This is the first issue of ICH Courier in 2022. As a newly appointed Director-General of ICHCAP and Executive Publisher, I am also happy to meet our readers for the first time. Thinking of all the people who have been with ICH Courier, I promise to lead the publication on the right path going forward.

We live in harmony with many beings around us, with our relationship with animals being particularly important. Taking the case of Korea, pets, or "companion animals," are seen as family members and subjects of affection, bringing great comfort and happiness; this is the era of ten million pets.

Humankind’s history with animals goes back a long time, and traces of it can be found in various places. Under the theme of “Animals in Stories” in this Volume 50 of ICH Courier, we looked up animal stories from all over the Asia-Pacific region, which have mainly been handed down through oral traditions. You may remember any fables you heard from your parents or grandparents when you were young. This edition may transport you back to the pleasant memories of that time.

The “Windows to ICH” section offers an opportunity to reconsider the wisdom and lessons to convey what harmony between humans and animals or animals and animals means to our society now. In addition, we wanted to capture the image of ICH as a link between the past and the present, but also the convergence between ICH and education sectors that UNESCO focuses on today, from an expert’s point of view.

ICH Courier will continue to make all efforts to deliver a range of information about living ICH in the Asia-Pacific region. We ask for your continuous support for those who are working toward the safeguarding of ICH; in return, the Centre will continue to provide quality contents that can be enjoyed both online and offline.
A master musician demonstrates his art to Kazakh students © UNESCO / Saniya Bazheneyeva

Bringing Living Heritage to Schools in Asia-Pacific: A Resource Kit to Help Teachers Develop Contextualized and Engaging Activities

Vanessa Achilles
ICH Consultant

School should be a happy place where students are willing to engage in activities, learn, share, and develop into citizens who make a useful contribution to society. Most people spend a significant proportion of their youth, and sometimes some of their adult years, in the education system. It is, therefore, not a surprise that quality education is one of the goals identified as part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Interestingly, this objective—Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)—focuses not only on quantitative indicators (e.g., ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education) but also on qualitative aspects of education. It is essential to give a central place to strengthening education’s contribution to the fulfillment of human rights, peace, and responsible citizenship. This can be achieved through, among other aspects, the acceptance and appreciation of the cultural diversity of the world.

Bringing Culture to School: Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage

Over time, numerous initiatives and pedagogical approaches have been promoted, with Global Citizenship Education (GCED) or Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) leading this movement. Bringing culture to schools is one way to advance this objective, while safeguarding and promoting the culture itself. From world heritage education to arts education, UNESCO has been spearheading these initiatives for over four decades.

Teaching with or about living heritage, or ICH, is one approach to enrich the learning process. Living heritage includes knowledge and skills that are practiced and passed on to younger generations. They include music, dances, rituals, local health practices, drama, cuisine, craft skills, and festivals. All students and their families, all teachers and people living in communities near schools have a living heritage that is part of their identity. These practices, whether shared among different communities or found in just one, constitute a vast reservoir of knowledge and skills available locally.

ICH is often transmitted informally within families or communities, but some elements can be taught through the formal education system. Some schools offer classes in traditional music, dances, and crafts, or use local literature in language classes. Innovative pedagogical approaches have also explored how to teach with living heritage. In some cases, the living heritage provides examples, content, pedagogic tools, or methods to teach other subjects to enrich the teaching and learning process. This can apply to all curriculum subjects as well as extracurricular activities. For instance, in math and sciences, students can calculate proportions for cooking ingredients. They can visualize geometric concepts through textile patterns. With musical instruments, they can experiment with sound, vibration, oscillation. In biology they can look at seasons and the life cycles of local plants and animals. In social studies or history, they can analyze and compare the historical, social, and political context of a living heritage element in the past and the modern day. They can reflect on the evolution of gender roles and social structures through a practice. The list is endless.

This approach has numerous benefits for the students, the school, and communities. Bringing ICH with which students are familiar into lessons will give them more context. Some lessons can be very hands-on, and help the students understand new information and concepts more easily. Learning with ICH is engaging, practical, and fun. In multicultural classrooms, students can share their respective knowledge, which will foster mutual understanding and enhance inclusion and tolerance. All of this contributes to quality education. Teachers can explore innovative pedagogies. They can also collaborate with colleagues in multidisciplinary projects or ICH elements that have been explored from multiple perspectives. Bringing a living heritage element into school also increases students’ awareness and therefore contributes to its safeguarding, for the benefit of the whole community. This approach also aligns with GCED or ESD principles and objectives; the relationship is mutually beneficial.

Building Up Real Experience

UNESCO developed a six-step methodology that guides educators in developing their own contextualized lessons connected to local living heritage (their own or that of their students). Building on past projects in Asia-Pacific and Europe, the methodology was tested and refined with funding from ICHCAP and the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding under the auspices of UNESCO (APCEIU).

In 2021, a pilot phase was conducted in twenty-one schools in six countries: Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand. Six teams of facilitators trained and supported teachers in their respective countries. From these pilots came a rich set of experiences and lesson plans that fed into and enriched the methodology. The pilot emphasized the importance of schools collaborating with their surrounding communities, who are the main content carriers of living heritage.

In Kazakhstan, for instance, the pilot focused on the living heritage of the Kazakh people. Students were introduced to traditional music, dances, and cuisine. They learned about the importance of festivals and the role of music and dance in Kazakh society. The pilot emphasized the importance of involving local communities in the learning process. This approach has numerous benefits for the students, the school, and communities.

The pilot phase in Kazakhstan was successful in engaging students and involving local communities. The methodology was refined and will be used in future projects. The pilot emphasized the importance of involving local communities in the learning process. This approach has numerous benefits for the students, the school, and communities.

