Imagine exploring ninety-three elements of Mongolian intangible cultural heritage and more than a hundred intangible cultural heritage elements reflecting the diverse ethnic groups in the Philippines; imagine seeing video and still images and hearing audio tracks of the unique heritage in the Ferghana Valley. Today, it is possible to explore the world’s intangible cultural heritage with a few clicks of a mouse. ICHCAP recently opened an online sphere that gives visitors easy access to find and discover intangible cultural heritage (http://www.ichcap.org/eng/ek/index.php). We call this online repository the e-Knowledge Center: ICHCAP Project Resources.

In the framework of building an e-knowledge center, ICHCAP repurposed the materials gathered through past and ongoing collaborative projects with international partners. ICHCAP selected material from several projects and meetings and made this data available online to increase users’ knowledge about intangible cultural heritage. The following are the eight sections currently available:

- Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Efforts in the Asia-Pacific Region
- Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Mongols
- Pinagmulan: Enumeration from the Philippine Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Sounds from Mongolian Grasslands
- Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements of Ferghana Valley
- A Window into Intangible Heritage (online photo exhibition)
- Magic Tour of World’s ICH (animation)
- Discourses on ICH Safeguarding Issues (reports of ICHCAP’s conferences and meetings).

In each section, readers can explore various forms of intangible cultural heritage as well as the different safeguarding activities in the countries that participated in each project by reading documents, watching videos, hearing audio recordings, and seeing various photos. The e-Knowledge Center currently has 708 documents (6,762 pages), 20 videos files (255 minutes), 170 audios files (574 minutes), 138 photographs, and 116 web articles.

The e-knowledge center was created in response to the need for publicizing intangible cultural heritage information collected through ICHCAP’s projects. In addition, ICHCAP decided to create a new foundation for a user-centered delivery system that provides specialized information for users who require in-depth information on specific topics. The new approach forms a more dynamic and vivid information space on intangible cultural heritage, supplementing ICHCAP’s current database-centered ICH archives.

Through the e-Knowledge project, ICHCAP expects to increase the availability of information related to intangible cultural heritage, improve information access, and enhance visibility on ICHCAP’s activities by attracting the users’ attention to intangible cultural heritage information.

Milee Choi (ICHCAP)

Inaugural Address

Let me convey a cordial greeting as the newly appointed Director-General of ICHCAP, established to protect intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region.

It gives me immense pride as well as a heavy sense of responsibility to be leading ICHCAP for the next three years, following in the footsteps of its former Director-General, Dr. Samuel Lee, who worked so hard to lay down the foundations for the Centre.

Around the world, we see conflicts arising from cultural clashes and a lack of cultural understanding. Globalization has also brought about a worrying degree of loss in cultural diversity. Thus, in my understanding, the UNESCO’s mandate lies in protecting the traditional values in danger of extinction and raising awareness of the diverse cultures around the world.

I believe ICHCAP has been playing a significant role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in its numerous activities related to information sharing and networking. It has shown special dynamism, even among UNESCO C2 centers, in identifying intangible cultural heritage in danger of extinction, sharing information about this heritage both online and offline, and creating networks between relevant institutions, organizations, and researchers. In light of all ICHCAP has accomplished, I believe States Party to the 2003 Convention and associated organizations around the world will have even greater hopes and expectations for our Centre as we move forward. I promise to do my best to expand efforts to fulfill the functions of ICHCAP while leading the Centre into a new stage in its development.

