Official Signing between Republic of Korea and UNESCO for New ICH Category 2 Centre in Korea

A signing ceremony and congratulatory banquet on the occasion of the UNESCO approval of the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO was held at the Grand Hilton Hotel Convention Centre on 3 November 2009 in conjunction with the International Conference on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Representing UNESCO at the signing ceremony, Cécile Duvelle, Section Chief of the UNESCO Division of Cultural Objects and Intangible Heritage presented the agreement between UNESCO and the Republic of Korea already signed by the UNESCO Director-General. Yi, Kun Moo, Administrator of the Korea Cultural Heritage Administration concluded the agreement at the ceremony signing in front of the invited guests from over fifteen counties. The newly approved centre will be the first UNESCO category 2 centre in the field of culture in the Republic of Korea.

With this agreement, it is expected that the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea and ICHCAP will cooperate to develop operational strategies and complete the formal and legal arrangements to fully establish the centre within 2010.

CONTENTS
ICH Issues ................................. 01
Director’s Note ........................... 02
Expert Remarks .......................... 03
Windows to ICH .......................... 04
Field Report ............................... 08
Inventory Making Efforts ............... 10
ICHCAP Inside ............................ 12
Safeguarding Pioneers ................. 14
ICH News Briefs ......................... 15

Applying Information and Networking to the Safeguarding of ICH

The International Conference on ICH Safeguarding in Seoul

The International Conference on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage took place at the Grand Hilton Hotel Convention Center in Seoul on 3-4 November 2009. The conference was organised by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP) under sponsorship of the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea.

The goals of the conference were to promote dialogue and discussion around strategies for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and the issues being confronted in the search for solutions. More specifically, the conference aimed to develop practical methods of applying information and networking to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the Asia and the Pacific region, as well as generate ideas about facilitating regional cooperation, to give direction to the newly approved UNESCO category 2 centre in Korea.

The theme of the conference was How to Apply Information and Networking to the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Keynote speakers were Cécile Duvelle, UNESCO Chief of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, and Seong-Yong Park, Executive Director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific.

The conference was divided into three sessions over the two days that addressed international cooperation in the context of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, establishing ICH information systems and information sharing, and the construction of a cooperative network for the safeguarding of ICH. The conference brought together 22 experts in the field of intangible cultural heritage from 15 countries who participated in the three sessions as presenters and discussants.

Following the third session was a round table meeting to discuss possibilities for cooperation within the Asia-Pacific region.

During her keynote speech, Duvelle noted that the conference was a turning point upon completing the first cycle of the Convention with the recent inscriptions on the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List in Abu Dhabi the previous month. Upon reaching this milestone, she advocated for reflection on the path, and future prospects and challenges of the Convention.

The timing of the conference was significant in light of the recent UNESCO approval of the regional ICH category 2 centre for Korea, as well as the signing ceremony that was held in conjunction with the event. The conference was also meant to provide a chance to gather recommendations for the new centre. In this context, ICHCAP Executive Director Seong-Yong

(Continued on page 2)
Applying Information and Networking to the Safeguarding of ICH

(Continued from page 1)

Park helped to set the tone of the conference by outlining the vision of and strategic tasks for the new regional ICH category 2 centre in Korea in his keynote presentation.

Noriko Aikawa-Faure, Advisor to the Assistant Director-General of the Cultural Sector of UNESCO, addressed the challenges to the implementation of the 2003 Convention. She highlighted misunderstandings around the definitions and purpose of the Urgent Safeguarding List and Representative List. She also brought attention to the widespread confusion between the ICH Convention and the World Heritage Convention, stressing the need for community participation according to the parameters of the ICH Convention.

The World Heritage Convention and its influence on the ICH Convention were also touched upon by Dawnhee Yim, Professor Emeritus at Dongguk University, who called attention to the need to come out of the shadow of the legacy of the World Heritage Convention. In light of the misconceptions surrounding the ICH Convention, it was proposed that the new centre could be instrumental in helping to demystify these issues.

Within the realm of legal protection, the issue of intellectual property rights and their implication for the protection of ICH covered by Wend Wendland of the World Intellectual Property Organization invited much discussion.

The importance of placing ICH in the context of other UN initiatives was raised with several references to the role of ICH in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, and finding ways to promote ICH as a tool for sustainable development. Within this context, examples of best practices were presented such as the ecomuseum in Halong Bay in Vietnam. Related to these best practices in considering the issue of transmission, there was a call for further discussion around the issue of providing ICH educational opportunities to youth.

In terms of networking, there were also several appeals for more conferences as a way of stimulating deeper and more frequent discussion around the issues of safeguarding. Several presenters and discussants also encouraged cooperation with other regions, particularly Africa, as a way to both share solutions and expertise with and learn from the issues facing other regions.

In addition, the need for proper representation was addressed, particularly among the Pacific Island countries, who so often exist at the margins in the Asia-Pacific discourse. The importance of actively including indigenous groups in the process of safeguarding was also highlighted. Within this context of being inclusive of indigenous communities, there is a need for understanding the dynamics between these communities and their cultural heritage, that ICH is the fabric of their lives they are seamlessly integrated with. As Amareswar Galla, Professor at Queensland University and conference rapporteur described it, ICH is the way people breathe. It is about their sense of place, collective identity and cultural self-esteem of belonging to the land.

As we move forward in this mission, Galla emphasised the need for a shared understanding that this is an evolving framework, an ongoing process, and that there is no one way of dealing with the safeguarding of ICH. Within this process, it is imperative to respect multiple voices while considering the role of stakeholders as well as the viability of First Voice communities.