In conclusion, bringing living heritage to school is a valuable approach to enriching the learning process. It provides students with more context and helps them understand new information and concepts more easily. It fosters mutual understanding and enhances inclusion and tolerance. All of this contributes to quality education. Teachers can explore innovative pedagogies. They can also collaborate with colleagues in multidisciplinary projects or ICH elements that have been explored from multiple perspectives. Bringing a living heritage element into school also increases students’ awareness and therefore contributes to its safeguarding, for the benefit of the whole community.
As a starting point, a series of video animations introduce the Visualization of the Steps of the ICH Package to Support Teachers, and More. Most of the two thousand participating students wore masks, why UNESCO compiled their real-life experiences into a guide to support teachers interested in teaching with living heritage. Local practitioners helped teachers acquire knowledge on custodians of local living heritage and an invaluable resource. The Nepalese experience was so successful that a district is now expanding the approach to all its schools. The very positive feedback received from them as well as from teachers is all the more meaningful.

The online course targets teachers of all grades and all subjects related to arts and culture, as well as any other discipline, who are interested in teaching with living heritage. Despite these challenges, teacher trainings and school meetings were canceled. Living heritage festivals and events were postponed or the practice disrupted. Facilitators and local partners had to quickly adapt to the ever-changing situation. Despite these challenges, teacher trainings and school activities took place, often online, sometimes in person. Over a hundred lessons were developed. For instance, a Kyrgyz school created an ICH museum to hold their lessons. The Nepalese experience was so successful that a district is now expanding the approach to all its schools. The creative solutions that emerged during this dark period can be applauded. Most of the two thousand participating students wore masks, but it was still possible to see the smiles on their faces and the sparkle in their eyes when they attended these innovative lessons. The very positive feedback received from them as well as from the teachers is all the more meaningful.

A Package to Support Teachers, and More
Teachers are the main target group for these resources. Yet, as demonstrated by this project, teachers do not work alone. Their work is framed by education policies, curricula, and programs, and by their schools’ missions. Therefore, a guide for school managers and policy-makers proposes ways to support teachers interested in teaching with living heritage. And as communities are the main custodians of their living heritage, another guide suggests how parents and local practitioners can collaborate with schools and teachers to enrich lessons and also to safeguard their practice. Living heritage is everywhere and the opportunities to bring it into schools to enrich pedagogical activities are unlimited. UNESCO invites teachers and all those interested to discover the resource kit and explore how the methodology could be applied in schools in their area.

The guide will be available on the UNESCO Bangkok website: https://bangkok.unesco.org/theme/culture. The online course will be accessible from the GCED Online Campus platform: www.gcedonlinecampus.org.

As a starting point, a series of video animations introduce the key ideas of the approach and the main actions that different stakeholders can take. To dive deeper, a downloadable and printable guide and an online course detail the concepts and methodology. The online course targets teachers of all grades and all subjects related to arts and culture, as well as any other discipline, who are interested in teaching with living heritage to give their teaching more context and make it more efficient. Most content and examples in the course are from primary and lower secondary levels but the methodology can be applied to all grades.

The course, composed of five modules, was developed by the project facilitators. The first module lays down the concepts: what is living heritage and what is teaching with living heritage in schools. Modules 2–4 guide the participant through the six steps of the methodology, from exploring how to find information about ICH and work with community partners, to developing activities and assessing outcomes. The last module suggests ways to connect the methodology to the reality of different schools for a more sustainable approach. It includes, for instance, suggestions on how to teach with living heritage in a multicultural environment, how to develop partnerships (especially in the community), and how to connect this approach with existing education priorities such as GCED or ESD.

Each module is composed of three to five videos illustrated by numerous real-life examples. At the end of each module, the participants are encouraged to reflect in a short assignment. Throughout the modules, not only do the participants learn new skills, they also develop their own lesson plans or activities connected to living heritage.

The guide and online course are complemented by a set of tools: example lesson plans and suggestions on how to connect different school subjects to living heritage for inspiration, advice on how to collect information on living heritage, and links to additional resources for those who wish to deepen their understanding of specific topics.
Namhaean Byeolsin-gut: Village Shaman Ritual

HAHM Hanhee
Director, The Center for Intangible Culture Studies (CICS)

Namhaean Byeolsin-gut, a shamanic ritual of the South Sea area of Korea, is a village gut (shamanic ritual) held on the islands of Hansando, Saryangdo, Jukdo, and many other islands of the southern archipelago of the Korean peninsula. Hundreds of islands are densely located in the South Sea, with some smaller islands giving scenic views of the region. Behind the beautiful scenery, the majority of islanders depend upon fishing for their livelihoods. In recent years, island populations have decreased, with a particularly sharp decline among younger generations aged between twenty and forty. As a result, difficulties in the economic, social, and cultural situations of the islands have become more pronounced.

Those that have stayed on the islands have maintained a close-knit community due to the ecological and environmental conditions. They have preserved their economic, social, and cultural life while placing importance on cooperation. The village gut has traditionally been regarded as a means of emphasizing the spirit of the community. However, it is rapidly disappearing and is often regarded as no more than an annual cultural event. Indeed, the village gut would have disappeared entirely from several South Sea islands had it not been for strenuous efforts by the Namhaean Byeolsin-gut Preservation Society.

In order to protect the endangered Namhaean Byeolsin-gut, Jeong Yeongman, the last shaman of the gut, gathered its practitioners and performed it regularly outside the islands whose villagers no longer invited them. This gathering later developed into the preservation society. The Korean government moved to protect the gut by designating it as a national...
intangible cultural property in 1987. Gut practitioners began to be acknowledged as the holders responsible for its transmission. The preservation society, of which Jeong Yeongman is presently the leader, has twenty-one members including shamans, musicians, and dancers. When a village gut is held, they are invited to perform rituals for and with the villagers. They prepare these rituals with the spirit of reverence.

The gut is a village ceremony held between the first and full moon of the Lunar New Year to pray for good fishing and the wellbeing of villagers. The situation varies from village to village, but usually it is held every two or three years. In the past, South Sea islanders used to hold Byeolsin-gut every ten years. In 2020 the decennial ceremony was held just before the outbreak of COVID-19. Had the gut not been held that year, the Neuryang villagers would have had to wait another ten years. The reason the gut is held only every few years is due to the economic peril of the South Sea islanders. To put on the gut, the village has to raise money for the ceremony. The majority of villagers contribute time and labor as money, though the donation is their free choice.