Kwon Huh
Director-General, ICHCAP

Presenting ICHCAP’s Project Resources Online
ICH CAP'S e-Knowledge Center Launched in Early 2015

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The International Symposium on the Shared Values of Tugging Rituals and Games in Asia
ICH Community-Based Perspectives

As an effort to build safeguarding measures and to develop an element’s value as a shared intangible cultural heritage element in Asia, ICHCAP, in cooperation with Dangjin City, Korea, and the Center for Intangible Culture Studies in Chonbuk National University, organized the international symposium, on the topic of ‘Shared Values of Tugging Rituals and Games in Asia: ICH Community-Based Perspectives.’ The international symposium was held from 9 to 12 April in Dangjin City. Attending the meeting were a hundred experts, scholars, and representatives from ICH communities from Cambodia, Korea, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The symposium was designed to promote cultural understanding and share information related to tugging rituals and games in the Asia-Pacific region and to facilitate collaboration in safeguarding this ICH element. In this way, the symposium focused on communities involved with tugging rituals and games examine the communities’ current role in relation to ICH safeguarding in each country.

The symposium also provided opportunities to discuss international cooperation for developing tugging rituals and games in the region. The participants took note of important aspects of safeguarding from the communities’ perspective in tugging rituals and games and suggested different ways of furthering their safeguarding activities with ICH communities to promote cultural diversity and sustainable development.

ICH Issues

Inauguration of Director-General Kwon Huh © ICHCAP

Rope for Korean Juldarigi © ICHCAP

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Encouraging ICH Safeguarding through an Online System: Ichpedia Project

HanHee Hahm, PhD (Professor of Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology, Chonbuk National University)

Complying with UNESCO’s safeguarding policy for ICH, Korea’s Cultural Heritage Administration attempted to initiate a digital inventory project in 2010. A group of researchers of the different fields including ICH specialists, folklorists, anthropologists, and computer scientists joined this project. I participated in this project as director. The project team endeavored to develop a new experimental ICH inventorying methodology using a new concept of collective intelligence and advanced information technologies. The team established Ichpedia, a web-based ICH inventory and archives in Korea.

The Ichpedia team consists of two groups: one group is concentrating on inventory-making through collecting ICH elements, and the other group is developing computer software programs regarding the database, archives, and GPS. Based on this collaboration, the team establishes a new way of investigating and inventorying ICH. The philosophy and new method of digital inventorying employed in the project is experimental with respect to the recording of ICH in several respects. Non-material features of ICH are known to be difficult or impossible to keep static, and such characteristics of ICH are frequently cited as impediments in the process of recording. Through the use of various forms of digital technology, such as audio devices and video tools, the project team makes it possible to record such dynamic characteristics of ICH.

Secondly, ICH’s changeable and unfixed nature can be traced more easily by efficient recording processes. Since many ICH elements are closely related to everyday lifestyles, practices, and ideas, subtle changes and disappearance may not be readily apparent. Thus, computerized devices can record the present conditions of ICH and make it easier to keep track of any future changes. Regularly updating inventories can be achieved by using information technology.

Thirdly, the project, with its digital innovations, tries to encourage participation on the part of ICH communities, groups, and individuals. They have direct access to the Ichpedia system and can record certain ICH elements on a voluntarily basis. It is completely the communities’ own decision whether or not to participate in the recording process. They have access to some guidelines and support to input their own information online with various source materials from Ichpedia assistants. The recording processes are considered a way of safeguarding ICH so that through the processes, the community members and bearers are able to raise awareness of its importance not just for the external groups but for their own community. However, for them, the use of digital technology may not be an easy task. The Ichpedia assistants provide practical aids to any volunteered informants who have difficulties in digital inventorying processes.

Fourthly, the web-based inventory is open to the public and develops cooperative works. Surveyors, administrators, NGOs, and ICH bearers can establish networks to share their interests of safeguarding ICH, and thereby, they have access to each other’s knowledge, activities, and practices. In the early stage of this online system, we may face some critical issues such as reliability of information, human rights infringement, and copyright disputes. But when these problems are resolved, the inventory making through the online system using collective intelligence will eventually evolve into a cultural movement. Owing to this movement, communities’, groups’, and individuals’ ICH that is in danger of disappearing would be protected and preserved by diverse stakeholders.

