelet, which symbolises chthonic (underground) element. Another comparable symbol was found in Sokh (Fergana region of Uzbekistan) on an amulet dating back to the third millennium BCE. It is made of black chrysolite (golden-green coloured precious stone) and in the shape of double-headed serpent. The latter piece mentioned is important as it is the most ancient image of snake on stone found in Uzbekistan and it shows that it was a common ancient belief that the depiction of two predatory animals protected the wearer from forces of evil from the right and left sides.

In Central Asia, totems containing both a serpent and a dragon (ajdahko in Uzbek) are widespread, and they represent the creation of the world and its protection. In miniature on one of the Bukhara treatises, a serpent-dragon appears, reflecting various periods of time. Such hybrid creatures were symbols of various environmental occurrences. Wings, for instance, represented the sky; a widely open jaw, a fire; a serpent’s body, the underground world and water. A creature called Senmurv, which unites the body parts of an animal, bird, and serpent—respectively symbolising earth, sky, and water—is a good example of a hybrid creature. The winged serpent embodies knowledge and enlightenment.

The signets of the ancient Khorezm usually had an image of a hippocampus—a winged horse-serpent. A similar creature was found on Dalvarzintepa signets, which also have artistic flourishes in the design. Among the ancient Uzbekistan findings, a figureine depicting a fabulous creature was found. It included the head, neck, and forelegs of a horse; a body, from which wings emerged, of a serpent; and a tale with a bifurcated tip resembling bear spear.

“The existence of a serpent-protector symbol in ancient Uzbekistan testifies that spiritual and cultural autonomy of different people of the world is a symbiosis of indigenous beliefs and cults with some admixtures of religious views.”

One of the wall paintings from Samarkand, dating back to the seventh century CE, depicts a creature living in water. It has a sheep head and a serpent body. Ancient beliefs say that a serpent with a head of sheep is a symbol of fertility and productivity. In the agriculture-based culture of Uzbekistan, sheep embodied the meaning of abundance and luck, whereas a water serpent was fertility. Having such a symbol on a wall painting of residential house as a protecting amulet meant luck and fertility for the hosts of the house.

The existence of a serpent-protector symbol in ancient Uzbekistan testifies that spiritual and cultural autonomy of different people of the world is a symbiosis of indigenous beliefs and cults with some admixtures of religious views. And this is one feature of the world’s religious space, reflecting the symbols of the universe known to all people and nations. These symbols helped ancient humans open the world not only intellectually but also spiritually. Throughout many centuries, monotheistic religions imposed the idea of self-sufficiency of a single and moral self-purification of the human. But ancient symbols preserved their power and came down to us.

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Image of snake on a cauldron fragment (left) and on a ceramic vessel fragment (right)
(Source: Antiquities of Southern Uzbekistan, Japan, 1991)

Amulet from Surkhandarya
(Source: Rempel L.I. Cep vremyon - Tashken, 1987)

Double-headed snake stone amulet from Sokh
(Source: Rempel L.I. Cep vremyon - Tashken, 1987)

Serpent with a head of sheep
(Source: Rempel L.I. Cep vremyon - Tashken, 1987)
The principal role of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre since its establishment in the early 1960s has been to document and record the culture and cultural history of Vanuatu. This has been done by the Centre's staff and a network of over one hundred volunteer fieldworkers. The documentation efforts focus on details of remembered histories and traditions; details of ritual practices, classification systems, and languages; details of cultural landscapes and particularly sites of cultural significance; and records of contemporary events of historical and cultural significance. The latter, which is essentially a history-in-the-making, is recorded on video as examples of material culture collected for museological display, but almost everything else is documented on audiotape. This is because our indigenous cultures are primarily oral, and therefore, all our cultural knowledge is retained and transmitted orally. This documented knowledge is held by the Centre and has been used as source material for the revival of certain traditional cultural practices no longer being practiced.

Most of the Centre's activities are in the outer islands of Vanuatu. The Centre's sixty-two male fieldworkers and fifty-four female fieldworkers are based in their own linguistic and cultural areas in the outer islands, and these volunteers document their own culture and history as well as the culture and history of neighbouring areas.