Members of the Namhaean Byeolsin-gut Preservation Society and main shaman (dojangsusa) Jeong Yeongman © Hanhee Hahn

In the past, South Sea islanders used to hold Byeolsin-gut on a regular basis. It was a ceremony that instilled a sense of community among the islanders, a way of giving thanks, wishing for the avoidance of risk, and serving communal purposes. But in recent years, it has become an increasingly rare practice. There are many reasons for this, such as the spread of Christianity, population decline, and economic burden. Accordingly, the Byeolsin-gut Preservation Society has seen its role and activities diminished. In response to these changes, the preservation society has made efforts to rescue the gut as act of a community faith and to persuade islanders to continue it as a village ritual. In addition, they have introduced the gut to cities as a folk art, performing it at city festivals for the benefit of the many attendees. For older city-dwellers, watching the gut makes them nostalgic for a lost culture, which broadens the scope of the preservation society’s role and activity.

Jeong Yeongman has been working hard toward the sustainability of gut: “I worry more than anyone else about the continuity of gut. My family has kept the gut alive for four hundred years and without that it would be extinct.” Other members of the preservation society also expressed their concerns regarding the future direction of the gut. “I don’t think it’s possible to save gut in this cultural environment, even if it’s subsidized by the government. After all, what we need now is a way to overcome the negative image of gut. With the start of westernized education, people came to think of gut as an element of an anachronistic culture and considered it as negative superstition. I think if we study how to put it back in place and practice it actively, gut can live, not relying on governments and preservation policy,” said preservation society member Yi HW.

On the surface, Jukdo gut is still alive. We can see the great care and sincerity of the elderly villagers in trying to preserve the spiritual ritual of the shaman and preservation society members. However, as shaman Jeong points out, “We are still alive but barely holding our heads above water, working hard to avoid drowning.” Fortunately, the preservation society has recently recruited younger members to practice a new direction, creating a children’s play version and educating young people about gut. In addition, they participate in various cultural events to promote the Namhaean Byeolsin-gut. From this point of view, there seems to be hope for the future of gut. However, the reality is a bit more complicated as there are still many negative connotations to the rituals. Although no one knows if or when the gut may submerge completely into the murky depths of industry-driven capitalism and urbanization in Korea, the preservation society members believe it is their responsibility to safeguard the gut heritage from total disappearance.
When we were young, we were told a lot of stories. Everyone hated the big, vicious, evil, and cunning animals. However, seen through grown-up eyes, there are no bad animals in the world. Animals personified in stories convey a message to the human world—that of peace and harmony. At a time when a message of peace is desperately needed, let's enjoy some stories featuring various animals, from tigers to birds, rabbits, monkeys, and more.
the founder of Hubaekje, Gyeon Hwon, when he was a mere ically guardians of national founders. One such tale features In Korean folklore, tigers are depicted as heroes and specif and heroic deeds Guardians of filial piety, repayment of favors, and heroes of the mountain deur, and dignity, tigers were also known as lords, spirits, gods proportions, tigers lurk slowly then pounce on their prey with again and again for three years after that. The tiger then carried Park safely all the way to the site, and father’s grave, the tiger gestured for him to ride on its back. Park visited his father’s grave every day. One day, when he was deeply devoted to his parents; after his father passed away, toiling in the fields, his mother left him at the base of a baby swaddled in cloth. One day, while Gyeon Hwon’s father was toiling in the fields, his mother left him at the base of a tree in order to deliver food to his father. When she returned, she witnessed a tiger feeding her baby with its own milk. In this tale, the tiger is depicted as a sacred animal that recognized the strong character of Gyeon Hwon, who proved go on to found the kingdom of Hubaekje. Tigers are also said to have eagerly helped other national founders such as Wang Geon of Goryeo and Yi Seong-gye of Joseon. Korea, the Land of the Tiger 

CHEON Jeong 
Former General Director, The National Folk Museum of Korea

Mountain lords and subjects of awe

Like the Chinese dragon, the Indian elephant, and the Egyptian lion, the animal that symbolizes Korea is the tiger. As such, tigers constitute a ubiquitous motif throughout the traditional culture of Korea, the so-called “land of tigers.” The Korean Peninsula became known as such as it largely embodied the wise, proud, and witty aspects and nature of divine, humorous, and humane beings. These familiar and Korea, the Land of the Tiger

resulted in an increase of misfortunes, the tiger often represents the mountain god into a fire. Meanwhile, in paintings depicting tigers and humans together, the tiger often represents the mountain god in itself or a messenger of the mountain god.

Tigers ward off misfortune and invite good fortune

Images made by drawing or embroidering on a tiger hide serve both decorative and evil-warding purposes. People in the past treasured such items, believing that possessing a tiger hide or a tiger hide painting would stop mischievous spirits from intruding and allow the owner to serve as an official for a long time. In a similar manner, draping a blanket embroidered with a tiger motif on the roof of a bride’s wedding palanquin was thought to ward off mischievous spirits. As living tigers fought off such spirits with overwhelming power and ferocity, even a part of their body was thought to have the ability to combat various evil influences. As such, people crafted items such as ornaments, tassels, and designs out of the fur, bones, whiskers, teeth, and claws of tigers. In this regard, tigers were guardian deities who protected people’s health and wellbeing in everyday life.