Lastly, Ichpedia reduces the economic burdens of establishing a highly efficient database system. It is easy and simple yet offers high efficiency compared to other web-based ICH encyclopedias worldwide. Ichpedia has the advantage of being the least expensive option for the development and maintenance of such a system. It is our team’s wish that Ichpedia will pave the way for digital innovation in the area of ICH recording with the free and open distribution of the digital platforms and technologies. Meanwhile, online networks require technological standardization. We have installed the database of archives and Ichpedia in compliance with international standards. By doing so, we can expand our online network to global ICH communities. The web-based network is convenient and efficient, and it is evolving rapidly.

To sum up our efforts thus far on the Ichpedia project, to compile exclusive lists of ICH, we use an online survey to solicit involvement using a bottom-up approach. The ultimate goal of the Ichpedia project is to increase cooperation among stakeholders for safeguarding ICH in Korea. The online networks have certain merits, including surpassing barriers of time and space, as well as various divisions and partitions within society. Our project will continue to move forward in dealing with important issues and unresolved challenges, such as the enhancement of cultural diversity, human creativity, and human rights violations.

Screen shot of Ichpedia.org.
Traditional Navigation of Pacific Islanders

Windows to ICH provides an introduction to examples of intangible cultural heritage practices throughout the Asia-Pacific region in relation to specific themes presented in each issue. This issue takes a look at traditional navigation of Pacific islanders. In these examples from FSM, Palau, and Tonga, you can explore the interesting navigation culture transmitted in the Pacific.

Federated States of Micronesia  Sailing Canoe Building on Mwoakilloa Atoll

Takuya Nagaoka  (Executive Director, NGO Pasifika Renaissance)

A sailing canoe was a material symbol of men’s skill and their pride on Mwoakilloa (formerly Mokil) Atoll in Micronesia. Acquiring the techniques to build a sailing canoe was difficult, and this is why learning the techniques was a rite of passage into manhood and criterion for marriage. At a marriage proposal, the man proposing used to be asked if he could make a paddle or bailer, implying a sailing canoe. The accomplishment of building one’s first sailing canoe was celebrated by a special launching ceremony called waspwij. The late Boaz Poll stated that “men used to have sailing canoe races as contests of manhood.” Even today, for those who remember the olden days, the Mwoakillese sailing canoe symbolizes traditional standards of men: competitiveness, cooperation, and hard work.

The Mwoakillese people are known as an enterprising group, being skilled at fishing, carpentry, and cooking using traditional and modern methods. This enterprising nature can be seen as having originated from the considerable cultural changes Mwoakillese people have undergone since the nineteenth century when early beachcombers influenced the small atoll population. This enterprising spirit also led to them adding new features to sailing canoes, which enabled the Mwoakillese to create the most developed canoe in the early historic period.

Oral traditions relate that the styles and building technology of the Mwoakillese canoes originated in the Marshall Islands as did several traits of Mwoakillese culture through their long-term interactions from the prehistoric period to today. Present sailing canoe building techniques were derived from the stranding of Marshallese, which occurred in 1865. After the introduction of the Marshallese canoe, the Mwoakillese people improved the structure and refined the building technique. The new Mwoakillese canoe was a simplification from the original, and it led to the creation of a structurally and stylishly superior canoe that was more suitable for new toll environment.

The art of canoe building was of great significance, and due to the competitive nature of Mwoakillese society, the art was passed down secretly and only to close relatives. However, when the Christian Endeavor, an association of evangelical Protestant churches, was established on Mwoakilloa in 1920, the Mwoakillese people became more faithful and cooperative. Men began to allow others to watch their work, except for the most secretive part of making a sail. The technique was passed on to relatives and friends so that by the beginning of World War II, most families possessed the knowledge.

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However, sailing canoe production declined during the 1950s while the production of local wooden boats increased. The prevalence of wooden boats and outboard motors in the 1960s drove the sailing canoe from the mainstream. Boat production became prominent in the late 1960s, and mass production for consumer markets made the island the center of boat manufacturing in the region until the mid-1980s. This greatly influenced the penetration of the money economy into island society and diminished the degree of cooperation. The use of wooden boats, however, has declined since the 1980s due to the popularity of imported fiberglass boats. Thus, the same enterprising spirit has enabled the people to make a speedy transition to locally made wooden boats and, after World War II, imported boats.