Faced with the need to record and store indigenous knowledge that is controlled by strict access and transmission procedures, the Centre has developed a system, which, to the extent that is possible, respects these maxims. When knowledge is recorded by fieldworkers, it is made clear what portions of the oral narrative are restricted, and to whom. As fieldworkers are from the same language group if not kin group as the informant, there is a much greater possibility that the informant will be made fully aware of what such documentation entails and what they, in turn, will be willing to divulge. Having a local doing this documentation work has proved to be an invaluable asset to the success of our programme.

The Tabu Room is a secured room at the Centre where all materials with some degree of restrictions are stored. Only the people identified as having the right to access the recorded material are allowed access. In some cases, access restrictions extend even to the Centre staff, who then become responsible for curating materials that they cannot listen to. There are different sections for each island group, and the records of women's knowledge therefore, all our cultural knowledge is retained and transmitted orally. This documented knowledge is held by the Centre and has been used as source material for the revival of certain traditional cultural practices no longer being practiced.

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are kept separate from the men’s to recognise that there is a separation between the ritual realms of women and men in Vanuatu. Often people come into the Centre to listen to material recorded by their deceased kin. In this way, some part of the tradition of the oral transmission of knowledge is continued, and moreover, a kin group has an opportunity to learn its own traditions even if this opportunity had been foregone while the possessor of the knowledge was still alive. The Centre is now embarking upon a programme to make some unrestricted cultural information available to the general public in the form of books and audio cassettes, with schoolchildren as a primary target group.

One of the Centre’s major projects with the fieldworkers is the audio-visual documentation of traditional rituals and cultural activities. The aim is to assist in preserving and promoting aspects of custom and culture and to try to ensure that as much of Vanuatu’s cultures and history as possible is recorded for posterity. Documentation subjects include major traditional rituals, such as initiation, funerals, marriages, and clan-alliance ceremonies, as well as activities such as weaving, gardening, village festivals, and myth re-enactments. All these things are of great importance and interest to all ni-Vanuatu, and it is widely understood that future generations will be able to learn, study, and benefit from this documentation project.

One aim of the documentation project is to help educate ni-Vanuatu about the value of their own and related cultures. Our dispersed country is culturally diverse, but through this project, our people can learn about cultures from other areas of the country. Future generations can learn of the activities of older generations. Before the arrival of new film and video techniques, recording was only in audio. Now, with video, we can see as well as hear. The National Film and Sound Unit, an important part of the Centre, provides its services free of charge to communities in the outer islands to document, at their request, rituals and historical events. Sponsors of the rituals—chiefs, and/or the village community involved—retain a copy of the resulting film, which they can use as they see fit. Public interest and awareness of this project has become so great that it is impossible to fulfil all requests. The fieldworkers spread throughout the islands are currently concentrating on audio documentation and photography because we do not have enough filming equipment to distribute evenly to satisfy the demand. We do, however, have permanent film units in South-West Bay, Malakula, at the Malakula Cultural Centre and at the Tafea Cultural Centre. Our hope is to eventually have more units throughout the islands.

Besides recording in the field, the National Film and Sound Unit is responsible for looking after its collection of film and sound archives, which include material recorded earlier this century as well as over three thousand hours of footage recorded by the Centre’s staff, fieldworkers, and researchers. Copies of certain non-taboo films are regularly shown, with permission, to schools, village communities, and so on. They are sometimes also used at local meetings, courses, or workshops. They are even sometimes taken by government representatives on workshops or conferences overseas. With the recent introduction of television in Vanuatu, we hope to be producing regular local documentary film features for broadcast. The Centre could thus benefit from television in Vanuatu by co-producing regular programmes on cultural matters using existing films in the archives and recording new material. Using modern audio-visual techniques and facilities, we document and raise awareness of Vanuatu’s cultural richness and diversity and help ensure that our small island nation does not lose its unique cultural identity.

The fieldworkers continue with a long-term project of eventually producing dictionaries of their own languages, local ethnographies of their own cultures, and transcriptions of selected non-taboo myths, legends, and histories for potential use in the education system. Regular radio programmes are also produced in Bislama based upon non-taboo selections from the audio collections.
Inventory-Making Efforts

Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory Making in Bhutan
Sonam Tobgay (Project Manager, Research and Media Division, National Library and Archives of Bhutan)

“An important part of the inventory-making system is the inheritor system in which the State Council announces the names of individuals who have been designated to pass on China’s ICH.”