Tigers embody the wise, proud, and witty nature of Korean people

Today, there are no tigers in the wild in Korea. However, the historical and cultural motif of tigers that formed over time continues to influence our lives in significant ways. Tigers are sometimes seen as violent beasts that bring catastrophe, but they were also worshiped as divine creatures with the power to fight off evil spirits. Depending on the tale, they were depicted as courteous animals who knew how to repay favors, or as dim-witted creatures who could be easily fooled. Our ancestors admired, hated, revered, and revered tigers, all at the same time. However, tigers in Korean folklore are never evil or malicious, instead being portrayed as dignified, divine, humorous, and humane beings. These familiar and compassionate aspects form the Korean motif of tigers, which embody the wise, proud, and witty aspects and nature of Korean people.
Role of the Tiger in Mongolian Oral Tradition

Saruel Arslan
Specialist, Division of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, National Center for Cultural Heritage of Mongolia

According to the Mongolian astrological calendar, as well as in other Asian countries, this year is the Year of the Tiger. As well as a year, the third of the twelve animals of lunar astrology is also marked with the day of the tiger (the day of the conquest of the tiger), the month of the tiger (the first month of spring), and the tiger hours of the day (3:40 a.m. to 5:40 a.m.). Mongolians teach that, “If you do not get up with tiger [i.e., during the tiger hours], then the day will be late. If you do not study in young age, then growing up will be late.” The tiger is also one of the eight cardinal directions on the map of Mongolia, representing northeast. This corresponds with the octagonal shape of a yurt, on which homeowners place the appropriate symbols depending on the direction of each face.

There are no tigers in Mongolia; however, the animal has long been known and portrayed by the Mongols. There is an abundance of tales and mythology about tigers, and even evidence of awareness in images in rock paintings, architectural ornaments, and folk games since ancient times. Rock art is one of the most recognizable cultures of Mongolia, seen, for example, in the rock art complex in the Mongolian Altai mountains, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are only five Stone Age Paleolithic petroglyphs in Mongolia, one of which on the Ikh Tolgii rock features a tiger. For this reason, it was concluded that tigers lived in Mongolia during the Paleolithic period. It is also unique in that it gives a very clear image of tigers.

Traditionally, Mongolians viewed the tiger as a symbol of confidence, power, and strength. Since ancient times, the Mongols have called the dragon, Garuda, lion, and tiger the four powers and dignities of the world. Two of the four dignities—dragon and Garuda—are celestial beings of the “sky world,” while the other two—lion and tiger—are earthly beings of the “land world.” It is said that the four powers of heaven and earth unite in four directions. In legends, tales, and old sayings, wrestlers are often compared to tigers, those with powerful limbs being described as having “tiger feet.”

There are many proverbs and sayings associated with tigers. Some examples are: “Golden wine in the mouth is like falling into the mouth of a tiger” (from the Chronicle of the Nine Knights of Genghis Khan, which discusses the dangers of alcohol); “It is better to be the head of a fly than to be the tail of a tiger” (that is, it is better to be independent than to be carried by someone else); “To take meat from the mouth of a tiger and to take from the hands of a rich man is the same”; “It is better to tame the tiger cub before it becomes a tiger” (that is, it is better to correct problems before they become too large, and prematurely suppress danger, for example administer early cures); “Put your hand in the mouth of a mad tiger” describes the age of stupid excitement, when people are young, strong, courageous, and unafraid of danger; “Eats like a tiger, acts like a stubborn bull” describes a person who does a bad job, and is helpless and lazy. “It is better to be magpies sitting in a row” illustrates the value of unity, collective strength, and friendship; “Even a tiger from the snowy mountains falls into the mouth of ants” (that is, even the strongest are fall to the bottom or lose strength in old age); “Running from the mouth of the wolf to fall into the mouth of the tiger” (that is, running away from one danger only to face a greater danger).

Many tales and myths about tigers are still told among the Mongols. The most famous is the legend of Dugar Knight Gandhi Bandida, the man who brought Buddhism to Khalkha (Kalka) Mongolia and Tibet and whose name is immortalized in the history of Asia, from Altai to Khyanggan and Lake Baikal. Some doors of Lhasa temples are decorated with snow-covered blue mountain lions (the legendary lion is depicted in many paintings in the form of a tiger), while in Mongolia the image of the Dugar Knight on a white camel is still preserved in the earliest known Buddhist monastery, Erdenezuu.

The tiger appears in many Mongolian folk tales, such as “How the tiger became striped,” “Barkhaadai and Turkhaadai,” “The cat and the tiger,” and “The old man and the tiger.” In one fairy tale, the tiger was the third year of the twelve-year calendar and was confident that no one could keep up with his speed and strength in the legendary twelve-year race. But when he crossed the river and thought he had won the race, he found the mouse had in fact won with his cunning and cleverness. The industrious cow had also already crossed, meaning the tiger actually came in third. “Traditional knowledge of observing natural surroundings and earth,” registered in the National Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mongolia, is a concept that the Mongols have used since ancient times to conquer the highlands of Central Asia and unite the forests, steppes, and deserts of the Gobi. They developed knowledge of observing nature—sky, land, and water—as well as how to analyze human nature, character, and movement. This knowledge, which was transmitted among the populace through oral expression and tradition, was tested in practice and further developed and proven in life. The legend of Ikh Khuree, the city that evolved to become Ulaanbaatar, the capital of modern Mongolia, tells that the city was founded by knowledgeable men on a specially designated place; this place, which is said to be “as auspicious as the stomach of a hungry tiger,” is inhabited by both people and animals.

Today, ICH is understood as a set of historical elements that contain traces of the past, and is increasingly considered a historical resource that enriches human life. Its richness and value are recognized and cherished.
Living with Animals in Harmony

Monalisa Maharjan
Researcher, University of Heidelberg

People around the world have a natural fondness for stories. Many cultures use storytelling as a way to pass on information, traditions, and knowledge to the younger generations. Most of these stories are transmitted via word of mouth.

Kathmandu Valley is filled with many stories, which are told in homes, villages, and during rituals. Humans don’t always play a central role in these tales. Many of the animals in the stories are normal animals found in our environment, although some are mythical. Many of these animals are even given the status of deities and are worshipped by the people.