Today, only one paddling canoe is still in use, but there are no sailing canoes left on the atoll. Only two canoe builders are capable of constructing a sailing canoe, and they are in their seventies, although many middle-aged to elderly men know some parts of canoe-building work. Some Mwoakillese men have talked about the need to revive sailing canoes due to the recent rise in gasoline price and lack of canoes, both of which have reduced the number of men’s fishing trips. There have been several attempts to revive the sailing canoe building on Mwoakilloa in the past two decades, although they achieved very limited success. Today, some elders discuss their strong interest in revival and are willing to pass down this dying art to succeeding generations without guarding their knowledge. Time is limited for the Mwoakillese people.
The Marshall Islands, also known as Ralik-Ratak, is made up of twenty-nine low-lying atolls on two archipelagic chains. Its history can be traced back to the second millennium BCE when early Marshallese travelled among islands in canoes with stick charts as a navigation aid. Stick charts, which are known locally as meto, help master navigators (rimedo) mark out travel routes. The charts are made of palm leaf midribs with small snail sells tied to them to indicate the islands. It is important to note that stick charts do not indicate an exact location of the islands; they illustrate the sea and swell conditions (swell strength, direction, persistence, and other measures) between islands and other relevant information related to the course.

It is important to note that there is no standardized system of stick charts and that no school knows the teachings of another school. Therefore, a stick chart must be interpreted and explained by the person who made it. This means that an expert seaman from one school would be unable to read the stick chart of another school without some additional information. Despite the individual differences, however, there are some common that go into making the three basic types of stick charts—instructional charts, summary charts, and special charts.

### Instructional Charts
Instructional charts (mattang or matang) demonstrate the voyage between two or four islands, or even simply demonstrate the conditions around a single island. A chart of two islands, which need not necessarily be named, is a lance-shaped structure with a frame and crosspieces showing the swells, knots and roots that lead to the islands (the points). A chart of four islands (me doemenani), on the other hand it exhibits the form of a Maltese cross set diagonally in a square frame. The four islands, which also need not be named, are located at the ends of the cross arms. Only the voyage through the middle of the cross between two opposing islands can be demonstrated. A short crosspiece is almost always located on the eastern arm of the cross, marking the eastern side (rear).

### Summary Charts
Summary charts (rebbelib or rebelip), as the name suggests, summarize either all or just the most important the islands of one or both Ralik-Ratak’s archipelagoes. Some other summary charts focus on just the northern or southern areas of both chains. In general, summary charts indicate only information about the swells between the islands whereas the actual geographic location is of no importance. Additional details about knots, current conditions, sighting distances, etc. are rarely if ever included.

### Special Charts
Special charts (meddo or medo) give a detailed representation of the sea conditions between a few islands. These charts are made up of various shapes depending to the areas being depicted and the methods of the navigator. Canoe captains consult with these special charts for pertinent information prior to setting out to sea. Once underway on the journey, however, they do not continue to consult with charts since it is considered scandalous to do so.

### Conclusion
Stick charts and their many forms have a history dating back thousands of years. Today, the traditional knowledge of master navigators is still being transferred from one generation to the next. However, with the effects of modernization and the introduction of western navigation techniques, many of the traditional forms have been falling into a state of neglect, so it is important to continue to raise awareness of the valuable library stored in the minds of master navigators.
Traditional navigators are trained to recognize physical signals in, "sea, skies, and stars, memory signals from knowledge of star, swell, and wind compasses... and cultural knowledge recorded in chants, dances, and stories". Signs include color, temperature, and taste (salinity) of seawater; floating plant debris; sightings of land-based seabirds flying out to fish; cloud type, color, and movement; wind direction, speed, and temperature; the direction and nature of ocean swells and waves; the position of stars in the sky; and his estimation of the speed, current set, and leeway of his sailing craft.