Background

Bhutan is considered one of the culturally and spiritually richest countries in the world. Culture and traditions being resultant of the evolution of human civilisation, they have developed according to the socio economic needs and conditions of the Bhutanese people, as well as within the physical and environmental constraints and opportunities of the place or the region. But most importantly, their origin is deeply rooted in Buddhism.

Buddhism first came to Bhutan in the seventh century. Since then, Buddhism has had a very strong impact on the Bhutanese society, which was largely shamanistic until then. The ideas and principles derived from Buddhist teachings underlie the evolution of the rich, diverse, and unique culture and traditions of Bhutan.

Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal unified the country that had been divided under the rule of numerous local chieftains in the seventeenth century. Under Zhabdrung’s rule, Drukpa Kagyu, a principal tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, was established as the state religion. Since then, imbued with Buddhist values and principles, a significant aspect of culture and traditions of Bhutan was formalised. These mainstream culture and traditions formed an integral part of Bhutanese identity and unity. Throughout the centuries, Bhutan has remained a sovereign country, and the preservation of culture and traditions is one of the main factors attributing to it. Since then, the government has continued to make great efforts to preserve and transmit these unique traditions and culture.

While culture and traditions are maintained and promoted, there are also many unique cultural traditions that have evolved in isolation and continue to thrive in remote parts of the country. Realising the importance of such cultural traditions in terms of cultural diversity, the government has been engaged in preserving these increasingly vulnerable cultural traditions of particular communities as the country has been quick to modernise.

ICH Inventory of Bhutan

The Research and Media Division, National Library and Archives of Bhutan under the Department of Culture is mandated with the function of developing and maintaining an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage of Bhutan.

The ICH inventory is geared towards achieving the following aims:

- to ensure security and sovereignty of the nation;
- to preserve cultural and spiritual values of the nation;
- to ensure proper documentation of cultural values before they become extinct; and
- to bridge the gap with new information.

The objectives behind inventory are:

- to identify, inventory, rectify, and document different ICH of Bhutan, with appropriate research, and to publish comprehensive books to help firmly establish our national identity;
- to safeguard the ICH of Bhutan; and
- to make ICH information accessible to people in written form as well as in video and audio formats to maintain the continuity of our culture.

Spearheaded by the Research and Media Division, the first nationwide survey and recording of ICH began in 2011 under the project titled Development of a National Inventory System of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bhutan between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP), Republic of Korea, with generous funding from ICHCAP. To date, the project has covered nine of the twenty districts of Bhutan. In those nine districts, more than a hundred villages were covered. Among the people interviewed were fifteen bearers, fifty-five practitioners and learners, and many other informants. The second phase of this ICH inventory programme is intended to be completed by March 2013.

Methodology for Inventorying

The team of researchers from National Library first approached and communicated with the local leader of every sub-district and gathered preliminary information on potential ICH in the villages within the sub-district. Based on the information collected from the local leaders, relevant villager, artists, and individual households...
were visited and interviewed using the questionnaire that was jointly developed among the researchers. The local leaders helped the team get appointments with individuals as well as organise a focus group interview when necessary. All the questionnaires were thoroughly checked in the evening to clarify the information written down. These data were entered into computers back in office, analysed, and organised.

ICH of Bhutan

Five domains of ICH as proposed by UNESCO 2003 Convention are used as a guide in identifying the ICH elements of Bhutan. The five domains being very broad and almost all encompassing in nature were thus found very useful.

Based on the five domains, the identified ICH elements of Bhutan include language, traditional etiquette, belief in karmic law (universal principle of cause and effect), mask dances, folk dances and music, drama, legends, aphorisms, poetry, sports and games, and stories. Further, it includes celebrations, national laws, medical treatments, rituals, belief systems, astrology, daily life, mediation, religious sects, arts and crafts, songs, and more.

The process and methods of teaching and learning different traditional sciences, arts and crafts, and medicines, and systems of conduct and manners that expound the appropriate or harmonious conduct of the body, speech, and mind are also considered the part of ICH.

Although the inventory team is still in the process of compiling the data collected from the field, it is apparent that the identified ICH items already run into hundreds.