The origin of the Kathmandu Valley itself has an interesting story. Thousands of years back when the valley was filled with water, making it a huge lake, a bodhisattva named Manjushree arrived from Tibet and saw a light in the middle of the lake emanating from a lotus. In order to get to the lotus, he used his sword to cut a gorge into one of the hills, which people believe is the southern hill named Chouvār, thus allowing the water to drain out of the valley. The temple Swyambhunath was built on the spot where the lotus came to rest.

In the process, however, many water-dwelling beings lost their home. As homage to the creatures—mostly snakes—they are still represented in almost all temples, water fountains, wells, and even homes in the region. Many people still believe that the worship of snakes in houses is a mark of respect to the animal for having occupied its former home. The stories tell that one particular snake refused to leave when the lake was drained, so he was placed in Taudaha, one of the remaining lakes within the valley. That lake, whose name translates as “snake lake,” is still believed to be the snake’s home.

Many ponds and lakes within Kathmandu Valley share the symbolic representation of the snake and stories behind it. In addition, the ancient waterspouts that are ubiquitous throughout the valley have the iconography of many water animals such as the frog, crocodile, fish, and also mythical creatures.

Animals have a very close relationship with the cultural heritage of Nepal. Most temples are decorated with stone statues of elephants, lions, or mythical creatures guarding the temples and deities. In festivals, animal stories are reenacted. During Indra Jatra, one of the festivals of Kathmandu, an elephant made of bamboo mat roams anxiously. Two people are inside the structure controlling its movement, while one other guides the elephant. According to oral stories, the elephant belonged to the god Indra, who came to steal flowers on earth. When Indra was caught and tied to a pole, the elephant wandered aimlessly looking for its master. As a representation of the anxious animal, the people inside the bamboo elephant act in an uncontrollable manner during the festival.

The stories of animals are not just limited to acting as entertainment during festivals and providing the aesthetic beauty for temple decorations. The animals are themselves treated as deities. One of the very famous temples in the city of Kirtipur has a deity named Bhag Bhairav; a tiger. The worship of tigers as deities of course has an associated story. In the distant past, a group of children were grazing cattle in the grassland. To entertain themselves they decided to make a tiger out of clay. To make the tiger’s tongue they went to find a leaf. However, when they came back, they saw blood in the statue’s mouth, and their cattle were nowhere to be found. From then on, people started to worship stone tigers as Bhairav. The main statue inside the temple of Kirtipur is a stone tiger covered with silver, but without a tongue. Locals tell that the original was made of clay and is still kept safe somewhere. It is forbidden to take pictures of the statue, which attracts many locals and visitors from all over the valley.

Another point of interest is that many deities used animals as vehicles to move around. So, depending on the deity, many temples are also decorated with these animal “vehicles.” Each one of these animals also has a story attached to it. Many of the animals found in the environment also have connections and stories that are told in everyday life.

Creatures that live in close harmony with humans, such as crows, dogs, cows and oxen, frogs, and more, feature in many mythical stories that are strengthened with yearly worship on specific days.

Even though many animals are not worshipped, their place in human life is clearly visible. As humans, we all love stories, and our shared spaces have stories to tell. In all traditional houses in the region, it’s possible to see many small holes, which have been left intentionally. These are for sparrows and pigeons, so that when we are reincarnated as these birds, we will still have homes. Though these structures are becoming increasingly less common, many people still feed birds and put out water for them in temples with the same belief.

Even though many of the stories are related to religious piety, merit, and good karma, the underlying message of these stories is that as humans we share this earth with other living beings, and that sharing is necessary for the normal functioning of the environment. While many of the characters from these stories are manifested in the form of statues in streets, narrow alleys, temples, and courtyards, many more are in the memories of people, which come out in the form of stories.
The Four Noble Friends (thuen-pa pun-zhi)

Yeshi Lhendup
Senior Research Librarian, National Library and Archives of Bhutan

The next day, everyone gathered near a giant banyan tree (Ficus benghalensis). For the test, the partridge prompted his friends, “Look at this tree,” and asked, “Which of us saw the tree first?” The elephant answered, “When I was small and lived with my mother’s herd, I saw the tree, and it was just as big as I am.” The monkey followed his giant friend and said, “I also saw the tree, and it was as big as my body.” And the rabbit said, “I saw the tree as a sapling with only two tender leaves, and I licked the dew drops off those freshly grown leaves.”

After hearing these coincidences, the animals other than the partridge acknowledged the hierarchy of age. But surprisingly, the partridge, though the smallest, said, “I am the one who nibbled the juicy banyan fruit, and this is the tree that grew from the seed I left on the ground.” Knowing who was the eldest among them, the elephant paid respect to his three other friends; similarly, the monkey honored the rabbit and the partridge; and the rabbit honored the partridge because he was the eldest and most senior among them. After that, the eldest got the first part of the food they found, with each animal then taking its turn, maintaining the age hierarchy. When they went on perilous journeys, the youngest carried the elder, the monkey carried the rabbit and so on, with the partridge ultimately enjoying the privilege of reserving the highest seat. On another occasion, the members discussed whether they should, besides respecting themselves, try to do at least some virtuous deeds. The partridge voluntarily stood up and suggested, “Until now, we have intentionally or unintentionally fed on the lives of other animals. Being a predator is an unvirtuous act, so let’s cultivate and be herbivores.” Immediately, the others spoke up. “Although we can avoid taking life, we sometimes feed on what is not really ours. This is an act of possession that is not granted or by permission, so from now on we will not commit ourselves to consume anything that is not given or offered.” They then agreed not to be possessed of food, sexual misconduct, and untruthfulness, and also to renounce the consumption of intoxicants, especially alcohol.

The four friends committed themselves to the Basic Five Virtues Law they imposed on each other. One day, the eldest friend, the partridge, asked the rest of his friends, “Let’s make our friends besides ourselves abide by our rules—who among us can bring their friends under this law?” The monkey replied, “I can make all my fellows abide.” Similarly, the rabbit and the elephant also assured the others that their friends would follow the rules. Gradually, all the animals came to obey the fundamental law, which led to a spell of favorable weather that not only brought abundant fruit and harvests to the animal world but also enabled humankind to live in harmony.