The necessity to engage with communities and ensure their participation in the safeguarding process was repeatedly stressed throughout the conference. Recalling the raison d’être of the ICH Convention in her closing, Duvelle framed the focus of the conference by reminding us that, after all, it is the communities who are keeping intangible cultural heritage alive and who are the keepers of the world’s cultural diversity.

 директор’s Note

this issue of the ICH Courier has a special focus on good practices of intangible heritage safeguarding, in which we introduce two institutes making significant strides in the field, the Vietnam Field School and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. Part of our mission is disseminating model practices among communities and institutes and we hope that you will be equally inspired by these cases.

In this edition of the Windows to ICH section, we take a look at intangible cultural heritage through the lens of work and labour. Through this theme, the emphasis is on community participation, an essential piece in sustaining intangible cultural heritage which has been developed within and handed down through communities. Indeed it is our hope that their role and involvement be strengthened in the ICH policies of each country for future safeguarding efforts.

In addition, this past November was a momentous month for ICHCAP, in which the agreement with UNESCO was signed for the ICH category 2 centre in the Republic of Korea, the International Conference on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was held along with the International Workshop on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage for experts and policy makers. You can read more about each of these events in this issue.

I hope you enjoy this instalment and I invite you to share with us your ideas and experience in the name of a better world for ICH.
ICH and the ‘Fingers in the Dirt’ Vietnam Field School

Amareswar Galla, PhD (Professor of Museum Studies, University of Queensland; Convener, Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity in Human Development)

One of the most challenging imperatives of the 21st Century is to bring people and their heritage together through a holistic conservation ethic. It requires a departure from the silo approaches of dealing with heritage resources along fragmented disciplines and professional lines. Sustainable heritage development means integrated engagement, in any given context, with the sum of all the heritage resources - tangible and intangible; cultural and natural; movable and immovable.

In this context, intangible heritage or ICH provides the means for exploring a dynamic sense of place and cultural esteem of groups through the First Voice of the primary stakeholders playing a definitive role in informing all official, professional and community processes.

First and foremost is the understanding of safeguarding as a critical concept that is inclusive of and builds on all the earlier definitions of heritage protection. It underlines the viability of the ICH element and its organic evolution with changing times or the revitalisation of its various aspects. The associated methodologies for safeguarding are being scoped and developed through demonstration projects.

Then the integration of ICH and tangible heritage calls for understanding the complexity of different UNESCO Conventions in a comparative context. For instance, the Urgent Safeguarding List is central to the 2003 ICH Convention. This is different from placing World Heritage properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger, referred to as the Danger List. But there is confusion between the understandings of the two lists including a sense of embarrassment associated with the Danger List and thus inadvertently precluding the nominations for the Urgent Safeguarding List of the ICH Convention. Similarly while the concept of authenticity is an integral part of the World Heritage inscription process, it is contested in safeguarding dynamic and living ICH elements.

The 2003 ICH Convention is popularly called ‘the people’s convention’ or ‘the democratic convention’. It has embedded participatory democracy validating carriers and transmitters of ICH and their contextual communities as well as relevant research mechanisms and expertise.

Institutional capacity building to understand the safeguarding of ICH has only recently been recognised by several agencies. While most training programs are addressing the challenges of dealing with ICH, there is at least the international Best Practice Field School for building the competencies of heritage workers in ICH within the total context of heritage development.

The Field School covers several key themes through problem solving exercises using culture in poverty alleviation case studies in Vietnam. Safeguarding as a concept, a strategy and a process is analysed and discussed in various community and heritage contexts during the school. Integrated approaches to both intangible and tangible heritage are examined at various places. This includes various cross cutting diversity themes of gender, ethnicity, race, class, language, faith, region, economic status and so on. Millenium Development Goals and Vietnam’s rapid progress in addressing them are central to the transformative learning of the Field School.

The safeguarding of ICH is also studied in diverse World Heritage Areas using documented demonstration projects from Ha Long Bay, Hue and Hoi An. The Field School is interdisciplinary and intersectoral. It examines integrated local area planning as a framework using the case study of Hoi An World Heritage Area and the Cham Island UNESCO Biosphere reserve in the total environment of the Hoi An district and the surrounding riverine and marine hinterlands. The application of the western dichotomy of nature and culture in an Asian context is interrogated.

The 2003 ICH and the 2005 Cultural Diversity Conventions are considered twin standard setting instruments. These along with the suite of all the cultural and natural international heritage instruments of UNESCO are examined seamlessly throughout the Field School. The location of culture in sustainable development has been taken one step further with safeguarding ICH in poverty alleviation through the Cua Van Floating Cultural Centre among the fishing communities in the heart of the Ha Long Bay World Heritage Area. Ecomuseology, an Asian variation of it in many ways, provides the methodology.

A professional development initiative of the Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity in Human Development established as part of the Action Plan of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), this Field School is developed and run by a team of Vietnamese and other experts including community leaders facilitated and led by Professor Dr Amareswar Galla. For further information visit: www.pacificasiaobservatory.org.
ICH & LABOUR

Windows to ICH provides an introduction to examples of intangible cultural heritage practices from countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region related to a chosen theme. This issue looks at representations and practices in the context of work and labour. An intrinsic part of life, work is a common thread that connects every culture. In these examples of intangible cultural heritage from Uzbekistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and China, the intersections of culture and work and their influence on each other can be seen.