Conclusion

During the survey, it was found that ICH elements are declining at an increasing rate, and some of these ICH elements are on the verge of disappearing in near future. ICH bearers and practitioners shared that younger generations are least interested in learning the traditional practices. One of the reasons of the decline and extinction of ICH elements is due to lack of timely support from the community and the government in terms of financial and human resources. Given the very short duration of the current inventory project, it will be extremely difficult to develop a comprehensive ICH inventory of Bhutan. Nevertheless, this project has helped to initiate a very important activity of identifying and recording the ICH of Bhutan, and it will significantly contribute to the efforts towards preserving the ICH of Bhutan.
ICHCAP’s Activities and Collaborative Strategies for 2013
Seong-Yong Park, Ph.D. (Assistant Director, ICHCAP)

Official inaugurated in 2011, ICHCAP has been working steadily to increase its activities and build its capacity for sharing information and building networks throughout the region. And thanks to the strong support of Member States, we have been meeting and even exceeding our expectations. Based on our progress thus far, the Centre is looking forward to improving its contributions to ICH safeguarding in 2013. This year is particularly meaningful as it marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the 2003 UNESCO Convention.

This year, ICHCAP is designing its programmes through a performance-based management system to reinforce its main projects in:

- Building a Foundation for Information Systems
- Establishing Cooperative Networks for ICH
- Raising Awareness and Promoting ICH

Most importantly, while proceeding with the projects, it is necessary for the Centre to cooperate with the governments of regional Member States, UNESCO and its regional offices, and other C2 Centres and relevant institutes.

Building a Foundation for Information Systems
ICHCAP has been collecting information on the current status of ICH safeguarding from five countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Also, Centre’s identification and documentation project for Central Asia has entered its third phases. In this regard, ICHCAP is looking forward to disseminating an ICH database system in the sub-region. In addition, information projects on producing video documentation on Mongolia and digitising recorded materials from Viet Nam will be carried out throughout the year. For the ICH intellectual property rights project, ICHCAP expects to establish useful methodologies for information building and sharing and draft an IP working manual.

Establishing Cooperative Networks for ICH
ICHCAP will host sub-regional meetings in Central Asia (Kazakhstan), the Pacific (Vanuatu), and South-East Asia (Viet Nam) to promote cooperation with UNESCO, Member States, C2 Centres, and other relevant institutes. Particularly, an international expert meeting is planned to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the 2003 Convention.

Raising Awareness and Promoting ICH
ICHCAP will continue to publish the ICH Courier, the Centre’s quarterly newsletter, and will prepare to publish UNESCO children’s books to introduce ICH to young audiences. In addition, ICHCAP will organise an ICH photo exhibition of ICH elements to raise awareness of the importance of ICH to the public and begin a project to produce and distribute digital contents to expand the general concept of understanding ICH.

Additionally, there will be special projects apart from our regular budgetary projects to assist Member States. These extra-budgetary projects are part of the Official Development Assistance Programme sponsored by the Cultural heritage Administration and local governments in Korea. In accordance with the special programme, ICHCAP will implement support projects for ICH safeguarding in Myanmar, Tajikistan, and Bhutan this year. These projects will also allow ICHCAP to help Member States identify shared ICH elements in the region and to facilitate the collective efforts in safeguarding those elements. Furthermore, ICHCAP plans to continue its Cultural Partnership Initiative Programme by inviting ICH experts to work at ICHCAP for three to six months. This programme is sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Sports.

The abovementioned cooperative projects are being prepared for 2013. To implement these projects efficiently and successfully, ICHCAP will need to efficiently channel its resources and collaborate with regional organisations. In this regard, ICHCAP will analyse and disseminate the existing and collected information and data from Member States and other stakeholders, which will help reinforce the Centre’s capacity of delivering the information to the Member States. In addition, it will work towards increasing the participation of Member States. In particular, the Centre will explore more possibilities of co-managing projects and events with Member States and sharing the roles and responsibilities. Last but not least, the Centre emphasise maintaining close collaborative relationship with UNESCO and its offices, C2 Centres, and other stakeholders in the field.

In particular, as the Category 2 Centres signed the MOU at the end of last year, concrete cooperation projects are expected to be developed among the Centres to accomplish our common goals.

In considering an old African proverb, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” I envision our collective journey helping us go far in our efforts to safeguard ICH.
Safeguarding Pioneers

Institute of Language and Literature of Mongolian Academy of Sciences
Alimaa Ayushzhava, Ph.D. (Mongolian Folklore Specialist, Institute of Language and Literature, Mongolian Academy of Sciences)

"The central mission of the ILL is to create a mental output that coalesces with social requests and promotes collaboration of national philology and modernity and promotes interdisciplinary research."