The King, fascinated by the unusual, auspicious signs, called his queens, ministers, young men, and merchants to inquire about the cause of this good luck, but no one could give an answer. One day, the King met a hermit who lived in the seclusion of the forest and could predict everything, and asked him the same question. The hermit said, “All these auspicious signs are due to the virtuous behavior of the animals that live in your forest.” Although the King was surprised by this news and wanted to see the animals, the hermit urged him to make his countrymen obey the law of animals: not to kill, not to steal, not to commit misconduct, not to be dishonest, and not to engage in the consumption of intoxicants.

As advised, the King instructed all his citizens to obey the law, which had originally been established by the four noble animal friends. Finally, the King, the people, and the animals experienced an unbreakable peace, tranquility, and blissful life in the present, which they continued to enjoy even as heavenly beings after their deaths.

In order to obtain their blessings, attract good fortune, and remember the rules of good conduct set by the four noble friends, many people, especially Buddhists, like to use the symbols of these animals in their homes, schools, and also in most religious institutions.
The arrival of a newborn baby is cause for great joy, particularly for a newly wedded couple if it is their first child. In traditional Fijian society, when a married woman was expecting, her husband and his kin would plant *iota* (yams), a root crop known as *dalo* (*Colocasia esculenta*), and stock pigs in pens. The matriarchs from both the man’s and woman’s sides would also begin weaving new mats in anticipation of the birth. In the past, marriage was a decision made carefully, based on kinship connections and traditional alliances, because the shared commonalities facilitated collaboration on both sides.

When a newly wedded woman was expecting a child, there were responsibilities borne by all in preparing items including staple foods, herbal concoctions, mats, scented body oil, and tapa cloth. There would be a lot of excitement and anticipation on both sides, and an air of friendly competition as to who could outdo the other in terms of the best and the most offerings.

Leading up to the final trimester, an expectant mother would be relieved of certain chores that were believed to impede delivery. These mostly included strenuous activities that involved continuous standing or sitting. Senior matriarchs would also begin to monitor the diet of the expectant mother, advising of certain foods to avoid and ones to prioritize.

Prior to the construction of modern hospitals, delivery in villages was handled by traditional midwives known as *vunikalou* (spirit trees) or *yalewa vuku* (wise maidens). They were approached and on hand when labor contractions were expected. These *vunikalou* had diverse knowledge about herbal medicines to administer to the mother during and after pregnancy.

Elderly matriarchs would also be on hand to administer to the expectant mother’s needs, taking care of tasks like washing, cooking, and cleaning. The sleeping area would be cordoned off with a huge *taunamu* or wall-length tapa as traditional Fijian houses do not have separate rooms. Tradition has it that mother...
and newborn baby must not emerge from behind this screen until the end of the fourth night. This was due to the belief that a newborn baby was very vulnerable and sensitive, and could succumb to certain “bad airs.” This was how contagious airborne infection was understood in the indigenous mind. Males too were forbidden from entering the residence where mother and newborn were until after the fourth day, otherwise they would be dealt a traditional punishment called ore by the matriarchs. However, young men, the baby’s father and other menfolk, would intentionally violate the rules as an excuse for them to bear the burden of the “punishment.” This was their indirect way of showing their affection and pride regarding the arrival of the newborn baby. They would take a day or so to prepare their “punishment tokens,” which could be cooked fish, or dalo, fruits, vakalolo (grated starch with sweetened, caramelized coconut milk), cigarettes, and so on, for the matriarchs’ enjoyment, served in the home.

When a baby is born, it was traditionally the responsibility of the baby’s father’s kin to relay the message to the baby’s susu or maternal kin. A whale’s tooth would be presented to relay the joyful news. During the first four nights of the baby’s life, kin from both the mother’s and father’s sides would present raw dalo, freshly woven baby mats, oil, brooms, and tapa cloth. The dalo presentation is called drekeba (stress on the final syllable). The boiled dalo stalk was the primary meal of the new mother as it was believed it improved lactation. The mats were gifts for the matriarchs serving in the household. This occasion was called roqoroqo, meaning “to carry.” When the women arrived (no males were yet allowed in, although they still entered in their eagerness to receive their “punishment,” as described above), they sang meke and folk songs. The matriarchs serving in the house entertained the roqoroqo parties and there would be much joy. The loud noise and merrymaking was said to make the newborn begin to understand in their spiritual mind and heart that there was a large family waiting for them, ready to support in their rearing. In other words, this is the indigenous iTaukei equivalent of the saying that it takes a village to raise a child. This gathering, singing, and noise-making was the actual roqoroqo or baby shower. There was no actual carrying and kissing of the newborn baby until after the fourth night, as it was believed the baby was still spiritually and physically vulnerable to all sorts of “bad airs” and malevolence. On the fourth day, the baby’s paternal kin would prepare a feast called vakatunudra (warming the blood) for the village to enjoy.

The serving matriarchs took turns in carrying the baby as the mother recovered. The one on whom the baby’s umbilical cord fell would be the one to provide the four-night feast. This role was quietly contested as each matriarch was eager to show their affection and home network support.

When the fourth night celebration was over, the newborn baby’s paternal kin would present gifts of food and tapa to the matriarchs to acknowledge and repay them for their time and willingness. The new mother continued to be served by a single matriarch, or she could choose to go to her side of the family until the baby was a few months old.

Much has changed from the original notion of roqoroqo or baby showers. Today, babies are born in hospitals and the ceremonies, pomp, and jovial camaraderie between kinsfolk is diminishing. A version of it exists though in the modern scenes of visitation to a newborn baby’s family with modern gifts for both baby and mother.
The decorative and applied art of any country is diverse and multifaceted, remaining a connecting thread between the past and the present, while reflecting the strict adherence of the peoples to the ancient culture of their ancestors. One of the most ancient types of decorative and applied art of the Turkmen people is embroidery, which occupies a special place in the decoration of traditional clothing of both women and men. Embroidery is connected with its theme, symbolism with the ancient history of Turkmenistan, with all the civilizations that have passed through this land.