UZBEKISTAN  Agriculture Associated Rites in Boysun
Alisher Ikramov (Secretary-General, National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO)

Boysun district*, situated in southern Uzbekistan, has a beautiful natural landscape and is surrounded by a mountain range. The local environment and geographic isolation created favorable conditions for unique local intangible cultural heritage forms and expressions to form and be preserved over time. The same conditions also led to the existence of various types of labor activities, such as agriculture, cattle breeding and handicrafts. Local agriculture of Boysun is based on irrigation and non-irrigation farming activities. From very early on, everyday needs necessitated the development of various artisan workshops in Boysun. In this regard, metalsmithing was an essential craft for producing tools for farmers and breeders. Homemade textile manufacturing (carpet weaving, felt-making and embroidery) and leather-craft (footware) are highly developed in the Boysun district. Boysun textiles are particularly well known for their firmness and durability, and have been renowned for centuries well beyond the region. Local potteries also supplied the local population with earthenware pots, vases, and plates of unusual beauty.

The core element of indigenous rites associated with labor activities, such as first plow, harvest and crop processing, is connected with popular belief about the revival of nature, which provides the basis for well-being, prosperity and optimism among the people. Traditionally, folk songs represent the invocation of benevolence from nature and are performed by groups in recitative form in conjunction with rituals.

One of these rituals, called “Sus Hotin” (literally “the woman Sus who gives water”), illustrates one of the bright examples of the calendar rites associated with agricultural activity in spring and summer. This ritual calls for rain during a time of drought and is performed as rhythmic melodies by a group of villagers. The ritual starts with the consent of the village elders, who give their approval for the preparation and organisation of a Sus Hotin ceremony. Next, the villagers make the ritual doll which is similar to a scarecrow, and is compulsory attribute of the ceremony. On the agreed day and time, the group starts the procession, carrying the doll dressed in old woman’s clothes. The group goes from one house of the village to another while singing the ceremonial song Sus Hotin. Usually one of the participants of the group carries the doll, after whom the rest of the participants follow. Residents of the village joyfully greet the participants of the rite, pour water over the doll, give flat cakes, sweets, grain and meat, which are put into a hurjun (a special bag for keeping food). At the end of the procession, participants of the rite gather on the edge of the village to arrange a collective meal. The song of Sus Hotin starts with the refrain and is performed by a women’s chorus. It contains the hopes for good crops and wishes of happiness for everybody:

O Woman Sus, O Sultana
The woman who is subordinate to no one
May there be a rich crop, Woman Sus
May the house of peasants be full, Woman Sus
Pour streams of rain, Woman Sus

The ritual comes to an end when one of the participants throws the doll into a river or a well.

* The cultural area of Boysun District was proclaimed by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2001.

Sus Hotin Rite (Photo by SMI Group, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

Navruz folk songs during sumalak making (Photo by SMI Group, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
Within indigenous communities throughout the Philippines, traditional crafts continue to be practiced despite the limited market opportunities. In light of this situation, government and non-government institutions have taken responsibility and initiated an income assistance programme while also exploring possibilities for expanding markets for these communities.

The Non-Timber Forest Task Force (NTFTF) is a non-government organisation (NGO) that has done extensive research and field work resulting in a network of organisations who share the same idealism and objectives to protect indigenous communities from exploitation and assist them on issues of land tenure, resource management and livelihood. To ensure the practice of fair trade, the NTFTF established CustomMade, an organisation that implements the objectives of NTFTF through handicrafts produced by indigenous communities. CustomMade also focuses on capacity building that ensures product quality without sacrificing traditional systems and designs used in weaving and basketry.

An important component of Custom-Made’s policy is their commitment to environmental protection, which helps to put communities at ease regarding any intentions toward their natural resources, a common cause of suspicion toward NGOs entering indigenous communities. Gender equity is another issue emphasised due to the reality within indigenous communities where women are generally relegated to less important roles. The demand for crafts for an expanded market has given the women an important role in the production, which has resulted in more opportunities for their livelihood.

Through the work of NTFTF and its subsidiary, CustomMade, the indigenous communities involved are producing higher quality products that are highly marketable and in demand both in the Philippines and abroad.

Some examples of these products are the woven materials of the Higaonons of the northern region of Mindanao, most southeastern island in the Philippines. This indigenous community was originally divided between warrior and peaceful clans who now peacefully coexist focused on life in the forest and the production of the handwoven material, hinabol, in addition to other crafts. While the traditionally woven fabric has become a form of income, traditional needs are prioritised over commercial use. Hinabol holds a central place in Higaonon culture. Traditionally, hinabol is given as a gift at weddings, rituals and gatherings. It is also used as a peace offering in resolving conflicts.

On Mindoro island, the indigenous Mangyan produce a traditional fabric called ramit. Ramit is made by the women of the community and was traditionally woven from indigenous cotton seed materials. Women wear the ramit as a skirt with a blouse called balukas, while men wear a traditional loincloth or ba-ag. Nowadays, ramit weaving uses cotton threads obtained from commercial and industrial garment producers, mainly of jeans. This recycling of waste threads to use for weaving may not be indigenous, but the skills used in making the cloth are still indigenous. In addition to the ramit, the Mangyans also weave baskets made with buri palm leaf and nito vine strips to create specific Mangyan designs.

A province situated in southwestern Mindanao, Maguindanao is the inaul, in which the two ends of the material are sewn together to create a malong. A malong is a traditional cloth used as a skirt for women and men, that has many uses and could be compared to a sarong. There is a large demand for malong even among non-Muslims because of the rich colours and the gold threads that are incorporated into the cloth. Like the hinabol and ramit featured here, the malong has received attention from contemporary fashion designers.

These traditional fabrics have been adapted for contemporary use in clothing and accessories such as bags, home accessories, office items, belts, boxes for organisers etc. The use of this indigenous material by creative minds has resulted in a profitable fair trade indigenous production network. Which has in turn provided access to a broad world market for indigenous communities in the hinterlands, uplands and lowlands who now have gained a viable way of improving their livelihood and earning supplemental income to help pay for their children’s education.