Ebiil Society, a non-governmental organization in Palau, provides training and education on traditional knowledge. For this purpose, traditional knowledge trainers are sought after to help develop training programs. This article represents a collection of ideas in navigation training by Ebiil Society.

Pacific Islanders traditionally maintain records through their stories, chants, and performance arts. It is within these traditions that navigators maintain or recollect information that they need for a successful voyage.

**Inter-Island Navigation**
Inter-island navigation is for short-distance travel within an island country where land visibility is less constrained. The navigator is taught to use his immediate surroundings and information to determine travel time and routes.

Trade winds knowledge is necessary for voyage planning and travel to distant places. During the easterly trade winds season, sailboats are on a dry dock for a complete check and maintenance work while preparing for distant sailing or fishing expeditions.

Along with this knowledge, navigators need to be familiar with the ocean depths and the colors of usual routes to determine the true course since looking ahead during heavy rains or squalls can be misleading.

Navigators also use the land’s silhouette against the sky to travel at dusk or dawn. During rainy days and distance travel when land is not visible on the horizon, they look in the clouds for color reflections of land and shallow water.

Cloud colors, shapes, and positioning are also used to determine weather conditions. For example, when the clouds above glow white and the horizon reflects a thick gray blanket of cloud, it means that rain will come in two to three days.

Lunar cycles and associated tides are used to determine travel schedules and routes.

The striking point of a swell against the side of the boat reflects wind direction and determines east and west with reference to trade winds.

**Deep Sea Navigation**
Deep sea navigation combines inter-island navigation and the more complex use of the star compass used by Micronesians to sail greater distances across the Pacific Ocean to explore for new land and resources.

Later development of Micronesian navigation includes the star compass used by navigators such as the Satawalese of Yap. The star compass depicts thirty-two points at which key stars rise on the eastern horizon and set on the western horizon. The “compass” is not a magnetic tool but a mental model of island locations and the star points to use to navigate between them. Deep sea navigation takes years of training, beginning as early as four years of age, and by the time the young apprentice is allowed to take his first voyage, he is well into his adult years. Some apprentices never take a deep-sea voyage.

Types of fish, birds, and mammals, such as whales and dolphins, as well as debris on the ocean surface are used to reference distance to land.

**Conclusion**
We hope that providing such experiential learning opportunities will spark interest in pursuing navigation as a trade that incorporates indigenous knowledge and today’s technology to make a successful navigator. Such a navigator will have a higher sense of respect and protection towards his natural and cultural environment.

2. Ibid.
The voyaging knowledge and traditions of the Pacific islands are a rich and exceptional example of intangible cultural heritage. Covering one-third of the globe’s surface, the Pacific Ocean is home to numerous archipelagos that were settled as long as 40,000 years ago in the case of Papua New Guinea—a continental island in Melanesia, and as recent as 800 years ago, in some of the farthest flung archipelagos in Polynesia, which makes the Pacific the last region of the world to be settled by humans and the largest maritime diaspora in the world. Evidence points to the island archipelagos in Southeast Asia, including the continental island of Taiwan, as launching points for settling the remote Pacific Ocean, beyond Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands, into what is today called Polynesia and Micronesia. Current thinking places Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji as the landing point for voyagers who came from Vanuatu in the Western Pacific about 3,500 years ago.

The Tongan archipelago, today consisting of about 175 islands linked together by immense waterways, ensconced by coral reefs sitting atop vast volcanic mounts, some of which are still producing new islands today, was several hundred years ago the center of a vast maritime network that extended between Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Rotuma, Uvea (Wallis), and Futuna, and some theorize as far as Tahiti and Hawai‘i, constituting the largest “voyaging sphere” in the Pacific Ocean. Image 4. According to archaeologists, the Tongan maritime empire wielding immense power over the maritime areas between the tenth and sixteenth centuries, as Tonga, Samoa, and to some extent Fiji became increasingly interlinked by boatbuilding industries that required cooperation and resource sharing.