Since ancient times, women have been engaged in the art of embroidery in Turkmen society. At the same time, the main secrets of embroidery technology were carefully passed down from generation to generation, from mother to daughter. Young girls began to master this art from childhood. They studied the craft, learned how to choose the right fabrics, practiced the selection of colors and threads, and created new details and elements of the national costume. Traditionally, Turkmen girls themselves prepared the marriage set—dresses, robes, tahya hats and headscarves, richly decorated with beautiful embroidery, in line with national tastes and traditional requirements.

Turkmen craftswomen have always created embroidery with their own hands, producing pieces to be located on the collar, chest, sleeves, and side slits of clothing. Each pattern was invented individually, eventually seeing the development of new patterns and ornaments. As intriguing an activity as embroidery is, it is also at the same time very time-consuming and painstaking work that requires patience and time. Skillfully welding one small needle, the embroidery masters of the past created a whole world of patterns, embodying in them high love and aspirations. In turn, the art of embroidery had a beneficial effect on the mental ability of the masters; during the process of embroidery, women and girls thought about important plans, dreamed of the future, and, most importantly, brought themselves into mental balance. Through embroidery, they demonstrated their creative ideas and skills. As an integral part of the national dress, Turkmen embroidery emphasizes the originality of cultural heritage. Embroidery pieces have served as illustrations to epic narratives that reflect the nature of the various regions of country as well as the history, culture, and way of life of the Turkmen people. At the same time, Turkmen embroiderers have their own distinctive features: they are peculiar in technique and the character of the ornament. The uniqueness of Turkmen embroidery is also in the harmonious combination of patterns and colors, the variety of subjects depicted, and the creative vision of the embroiderer’s surrounding world. In different parts of Turkmenistan, masters use different embroidery techniques, each of them trying to make their work unique and of high quality. The most common and characteristic variations are the three main types of seams: akgayma, kojeme, and ilme. Each of these seams are widely used by certain groups. For example, the akgayma seam is widely distributed among the population of the Akhal and Mary velayats (regions) and is used mainly for embroidery of women's clothing, men's skullcaps, and dressing gowns; the same seam is sewn on the collar of dresses and men's shirts. The kojeme seam, meanwhile, is widespread among the population of the Dashoguz and Balkan velayats, although it can be found in all regions of the country. Ilme is more common in the western and northern regions.

The traditional Turkmen embroidery techniques, as well as carpet weaving techniques, provide extremely interesting material in studying the ethnogenesis of the people. The famous Russian scientist, ethnographer G. P. Vasilyeva, writes that, “the technique of embroidery ‘kojeme’ which is now widespread in most of the territory of Turkmenistan, is almost not found among other peoples of Central Asia, with the exception of the southern Kyrgyz and occasionally among the Karakalpaks. Outside of Central Asia, such a seam exists in the southwestern Bashkiris and, apparently, in the Yakuts, i.e. among peoples geographically distant from each other, which excludes the possibility of cultural borrowing and suggests a common ethnic component in the composition of these peoples.” This hypothesis once again confirms the early ethnic ties of the Turkmens with the peoples of the Turkic-speaking world of Asia.

Currently, the best examples of Turkmen embroidery are kept in the national museums of Turkmenistan, hardly anywhere in the world can you find such unique pieces. Most of them belong to the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries; however, if you look at the uniqueness of the clothing of those times, it becomes clear that embroidery, as a traditional art, existed on the territory of Turkmenistan in an earlier period of history.

Based on the above information, it can be concluded that the ancient lands of the Turkmen people served as one of the early centers of cultural civilization. Excavations of ancient settlements, uncovering artifacts from the heyday of various epochs, allow us to study the wonderful world of material culture—a unique layer of the richest heritage of the Turkmen people, where the highest art of embroidery occupies a special place.

The development of Turkmenistan’s light industry over the past thirty years of independence has given impetus to the flourishing of this unique art, as a result of which, today, the best examples of elegant Turkmen embroidery are actively demonstrated at major international exhibitions and fashion shows.

The world is changing, and fashion is changing with it. At the same time, Turkmen designers are trying to preserve and enrich traditional clothing with their new brands, thereby emphasizing the splendor and variability of Turkmen national embroidery, which is recognizable in almost every outfit. Using new fabrics, changing the cut, adding their own touches to this art, the designers of Turkmenistan fully adhere to the general principles and preserve the beautiful embroidery—a symbol of the wealth of national art.

NOTE
1. G. P. Vasilyeva, “Species of the women’s folk arts of Turkmen (their role in interethnic contacts),” Journal of Ethnographic Review, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The author generalizes data on the folk arts that she collected during her expeditions to Turkmenia in the 1940s.
from early on in her life, Shyam Badan Shrestha was an inquisitive child, always eager to learn new skills. She became a science teacher in 1968 and, as part of her extracurricular activities, she taught craft skills to the children. Browsing through the school library one day, Shyam stumbled on a macramé book and eventually taught herself to produce knot craft items. She later introduced the craft to the Nepalese marketplace after she left the teaching profession in 1986. Her continued interest in macramé blossomed into an enterprise, the Nepal Knotcraft Centre. Thanks to her passion, macramé became a popular craft in Kathmandu during that time.