We have to look to the UNESCO ICH Convention as a guide for the economic, social and moral sustainability of our indigenous peoples. Traditional practices should be applicable toward employment and result in poverty alleviation. Traditions are important but they should benefit the indigenous communities that practice them. Furthermore, those who produce and deliver these traditional products for general consumption should be careful not to lose the integrity of their communities. The traditional values and beliefs that are of utmost importance to their lives should remain intact, protected and preserved.
A durae is a cooperative labor organisation that was established as the culture of agriculture developed in Korea during the latter part of the Chosun dynasty when rice transplantation methods became widely implemented. Rice transplantation is simply the method of transplanting rice seedlings to a rice paddy, after first sowing them in a seedbed. By utilising this technique, the need for weeding could be reduced to only two times per year from the typical three times or more with the normal way of seeding. Work could be finished in a much shorter period by transplanting into this type of rice field filled with water.

A durae consists of 20–50 people depending on the size of the village, and at least one person per household is required to participate in the durae. The organisation of a durae consists of three members: a group leader, an officer responsible for managing the group, and a secretary who handles the expenses and finances of the rice field and wages. While the members of a durae are obligated to participate without compensation, any earnings of the group are used toward public projects for the village such as improving a road or building a bridge.

A nongak (literally “farmer’s music”) or musical percussion group is formed within the durae for better work efficiency. With the percussion group leading the way, the durae leaves the village early in the morning to start work carrying with them flags symbolising both the durae and Nongshin, the god of agriculture. As the workers’ hands become synchronised with the percussive beats and rhythms, the work becomes more efficient. The four main instruments in a nongak group are the janggo (hourglass-shaped drum), buk (barrel drum), jing (gong) and kkwaenggwari (small gong). The percussion group also acts as accompaniment to songs that the workers sing, also called nongyo.

In this way, cooperative labour combined with music and song have the effect of increasing efficiency and mental stamina to overcome the difficult labour of agricultural life. However, it is much harder to find remnants of the durae. The modernisation of agriculture has led to a decline in the need for such labour cooperatives for farming. These days, the durae, the original context for nongak and nongyo has become a thing of the past.

Nongak and nongyo are designated Important Intangible Cultural Properties in Korea and are still being practiced and transmitted. Nongak is registered as Important Intangible Cultural Property No.11 with special recognition of the regional characteristic rhythms of Gyeonggi province, Jeolla province and Gyeongsang province. Nongyo, the enchanted singing of Gyeongsang province, is designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property No.84 and is still being transmitted today.
Nestled in the valley along the Huaihe River in eastern China, a special folk art, centuries old, still captivates people today with its bright colors, diverse forms, fast pace and cheerful spirit. A folk art of the Han people located in rural Anhui Province, Huagudeng is a Chinese national treasure and is listed in the national inventory of intangible cultural heritage in China.

As a traditional folk art form, Huagudeng has a very long history. It is said to have originated during the Song Dynasty (960-1279AD), developed through the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644AD), and finally gained wide public appeal during the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911AD). As an artistic form, Huagudeng is a combination of dance, song, drama, percussion, martial arts and acrobatics. The dance movements in particular are inspired by work and daily life. In the rural areas of Anhui Province, where agriculture is closely related to local life, Huagudeng is a popular folk art form whose popularity extends to the cities and counties of neighboring provinces.

In Chinese, the term Huagudeng refers to three different objects: huā (flower), gu (drum), and dēng (lantern), therefore Huagudeng literally means and is referred to in English as “Flower Drum Lantern”. In the dance, the female dancers are called lánhua (orchid), and each wears a red silk flower, called a ball flower, on their heads. In their hands, silk fans and handkerchiefs are used as props. In the past before China’s liberation in 1949, women were discouraged from performing in public so female roles were mostly played by men. That is why all of the older, famous artists still alive today are men. Among them, Mr Feng Guo-pei, a Huagudeng ICH bearer, is the most famous of his generation. In modern times, however, women take part in the performance both on and off stage; as a result, it is hard to find men playing female roles today. Male dancers are called gujiazi (drum stand). The props used by men are mainly umbrellas, short wooden sticks and percussion instruments. The lantern in the name comes from the fact that when performed at night, it would be in a square lit with lanterns. Huagudeng is usually performed in an open space such as the central square of a village, the side of a river, or in the yard of a temple. The audience usually gathers around in a circle. Inside the circle are several long benches with the percussion group on one side. The performers enter the circle with the women standing on the men’s shoulders, then the men lower the women to the benches and stand beside them. The show formally begins when the men with umbrellas who lead the performance troupe enter the performance space. They bow and lead the performers into the centre to dance.

Although the music and percussion are integral to Huagudeng, dancing is the main element of this folk art. The dancing is a combination of duet and group dances, each with its own fixed performance standard. The Flower Drum Lantern dances are quite famous and require skillful control of the fan. The many difficult movements using the fan give the performance a refined sense and take a long time to master.

During the annual Spring Festival (Lunar New Year) season, even today, village dance teams often compete with each other performing Huagudeng.

There are currently four bearers of Huagudeng that are officially recognized, Feng Guo-pei, Zheng Jiu-ru, Chen Jing-zhi and Wang Chuan-xian.
The first thing I learned when I began my field work in the Province of Ifugao was that my time was not my own. Time belonged to the gods and spirits which unexpectedly appear in dreams and give omens compelling the people to seek their mumbaki for guidance.

Because every aspect of Ifugao life must be favorable to the gods it is the mumbaki (ritual specialist), considered a central figure in Ifugao religion, who carries out the appropriate baki (ritual). He recites from memory, invokes and offers sacrifices to the deities and spirits for the one seeking blessing or atonement.