The traditional double-hulled boats called tongiaki from Tonga belong to the classical open sea boats that the Polynesians used when exploring the vast Pacific Ocean. Willem Schouten, a Dutch explorer who circumnavigated the globe in 1616, saw a double-hulled tongiaki on long-distance journeys and wrote about them: “[T]hey are navigating so fast with sails, that there are just a few boats in Holland which were able to overtake them.”

Tongiaki were constructed by master builders called tufunga fo‘u vaka who worked in service of their chief. The boats built were mighty and essential to the survival and political dominion achieved. They often measured up to twenty-five meters and could carry over two hundred people on local journeys, who rode on a solid platform-like connection between the two big hulls.

Like the rest of Oceania, metal nails were unknown in Tonga, and the structural pieces were connected with coconut fiber rope called kafa and organic caulking made of plant gum. Sails were woven from plant fibers and, as historical evidence shows, were possibly decorated with designs.

The boatbuilding industry required close cooperation among Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji. Tonga did not have the forests and hardwoods necessary for building seagoing vessels. Hardwood trees were sourced from Fiji. Boat builders from different families or clans, such as the Lemaki Clan of Samoa, came to preeminence in the years before indigenous boatbuilding and navigation in the Southwestern Pacific went into decline with the European “discovery” of these vast archipelagos. By the nineteenth century, the influence of European trade and shipping networks began to shift the balance of power of these Oceanian maritime cultures. With the introduction of the steam engine and its ability to sail faster than wind-powered vessels, a great decrease in traditional navigation and building occurred across the islands.

Today, navigation and sailing are becoming powerful political and material forms of cultural identity. Tonga has joined other robust seafaring and traditional navigation revitalization movements like those in Hawai‘i, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti, Cook Islands, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Samoa, and Fiji amongst others who are reclaiming “Moana,” an indigenous Oceanian word for the Pacific Ocean. Regional Pacific cooperation in preserving and perpetuating indigenous knowledge and intangible heritage of seafaring cultures is a way forward into a more sustainable and climate-challenged Pacific island region.
The Vietnamese Institute for Musicology and the Binh Dinh Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism have jointly organized Bai choi Folk Art of Vietnam and Similar Art Forms around the World, an international conference held on 13 and 14 January 2015 in Qui Nhon City, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam.

The conference was held to promote the special values of bai choi heritage to international music researchers and heritage scholars. At the same time, the conference allowed the international community to share information about similar arts around the world. It was a valuable opportunity in a number of ways. On the one hand, the participants had a chance to connect with relevant organizations, communities, and individuals and share heritage information. On the other hand, it served as an important activity within the roadmap to build the nomination file, Bai Choi Folk Art of Central Vietnam.

Conference participants included Ms. Dang Thi Bich Lien, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as well as representatives from the Agency for Cultural Heritage, the Agency for International Cooperation, the Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, the Vietnam National Academy of Music, the Vietnam Cultural Heritage Council, the Vietnam Folk Art Association, and the Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism of nine provinces and cities where bai choi is practiced. Also in attendance were Vietnamese culture and music researchers and scholars from France, German, Laos, Sweden, and Korea.

Traditional Music of Bai Choi
Bai choi, originating in the fifteenth or sixteenth century as a ritual for better harvests and bringing communities together, is unique to the central coastal region of Vietnam and performed locally during spring festivals. Resembling a game, bai choi is similar to bingo, but it also includes music, song, and poetry.

The performances take place outdoors, where nine open huts are built for the event. One hut, the central hut, is reserved for a troupe of musicians, and the other eight huts house five or six players each. Prior to play, a deck of cards is cut, and one half is distributed among the players, and the other is placed in a box at the central hut. On each card are three symbols related to Vietnamese culture, and these can include numbers written in Han Nom.