The Institute of Language and Literature (ILL) at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences is a scientific organisation that manages academic researches on philology, literature, and folklore in Mongolia. The ILL was founded as the Institute of Sutra and Script in 1921. The name subsequently institute changed to the Cabinet of Philology in 1930, to the Centre for the Study of Philology and Literature in 1957, and finally to the Institute of Language and Literature in 1961 when the Mongolian Academy of Sciences was established. First director of the institute was Mr S. Jamiyan. Today, Dr L. Bold—a professor, academician, and doctor of linguistics—leads the institute.

The Scientific Board of the institute reviews and confirms basic direction of research activities as well as the middle- and long-term goals. This institute.

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The Scientific Board of the institute reviews and confirms basic direction of research activities as well as the middle- and long-term goals. This institute has the following sectors and departments:

- Sector of Linguistics
- Sector of Altai Studies
- Sector of Literature Studies
- Sector for the Study of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Folklore
- Sector for Tibetan /Literature on Tibetan/ Studies
- Treasury of Oral and Written Monuments
- Home Museum of Ts. Damdinsuren, the well-known scholar and academician
- Two additional centres
- Library

The Institute of Culture and Art of Mongolia was branched off the Sector of Art Studies at the ILL in August 1989.

The central mission of the ILL is to create a mental output that coalesces with social requests and promotes collaboration of national philology and modernity and promotes interdisciplinary research. The main lines of activity are:

- Structure, system, and typological studies of the Mongolian language
- Poetic and methodological studies of Mongolian folklore and written literature

At the present time, the institute has more than forty researchers, and about 80 per cent of them have scientific degrees and titles. Apart from main lines of activity, the research team pays attention to strengthening the public’s language and grammar capacity and implementing the language policy of the government. Therefore, on 8 September 1970, the ILL was awarded the UNESCO Nadezhda K. Krupskaya Literacy Prize for its contribution to reducing illiteracy.

As a result of many years of work, the researchers at the ILL published An Encyclopaedia of the Mongolian Words (1927), A Grammar of the Mongolian Script (1964–1967), and an Encyclopaedia of Mongolian Language (2008).

ILL researchers actively conduct studies on ancient and modern Mongolian literature and folklore as well as intangible cultural heritage. They also participate in the activities geared towards the preservation, advertisement, and training of the Mongolian long folk song and the heroic epics based on the UNESCO 2003 Convention.

In 1981, the Tibetan Studies sector was founded. Researchers in this sector primarily study the historical relationship between Mongolia and Tibet, and a lot of sutras and books in Tibetan language were published by Mongolians.

The researchers conduct several activities on preserving and investigating the ancient books of Mongolia, which are preserved in Mongolia. For instance, in 2004, the centre for the Study of the Secret History of the Mongols was founded to investigate this unique literature, language, and historical source. Researchers of that institute have been published information in modern Mongolian for the public.

Since 1962, the ILL at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences has been implementing fieldwork on folk heritage and local dialects one to three times per year. Sometimes folk tellers and singers have been invited to make audio and video recordings. As a result of these activities, the ILL has built a treasury of audio recordings and manuscripts of Mongolian cultural heritage. For instance, this treasury contains tales, heroic epics, long and short songs, and wise and metaphoric words. Also our researchers have recorded ethnic legends and stories about rituals and customs and festivals. About 1100 hours of audio recordings have been preserved in this fund. We are also preserving 451 units of handwritten books and manuscripts.

Home Museum of Ts. Damdinsuren is an enlightening centre that preserves five thousand rare books and five thousand sutras in Tibetan and Mongolian as well as written scholarly heritage.

The foreign collaboration of the institute develops in philological and cultural fields. For instance, in 2003, the academician Kh. Sampildendev was chosen as the chairman of the Association of the East Asian Customs.
The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was held from 3 to 7 December at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris. During the session, four ICH elements were inscribed to the Urgent Safeguarding List, twenty-seven elements (including three multinational) were inscribed on the Representative List, and two Best Safeguarding Practices were selected. As of this meeting, there are a total of 31 elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List; 257 elements on the Representative List; and 10 programmes, projects, and activities in the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices.