One of the Ifugao rituals is the rite for the dead called the bogwa. While both subgroups of the Ifugao, the Tuwali and the Ayangan, have their own version of the ritual, the practice is mainly attributed to the Tuwali. Except in extraordinary circumstances like murder or accident, the mumbaki will not invoke any of the deities except the linnawa (soul of the dead), rendering the bogwa a minor ritual. Its importance arises only when there is a sickness to be cured, believed to have been caused by an offended soul.

Bogwa is usually performed one or two years after a death for varied reasons: if a person has persistent dreams of a family member or kin, to cure a sickness after ascertaining its cause through divination, to pay tribute or fulfill the last will of a parent, or if the widow or widower of the deceased wants to remarry.

The bukahon is the bogwa for those who have met unnatural death. It is held only once and the wake lasts for two and a half days. Only a munpohophod, a mumbaki who specialises in the bukahon is allowed to invoke the soul of the deceased along with Manahhaut (the Deceiver), and perform the corresponding cursing ritual.

In contrast, the bogwa for ordinary deaths may last for three to twelve days and may be repeated several times for the same person.
The bogwa is a ritual founded on a shared belief that reaffirms the Ifugao’s fidelity to long-established traditions that sustain the bond of community in the midst of modernity and change.

The number of animals to be sacrificed and the death blanket that will be used to wrap the bones would depend on the social status of the family. Paniyo (taboos) are strictly observed during the bogwa by the family, their relatives, the mumbaki and, in some cases, their neighbors. Only old men and women are entitled to this ritual and not children who are deemed incapable of causing sickness because of their innocence and lack of malice.

The bogwa officially starts after the punhukutan (the day the bones are brought out of the tomb, grave or house) to be prepared for the wake. During the punhukutan, one or two munhukut (the one in charge of handling the bones during the bogwa) remove the bones from its original shroud to be cleaned, arranged and rewrapped in a new uloh (hand-woven blanket) held together by a wano (g-string) for the male and a tolge (wrap around skirt) tied with a balko (belt) for the female. The shroud is then placed on a table for public viewing. Before the day is over, an elderly relative or someone close to the deceased will offer a baki (prayer) followed with a iyo (dirge) to recount the good deeds done by the person while still alive.

On certain days during the bogwa, offerings are made by the mumbaki while invoking the linnawa of the dead person, his deceased father, mother or siblings through mungkondat (spiritual messengers) who are sent to inform the souls that they are being summoned to earth. On the last day of the bogwa, after the bones have been returned to its grave or to the, house, the mumbaki performs the final rite called kahiw. It is meant to remove the food prohibitions observed by the family and their relatives during the bogwa.

The celebration of bogwa is not exclusive to one family but involves an entire village as demonstrated in the meat sharing system called bolwa. A distinct practice in Ifugao ritual, the meat of the sacrificed animal is shared with the people who helped in the bogwa. It promotes reciprocity and strengthens relationships between kin and within the community.

Although the people ascribe their fate and general well-being to their gods, the bogwa is an example of a ritual founded on a shared belief. It reaffirms the Ifugao’s fidelity to long-established traditions which sustain the bond of community while in the midst of modernity and change. If bogwa is a microcosm of the Ifugao belief system, it is undergoing constant transformation and adapting to present social conditions. However, its function remains the same: to honor and remember the departed, maintain personal and community ties, and observe the rites handed down from generation to generation, making it an important element of intangible cultural heritage integral to the life of the Ifugao.

NOTE: The bogwa described in this article is one variation of the ritual practiced by the Tuwali in the Municipality of Lagawe, Province of Ifugao, Northern Luzon, Philippines. The Ifugao is one of the major ethnolinguistic groups of the Philippines. The Tuwali and the Ayangan are the two subgroups of Ifugao.
Fifteen years ago, nobody used the term ‘intangible cultural heritage’ (ICH) in Vietnam. It was only used in the official context of the 2001 Law on Cultural Heritage. The Cultural Heritage Law of Vietnam is in conformity with other international documents in regards to wording for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and inventories. Although inventory-making is one of the important measures used in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, the term ‘ICH inventory-making’ was not included in the law. At that time, inventory-making meant surveying and collecting. In 2003, as an international legal tool, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage helped enlighten the understanding of ICH inventory-making in Vietnam. Six years later, this term, as well as other contents compatible with the Convention were included in the 2009 amended Law on Cultural Heritage. This illustrates the fact that, despite starting late, understanding and awareness of ICH inventory-making in Vietnam has developed rapidly and thoroughly.

Over the last ten years, ICH safeguarding efforts targeting 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam were carried out through several State funded general surveys that focused on making ICH lists and classifying them according to geography and forms. Most of the surveys were realised by the Institute of Culture and Arts under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and provincial departments of culture, sports and tourism. Through these projects, ICH information and data was collected, published and compiled into a database. Much of the ICH at risk of disappearance was discovered and safeguarding practices of revival and transmission activities were urgently applied. As a result, the vitality of ICH has multiplied within community activities and throughout the cultural life of society.

In addition, the Vietnamese Association of Folklorists, a non-governmental organisation which receives support from the State, has carried out a comprehensive program on ICH inventory-making.

However, an important lesson learned from those projects is that the theoretical and unclear understanding of inventory-making objectives can lead to impractical results. For example, some projects have good objectives, but lack community participation; while other projects are comprehensive in their overall approach, but are missing up-to-date information. Still others have solid objectives and community participation, but lack totality and consistency. Most of the investigation and statistical projects have been separate, and have not been coordinated and integrated for each objective. No specific measures for safeguarding existing ICH or ICH in need of urgent safeguarding were proposed. In addition, the process of inventory-making lacked voluntary, active and informed participation of the community.