In the 1990s a trade embargo was imposed between Nepal and India. For thirteen months, imported cotton cording used for macramé production was unavailable. Not to be deterred, Shyam searched for a local substitute to continue her interest beyond macramé. Shyam continued to explore local skills and native plant fibers in different communities and studied the local techniques of weaving, knotting, and coiling. She was particularly inspired by women from the hillside in Kathmandu who wove sukul mats from rice straw to cover mud floors. Rice mats are thin and easily collect dust. They also wear out faster. Rice straw is also valuable as animal feed. In comparison, Shyam realized that the Newar counter-twine method of mat-making was more durable; the material is thicker and very compatible with other forms of fiber like cardamom, papyrus, and cattail, all agricultural waste materials. Shyam could foresee the practical and economic advantages to the community that would come from introducing counter-twine weaving. Collective innovation would increase weaving skills, add value to their product, recycle agricultural waste, and advance weaving to a higher level that would generate more income.

Counter-twine weaving is well known in the contemporary world. Convinced that this innovation would be a great benefit, in 2000 Shyam organized a skills training program in one of the villages in the Terai. She taught women how to counter-twine weave to make sukuls. Women in the Terai region make local mats called chatai using papyrus plants, known locally as puter. This plant is found on marshy land and river banks. The fiber is soft and long, meaning the weaving process is quicker and the product softer and smoother. Transferring the relevant skills to communities was challenging, but the practice slowly spread to many villages and people started valuing the new ideas and skills. Today, this skill contributes a significant portion of income in many village households.

Growing interest in craft revival initiatives were helping village women to contribute to family income. Shyam was well prepared and fully motivated to participate in this movement to recognize the role women play in the world economy. She discovered massive amounts of cardamom in the mountains and experimented with the material for weaving and found that it was an excellent fiber to use for many products. In 2007 she taught the Newari skill to women in Dhankuta, Taplejung, and Lambung, the hill districts of Nepal. Here, the farmers produce tons of cardamom as spice for export to other countries. Previously, the seemingly valueless agricultural waste would be thrown in the river, where it would rot slowly. Now utilitarian products are made with the plant. For many groups, this discovery opened pathways to income-generation activities and related environmentally friendly enterprises.

Recycling not only gives value to agricultural waste, it creates enterprises that are sustainable as long as markets, technology, and designs go hand in hand with development. Weaving is not just an activity, it’s a cultural and traditional part of village life that needs to transition to the realities of a competitive world in order to survive. Without awareness of market and design trends, sustainability is threatened. Shyam’s craft training and promotion included the importance of sustainability and stressed that crafts “are a major form of cultural identity.” The transfer of Newari counter-twine weaving using different raw materials found in Nepali villages has contributed to increased income; now this technique is acknowledged in the countryside as the ‘Kathmandu weave.”

The current international cross-cultural appreciation for women products represents a huge opportunity for Nepal to show the world how talented and resourceful its village women are. Weaving has great potential to enhance the rural economy and to empower women to take their place in business, design, and technical innovation. Kathmandu weave has created a strong relationship between nature, culture, and Nepali communities.
2022 Korean UNESCO Category 2 Centres Network Meeting Held

On 2 March 2022, the UNESCO Category 2 Centres Network Meeting was held, led by the International Centre for Water Security and Sustainable Management under the auspices of UNESCO (i-WSSM). Around thirty people from six Category 2 centres in Korea and the Korean National Commission for UNESCO participated in the meeting.

Category 2 centres are international organizations established under the agreement between the Korean government and UNESCO, providing expertise for the implementation of UNESCO values in the fields of education, science, culture, humanities, social sciences, and communication while strengthening the capacity of member states. Alongside ICHCAP and i-WSSM, the other Category 2 centres located in Korea are the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), the International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement (ICM), the International Centre for Documentary Heritage (ICDH), and the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of the World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC).

The meeting ended with the hope that UNESCO Category 2 centres, gathered under the core values pursued by UNESCO, would achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and hold offline meetings once the COVID-19 situation has abated sufficiently.

WHIPIC Established with ICHCAP Assistance

In January 2022, the International Center for the Interpretation and Presentation of the World Heritage Sites under the auspices of UNESCO (WHIPIC), a UNESCO Category 2 Centre, was officially established in Korea. WHIPIC is an organization jointly established by UNESCO and the Korean government to discover various meanings and values of world heritage and understand them comprehensively. WHIPIC is the only UNESCO organization in the world that specializes in interpreting and presenting World Heritage sites, as such, experts around the world have high expectations.

WHIPIC played a major role in preparing for the establishment of WHIPIC. ICHCAP has become an incubating institution for establishing the WHIPIC corporation and organization. The preparatory office moved to Boram-dong, Sejong’s administrative complex, in December 2020 and was officially opened. The preparatory office was established to raise international awareness of heritage, region-building strategies, research, and various projects to lay the foundation for world heritage interpretation and presentation. A total of fifteen projects for world heritage interpretation and presentation. A total of fifteen projects were presented under the themes of “Heritage Places and Memory.” In addition, WHIPIC expanded its network by strengthening cooperation in related fields both internally and externally.

This year, as the first year of its establishment, WHIPIC plans to operate various projects to lay the foundation for world heritage interpretation and presentation. A total of fifteen projects will include theoretical research to establish concepts and terms for world heritage interpretation, study on dissonant heritage, regional capacity-building strategies, research, and various projects to lay the foundation for world heritage interpretation and presentation. A total of fifteen projects will include theoretical research to establish concepts and terms for world heritage interpretation, study on dissonant heritage, regional capacity-building strategies, research, and workshops. In addition, there will be an inaugural ceremony and governing board meeting, and the organization will also conduct various promotional activities to announce the launch of WHIPIC internationally. WHIPIC members are striving to demonstrate intellectual leadership in the field of world heritage interpretation, which is increasing in interest and demand worldwide.
Join the First UNESCO Massive Open Online Course on Living Heritage and Sustainable Development

By taking this course, you can gain a better understanding of intangible cultural heritage and its relationships with sustainable development, exploring examples and experiences of communities from all around the world!

The course is developed by UNESCO in collaboration with the International Information and Networking Centre in Asia and the Pacific under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP) and the SDG Academy

Free Enrollment Here!

www.edx.org/course/living-heritage-and-sustainable-development

(c) IPHAN (c) Jeju Haenyeo Museum (c) CNRPAH