From the Asia-Pacific region, two elements were selected for the Urgent Safeguarding List—from Kyrgyzstan, the art of traditional felt carpets (Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdak) and from Indonesia, multifunctional knotted or woven bag (Noken), Papua handicrafts. On the Representative List, six elements from Asian countries, including Arranq, a lyrical folksong of the Republic of Korea, were newly inscribed. Also, the strategy for training coming generations of Fujian puppetry practitioners (China) was registered as a best safeguarding practice.

The Consultative Body, which is made of six accredited non-governmental organisations and six independent experts, including the Centre for Research, Support and Development of Culture (Viet Nam) and Mr Rahul Goswami (India), will examine the 2013 nominations for inscriptions on the Urgent Safeguarding List, the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices, and requests for international assistance greater than US$25,000. A Subsidiary Body to evaluate nominations for possible inscription on the Representative List in 2013 consists of Spain, Czech Republic, Peru, Japan, Nigeria, and Morocco. Also, the Committee has limited the number of nominations and requests to sixty during the course of 2014 and 2015, considering Committee’s capacity to examine files during a single session.

Based on the discussions at the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Woking Group held last October, the Committee is encouraging States Parties to consider the diverse contexts in which the Convention can be applied and to consider the most appropriate scale and scope for the intended purposes.

Also, the Committee decided to establish an online resource through which States Parties can voluntarily announce their intention to submit files so that they can seek opportunities to cooperate in developing multinational files.

Representatives of ICH-related organisations and individuals from Member States participated in the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the 2003 Convention, which successfully closed after finishing the five-day schedule. The eighth session will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 2 to 8 December 2013.

Saymin Lee (ICHCAP)
ICH News Briefs

[Cambodia] Reorienting Methods of Inventorying Living Heritage

Cambodia is reinforcing a community-based focus in its existing and new efforts to document and inventory living heritage. For this purpose and with generous funding from Japan, over thirty-five participants came together in Siem Reap from 14 to 21 February this year to build their knowledge and develop this new approach.

UNESCO provided substantive support through two members of its certified facilitators’ network, Mr Rahul Goswami from India and Ms Suzanne Ogge from Australia. The programme included eight days of intensive coursework and field-based practicum carried out in the rural areas of Siem Reap and in the town itself. Through hands-on training, participants learned field-based techniques of interviewing and audio-visual recording. A visit was also conducted to the Eco-Global Museum (supported by UNESCO), located in Preah Vihear Province, to learn about a concrete inventory project underway that combines audio-visual documentation of living heritage among a local indigenous community with the documentation of associated cultural objects.

This capacity-building workshop on inventorying with its strong community focus has thus provided participants with greater skills and knowledge for their field practice. In addition, the training emphasised developing mutually supportive networks among cultural professionals and communities to support national efforts to document and inventory living heritage.

(Source: UNESCO)

[Samoa] Workshop on Implementing the ICH Convention

This workshop aimed at providing cultural experts in Samoa with training opportunities to implement the 2003 ICH Convention at the national level.

Last year the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) held the ICH Ratification Workshop, which established the ICH Working Group. Furthermore, in October 2012, public hearings were held on two islands to consult with communities and ICH custodians on whether Samoa should join the Convention. Strongly supported by its traditional leaders and communities, Samoa is now preparing to join the ICH Convention.

With this as background, MESC has successfully completed ICH Implementation Workshop held from 11 to 15 February 2013 funded under the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust. Several important topics were presented for discussions among participants. These topics were: key concepts of the convention, community participation, identification and inventorying, ICH and sustainable development, safeguarding measures, institutions and policies, nominations and consent forms, awareness raising and international cooperation and assistance.

(Source: UNESCO Apia)

[UNESCO Almaty] UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Ceremony

On 2 March 2013, UNESCO and the Central Asian Crafts Support Association (CACSA) held the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts ceremony to deliver certificates to the awardees.

The UNESCO international jury of handicraft experts gathered in Tehran, Iran, in November 2012 to review and judge the submissions received from artisans from Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan who are participating in the UNESCO Award programme.

Established to encourage craftspeople to use traditional skills and materials, the Award aims to ensure the continuation of traditional knowledge and skills and the preservation of cultural diversity in the region. By recognising excellence in craftsmanship, the programme sets quality standards, raises international awareness, and strengthens market demand for West-Central Asian handicraft products.

Of the 407 entries, the 188 awards were presented. The award distribution was as follows: 146 to Iran, 12 to Kazakhstan, 22 to Kyrgyzstan, 2 to Tajikistan, 1 to Turkmenistan, and 5 to Uzbekistan.