Fortunately, the recent 2009 Law on Cultural Heritage amendment clearly identifies the purposes of ICH inventories and the responsibilities of concerned parties: “The Chairman of the centrally-controlled provinces and cities undertakes the responsibility to inventory the intangible cultural heritage within their locality, formulate scientific dossiers of selected heritage elements and propose that the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism include them in the National Inventory(ies) of Intangible Cultural Heritage.” The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism will issue regulations on inventory-making and establishing dossiers on living ICH. Local
communities will propose ICH for inscription onto the national list. The purpose of the national ICH list is not for the sake of ICH classification, but to identify the ICH that is representative of the communities and should receive priority support from the government for urgent safeguarding. The first inscription of ICH onto the national list is planned to take place in 2010.

To prepare for the release of a guide on ICH inventory, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism carried out various research projects and trainings on ICH inventory-making in Quảng Ninh province in 2004; in Đaknông province in 2007; in Bạc Ninh and Bạc Giang provinces in 2008; and in Hà Giang province in 2009. Quan họ and ca tru performances and Giong festival were selected for the above pilot projects. Many experiences and lessons were learned from these activities, including identifying ICH based on the definition of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, ICH documentation with community participation, the role of researchers in helping community with ICH inventory-making, and comprehensive approaches to safeguarding both tangible and intangible heritage.
The International Workshop on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage: Capacity Building and Networking for Experts and Policy Makers was held from 26 October - 13 November 2009 in Buyeo, Seoul, Gyeongju, Jeju Island and other locations around Korea. The workshop was co-organised by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP) and the Training Center for Traditional Culture (TCTC).

The participants of the workshop included heritage professionals and senior administrative personnel responsible for cultural heritage protection or intangible cultural heritage safeguarding from twelve Asian countries: Myanmar, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Laos, Vietnam, Philippines, Bhutan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan and Nepal.

In partnership with the University of Queensland in Australia, the first week of the workshop was specifically designed as a capacity building exercise for the Asia-based participants with applied and interactive learning components. It was facilitated by four distinguished scholars, Professor Amareswar Galla (University of Queensland), Professor Noriko Aikawa (Advisor to the Assistant Director General of the Cultural Sector, UNESCO), Mr Seong-Yong Park (Executive Director of ICHCAP) and Professor Jong Ho Choe (Korean National University of Cultural Heritage). Focused primarily on the theme of intangible cultural heritage and strategies for strengthening the implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage throughout the region, the first week incorporated structured sessions and in-depth discussions on effective measures for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

This ICH segment was facilitated using Blackboard, an academic software programme provided by the University of Queensland. The workshop examined case studies of applied and empowering projects drawn from the cultural diversity of Asia and elsewhere. Educational kits were distributed to participants with a selection of core readings.

The workshop was to provide a platform for the promotion of regional safeguarding activities through an international network, exchange of knowledge and experience, and discussion of current regional issues and tasks vital in the search for solutions.

Throughout the first week of discussions and lectures, the focus was on emerging contemporary issues in the field of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding. These issues covered the conceptual development of intangible cultural heritage, documentation and inventory-making, intellectual property rights, community engagement, international cooperation, and the ICH Urgent Safeguarding and Representative Lists.

The second and third weeks of the workshop concentrated on preservation efforts for tangible cultural heritage through an intensive
schedule of lectures, field study, and cultural heritage related government institute visits. A comprehensive overview of the entire scope of Korean cultural heritage preservation policy was provided through site visits and lectures. The lectures introduced Korean Cultural Heritage Protection Law, the role of the Cultural Heritage Administration, and World Heritage preservation and conservation case studies of Jeju Island and the historic city of Gyeongju. The programme also enhanced understanding of Korean traditional culture through site visits to a Buddhist temple and experiential programmes in pansori singing and Songpansandae mask dancing.

Through the three week workshop, ICHCAP was able to achieve several outcomes. First, by developing a curriculum with a sufficient amount of core reading materials, the readings could be used as a reference guidebook for participants after the workshop. The reading materials introduced participants to the theory of intangible heritage and the current issues at regional, national and international levels.

The second outcome was the sharing and exchange of information and knowledge regarding intangible cultural heritage in the region. Each participant submitted a report on the status of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in their country that will serve as a resource.

The third outcome is the creation of a network of regional experts as each workshop participant is affiliated with governmental organisations in the field of cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, participating ICH experts can serve as contact points or resources within an expert pool for future ICHCAP activities such as field surveys, newsletters, etc.

Last but not least, the participants’ understanding of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was enhanced among participating policy makers and experts. During the first week, the 2003 Convention along with other relevant UNESCO conventions and their applications were fully explained to guide participants in the applied implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention in their respective countries after the workshop’s close. Moreover, the workshop used relevant case studies of applied empowerment projects drawn from the cultural diversity of Asia so that participants could achieve a stronger understanding of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding.

ICHCAP will continue to develop the workshop to provide a platform for capacity building and networking for experts and policy makers in the region in order to contribute to ongoing regional development toward intangible cultural heritage safeguarding.

CHCAP developed a professional development curriculum in the field of intangible cultural heritage in 2008 in partnership with the University of Queensland in Australia. The cooperative project entitled Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Development of an Advanced Study Option for Flexible Capacity Building was aimed at developing a curriculum to reinforce capacity and establishing a network among intangible cultural heritage professionals and researchers, particularly experts and policy makers in the Asia-Pacific.