An exhibition of the awarded products and the Award ceremony for the artisans are carried out within the framework of the annual Central Asian Crafts Fair in the Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

(Source: UNESCO Almaty)

[Nauru] Joined the ICH Convention

The Republic of Nauru became a State Party to the 2003 ICH Convention in March 2013, making it the seventh Pacific country to complete the ratification process. Of the seven culture-related conventions administered by UNESCO, the 2003 ICH Convention is the first that Nauru has joined.

The ratification process began with a national consultation workshop that was held in Yaren in May 2011 by the Ministry of Home Affairs with the assistance of UNESCO. The workshop was an opportunity for Nauruan experts to present a variety of traditional cultural expressions such as traditional chants, string figures, traditional canoe-building, traditional sports, and performing arts.

The participants recommended the government to join the ICH Convention and to develop a strategy for ICH safeguarding. This recommendation was further examined by the Working Treaty Group (WTG), an inter-ministerial body that examines matters on international instruments. After reviewing the recommendations, the cabinet decided to join the ICH Convention. The Instrument of Ratification signed by the President Dabwooldi of Nauru was received by UNESCO in March 2013.


(Source: UNESCO Office in Apia)

[Nepal] Workshop on Community-Based Identification and Inventorying of ICH

Organised by UNESCO Office in Kathmandu, the Workshop on Community-Based Identification and Inventorying of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Nepal was held in January 2013.
VIETNAM

Vietnamese artisans demonstrated their skills by making the linen cloth of the Mong; the brocades of the Pa Then, Tay, Thai, Nung, Muong, Ede, M’uong, and Cham; and the silk of the Kinh and Khmer.

Other activities to help international guests deepen their understanding of Vietnamese culture included folk games, Vietnamese bamboo and stone musical instrument performances, chau van (spiritual singing), quan ho (romantic duets), cheo (traditional opera), and Central Highland gong arrangements. [Source: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam]

[ICCHAP] New Editorial Advisory Board of the ICH Courier 2013-2014

As the first board has come to the end of its successful two-year term, ICHCAP has appointed three new members who will serve for the 2013-2014 term. While two board members (from Central Asia and the Pacific) will be returning for a second term, the remaining three new members were selected to maintain regional balance among the sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific region. The new board will continue with the mission and standards that previous advisory board helped create. They will serve active roles by providing comments on yearly and quarterly plans; commenting on and monitor-ing articles, structure, and layout; providing topical ideas; and recommending experts. The Editorial Advisory Board Members will perform their duty until December 2014.

Members of the Editorial Advisory Board for 2013 to 2014

• Dr Hongnam Kim (East Asia)
• Dr Jesus Peralta (South-East Asia)
• Ms Moe Chiba (South Asia)
• Mr Alisher Ikramov (Central Asia)
• Dr Akatsuki Takahashi (Pacific)

[ASEAN] The Fourth ASEAN Traditional Textile Symposium

The Fourth ASEAN Traditional Textiles Symposium was held under the theme ‘Traditions, Innovations, and Interactions: Paving a Creative Path for Traditional Textiles of South-East Asia’. The symposium took place in Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam, from 15 to 18 March 2013.

The key objectives of the symposium included not only extending efforts to promote and preserve traditional textiles but also encouraging new techniques that will allow the development of the new creations using traditional textiles. The symposium attendees also discussed ways of building the capacity of the traditional textile industry to help facilitate entry into a wider market.

The symposium also included an exhibition showcasing the history of the textile industry, tracing its growth from the self-sufficient economy all the way through to modern industrial production. Complementing the exhibition was a fashion show that included representative work from participating countries as well as a series of traditional dresses Vietnamese of ethnic minorities.

The Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) launched a website of folktales from South-East Asia and Korea for elementary school students to raise awareness of cultural diversity and to promote inter-cultural dialogue.

The website includes popular folktales from twelve countries—namely, East Timor, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Brunei, Viet Nam, Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea. In addition to the multilingual, full-text classic stories, there are contemporary stories as well as guides for teachers.

This website is a result of joint project between the APCEIU and SEAMEO, which was implemented over the last three years and sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Korea.

The aim of this project is to help students understand the diverse traditional cultures of neighbouring countries, which will give our children a broader view of the world and more tolerant and understanding of others. More information is available at: asianfolktales.unescoapceiu.org