The final research product contained eleven modules that cover the scope of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding based on the 2003 UNESCO Convention beginning with an introduction to intangible cultural heritage, its conceptual development and an in-depth look at the variety of safeguarding measures. Each module provides a clear outline of the theme, objectives, and learning outcomes as well as a selection of supplemental readings. An additional component to the study materials are case studies from Asia and the Pacific that provide information regarding the status of ICH safeguarding in Asia and the Pacific at a national policy level as well as the community grassroots level. Critical issues related to ICH safeguarding such as intellectual property laws and using cultural mapping as a tool are examined along with model cases of nominations for the Representative and Urgent Safeguarding Lists.

The project was an initial step for ICHCAP toward reinforcing intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific through a regional network of experts and relevant organisations. Building on this foundation, the 2009 International Workshop on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage: Capacity Building and Networking for Experts and Policy Makers was developed based on the curriculum from the 2008 project outcome.
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

Molly Kaushal  (Head of the Janapada Sampada Division dedicated to Cultural Heritage, Folklore and Lifestyle Studies, Associate Professor, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, India)

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) was set up to fulfil late Smt. Indira Gandhi’s (former Prime Minister of India) idea of restoring the integral quality of a human being, fragmented by his diverse roles in cities, classes, ethnic groups, religions, traditions and nationalities, to reconcile one’s material and spiritual needs, and cognitive and instinctive experience, and enable one to be at peace with oneself and with society. The centre was visualised as encompassing the study and experience of all the arts – each form with its own integrity, yet within a dimension of mutual interdependence, interrelated with nature, social structure and cosmology.

IGNCA was set up in 1987 with Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India at the time, as its first president. Ms Sonia Gandhi become the next president, and the current president is Mr Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, the former Under-Secretary General to the United Nations Organisation.

IGNCA is based in New Delhi, situated on 12 hectares of prime land while the centre itself houses one of the finest libraries in the country, a media production division, a cultural information centre, an exhibition division, conference halls and 24 guest rooms. Regional centres are located in Bangalore (South India), Varanasi (North India), and Guwahati (the Northeast India). The centre has collaborative programmes with numerous national and international institutions and universities and its faculty is internationally trained.

IGNCA adopts a broad based definition of arts to include in its purview every aspect of creativity from architecture, sculpture, pottery, puppetry, weaving, painting, and graphics, to general material culture such as literature, photography and film as well as the performing arts of music, dance and theatre and anything else found in life with an artistic dimension. The centre’s agenda is to explore, study and revive dialogue between India and her neighbours within South and Southeast Asia in the context of the arts.

The uniqueness of IGNCA’s approach to the arts lies in the fact that it does not segregate between types of forms, whether folk and classic, oral and aural, written and spoken, or old and modern. Here the emphasis is on the connectivity and the continuity between the various fields that ultimately relate human to human, and human to nature. The IGNCA manifests its academic and research work in its publications, national and international seminars, conferences, exhibitions and lecture series. The schools and other education institutions fall under the umbrella of IGNCA’s outreach programme. IGNCA is also a nodal body for the ICH programme of the Government of India. It has been responsible for preparing nomination dossiers for Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity such as Ramlila and Vedic Chanting. It was responsible for the nomination of Ramman to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity for the 2008-2009 cycle.

Janapada Sampada, one of the main research divisions of the centre is fully devoted to the study, documentation and dissemination of India’s rich and variegated cultural heritage. It focusses on the aesthetic manifestations embedded in the very life processes and praxis of small scale communities and societies. It studies both the intangible and tangible aspects of culture as interconnected and intertwined parts of a unified whole. Some of the important studies under the division have been in the area of rock art, ethnomusicology, lifestyle studies, oral narratives, rituals, myths, fairs and festivals, traditional knowledge systems and resource management, expressions in arts and crafts traditions, oral history and sacred centres and landscapes.

Apart from the Janapada Sampada, the centre has four more divisions. Each of these divisions is autonomous in structure but linked through programming. The Kala Nidhi division comprises a conservation laboratory, a multimedia unit, cultural archive and a multimedia reference library which includes printed books, slides, microfilm, photographs and audio-visual material. The Kala Kosha division is focused on research and investigates intellectual traditions in their multi-layered and multi-disciplinary dimensions. The Kala Darshana division provides a forum for inter-disciplinary seminars, exhibitions and performances on unified themes and concepts.

The centre has a well developed Cultural Informatics Laboratory, which acts as a focal point for digitisation of rare manuscripts, books, photographs, slides and audio-video collection not only for IGNCA but also for the other organisations working with the Department of Culture.

IGNCA also houses the National Manuscripts Mission, a project that seeks to preserve, document and disseminate knowledge about the vast manuscript wealth of India.

The Sutradhara division provides administratively, managerial and organisational support and services to all the other divisions.

IGNCA has 26,000 hours of audio-video material, 28,000 hours of audio recordings, 200,000 still images, and 4,000 ethnographic objects from all over the world in its rare archival collection of cultural, religious and ritual performances, arts and crafts, and culturally rooted oral traditions of human and natural resource management.

It has organised more than 100 exhibitions and 150 national and international events. It has published over 200 publications on a wide range of subjects ranging from visual and performing arts to cultural and ethnographic studies. In addition, IGNCA also provides a valuable resource through its website (ignca.nic.in) which receives 1.5 million hits a month.

Scene from “Ras Lila”, a folk theatre performance based on the epic story of Radha Krishna (Photo by IGNCA)
The Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP), the Andong Festival Tourism Foundation (AFTF) and the International Mask Arts & Culture Organization (IMACO) concluded a memorandum of understanding concerning cooperative activities to contribute to the implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region on 18th December 2009 under mutual agreement of the three organisations.

The purpose of this memorandum is to develop a sustainable cooperative system and contribute to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage at the regional and international levels.

Upon concluding the MOU, the three parties pledged to cooperate in the development of projects and activities designed to enhance the visibility of intangible cultural heritage including performances and exhibitions, experience programmes, conferences and informational materials.

Twelve countries submitted a joint nomination for falconry to be inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage and the Emirates Falcons’ Club led the multinational nomination efforts to protect falconry and promote local and international awareness of its cultural legacy.

Falconry, a sport of using trained falcons, hawks or other raptors to hunt game for humans, is a tradition that dates back more than 2000 years. One of the oldest sports in the UAE, the sport has planning intersect within holistic heritage management frameworks. The course provides a critical introduction to cultural mapping, gender and youth issues in community engagement, poverty alleviation and Millennium Development Goals.

The Field School provides practical field experience to graduate students and researchers and it would also be of interest to those involved in archaeology, anthropology, planning, postcolonial studies, sustainable development and cultural heritage law. The International Field School is offered annually during the University of Queensland summer semester in Vietnam, with the support of the local, provincial and national cultural institutions and their respective authorities. This year’s programme was held 11-30 January.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Division of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) organised

ICHCAP’s Project Reports Published
ICHCAP has published the project reports of its 2009 activities in book form and will make select reports available in the future on the website.

The full list of published reports are:
- Final Report of the Cultural Atlas of India-Development of a web-based statewide database on the cultural resources of India; Sample data I; and Sample data II
- Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Efforts in Uzbekistan; Mongolia; Fiji; Cambodia; and Vietnam
- Korea-Mongolia Joint Cooperation Project Report: Establishing a Safeguarding System for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Mongolia and Draft of the Guidebook on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mongolia
- Intangible Cultural heritage: Research and Development of an Advanced Study Option for Flexible Capacity Building
- Country Report: Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Activities in Asia and the Pacific
- Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Korea: Cultural heritage training programme for overseas students & researchers
a two-day international seminar on endangered languages in India held 22-23 October 2009 in New Delhi.

The impetus for the seminar was sparked by India having 196 languages listed on the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger. Concerned linguists, scholars, educators and policymakers gathered at the India International Centre to discuss the issues threatening these languages.

Sessions at the seminar covered an overview of the endangered languages in India, considered best practices in the context of the possibility and desirability of revival, and looked at the impact of Hindi on unwritten languages.

Many of the endangered languages in India are regional or tribal languages, most of which are no longer represented within the educational system due to resource restrictions and diminishing cultural relevance that has pushed them to the periphery of the Hindi and English-speaking majority.

According to the latest edition of the UNESCO Atlas (2009), there are 2,500 endangered languages. The list is divided into five levels that range from vulnerable to critically endangered and includes a category for languages that are technically extinct. Other countries in the Asia-Pacific region on the list with a significant number of endangered languages are Indonesia (147 endangered languages), China (143), Australia (108), Papua New Guinea (98) and Vanuatu (46). The Atlas can be accessed online at www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas.

[Japan] International Seminar on ICH Safeguarding in Tokyo

The National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in Tokyo (NRICPT) held an international seminar on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage Current Situations and Challenges on the Safeguarding Measures in the Asia-Pacific Region in Tokyo from 14-15 January 2010. Experts from eleven countries participated in the seminar.

The aims of the seminar were to explore better ways of safeguarding ICH by examining the national safeguarding policy of elements from the Asia-Pacific region that were inscribed on the Representative or Urgent Safeguarding Lists.

The keynote speech by Mr Timothy Curtis, Head of the Culture Unit at the UNESCO Bangkok Office, addressed the challenges faced in the involvement of communities in the identification and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage within the framework of the 2003 ICH Convention. ICHCAP Executive Director, Mr Seong-Yong Park, gave a presentation during the first session on developing new approaches toward ICH policy in Korea under the 2003 UNESCO Convention. The conference closed with a comprehensive discussion on the involvement of communities in ICH safeguarding.

The seminar was followed by a day trip to see the Chakkirako new year festival tradition, inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. There, a community representative spoke about Chakkirako and ongoing transmission efforts, which was followed by a question and answer session.

[UNESCO] 2010 Named International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and UNESCO has been chosen to promote and implement activities in conjunction with the year.

The main goal of the year will be to demonstrate the benefits of cultural diversity and the importance of cultural exchange. In this way, the need to protect and promote the diversity of culture as manifested through lifestyles, value systems, traditions and beliefs provides the opportunity to renew and reinforce cooperation at local, national, regional and international levels.

Activities are encouraged that promote forms of intercultural mediation and creativity along with recognition of and respect of knowledge, that includes traditional and indigenous knowledge forms as well as an integrated vision of cultural heritage as a bearer of history and identity that must be preserved, a resource of sustainable development and a tool for intercultural dialogue.

Interested parties are invited to inform organisers of the Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures of any activities planned to celebrate the year. For contact information or details about specific projects planned for the year can be found at www.unesco.org/en/rapprochement-of-cultures.


An expert meeting on the Safeguarding of Intellectual Property Rights of Intangible Cultural Heritage was held at the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage on 16 December 2009. The meeting was sponsored by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific.

During the meeting, several invited speakers gave presentations on issues surrounding intellectual property and intangible cultural heritage. Seong-Yong Park, Executive Director of ICHCAP, gave the opening lecture on “Intellectual Property Issues in the Safeguarding of ICH”. Additional speakers were Ki-Seok Oh of the Korea Copyright Commission who spoke on “International Trends for the Safeguarding of Traditional Cultural Expressions”, Chungnam National University Law School Professor So-Young Yook addressed “The Meaning and Limits of Safeguarding the Intellectual Property of ICH”, and Professor Chul-Nam Lee gave a talk about “Intangible Cultural Heritage Documentation and Intellectual Property”.

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