Accompanied by the troupe, the hiếu (game singer) gives a flag to each hut while singing about daily life and work. The songs are emotional and tend to praise parental and conjugal affection and national pride while also criticizing behavior that goes against society. On returning to the central hut, the hiếu draws a card from the box and sings the symbols that are on the card. Whoever has a card that best matches the game singer’s card gets a yellow flag. At the end of the evening, the person who has the most yellow flags wins a prize, usually something small and of little or no material value.

Folk Artists at the Conference
By introducing and explaining bai choi, the bai choi folk artists—Mr. Nguyen Kiem (Binh Dinh Province), Mr. Nguyen Minh Dung (Binh Dinh Province) and Ms. Dang Thi Bich Lien, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as well as representatives from the Agency for Cultural Heritage, the Agency for International Cooperation, the Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, the Vietnam National Academy of Music, the Vietnam Cultural Heritage Council, the Vietnam Folk Art Association, and the Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism of nine provinces and cities where bai choi is practiced. Also in attendance were Vietnamese culture and music researchers and scholars from France, German, Laos, Sweden, and Korea.
Province), Ms. Le Thi Dao (Binh Dinh Province),
Mr. Nguyen Minh Chau (Quang Ngai Province),
and Mr. Tu Hai (Khanh Hoa Province)—clarified
issues related to how to build huts, use cards
in the performance, sing and read the name
of the cards, play musical instruments, and
perform solo drama excerpts. The breadth of
the explanations and the addition of useful
illustrations helped the participants gain a
better understanding and feel for the features,
values, and vitality of bai choi. The event was
made more memorable thanks to the bai choi
performance by Nguyen Kiem, a folk artist
from Binh Dinh Province.

Researchers and Scholars
Vietnamese researchers surveyed and
analyzed issues related to the historical
characteristics, cultural values, literary values,
and musical features of bai choi. In their
presentations they summarized their findings,
emphasizing the performance art of the male
and female singers, ways of playing the bai
choi card game, and the local differences in
the ways of performing bai choi. While the
information they presented was important,
the parts that drew the most attention were
related to the current status of bai choi as well
as the actions that have been done (or will
soon be done) to preserve and promote this
valuable heritage of Vietnam.

Presentations by international scholars—
Prof. Dr. Yves Defrance (France), Prof. Dr. Gisa
Jaehnichen (Germany), Prof. Dr. Tran Quang
Hai (France), Ebsjorn Watermark (Sweden), Dr.
Buontheng Souksavads (Laos), and Dr. Seong-
Yong Park (Korea)—were valuable in providing
points of reference, comments, and reviews
of bai choi. Moreover, they provided analysis
and a comparative framework by showing
similarities of bai choi in other art forms found
around the world. In doing so, they clarified
the values and specific features that make this
kind of intangible heritage and important part
of a greater global community.

Conclusion
The success of the two-day conference can
be measured in the participants’ greater
understanding of bai choi as a valuable
intangible cultural heritage element of
humanity. Through the meeting, many aspects
of bai choi were clarified and elaborated
upon. In light of the developments made at
the conference, the delegates believe that bai
choi deserves to be inscribed on the UNESCO
Representative List of the Intangible Cultural
Heritage of Humanity.
Country Background

Kyrgyzstan, officially called the Kyrgyz Republic, is a small mountainous country in Central Asia with a population of around six million people. The Kyrgyz Republic shares borders with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China. The Kyrgyz Republic gained its independence in 1991 after the downfall of the Soviet Union. About 80 percent of the populations are ethnic Kyrgyz. The other 20 percent consists of ethnic Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Tatars, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Dungans, Koreans, and other groups. The Kyrgyz people overwhelmingly consider themselves Muslim. The Kyrgyz Republic ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2006 and became one of the first Central Asian State Parties to the Convention. Also, the Kyrgyz Republic will continue to be a member of the Intergovernmental Committee until 2016.

Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Kyrgyz Republic has a rich intangible cultural heritage that is rooted in the history of the Kyrgyz people who had nomadic way of life for many centuries. Kyrgyz culture has always been based on a traditional knowledge system that reflects the centuries-old folk wisdom. Intangible cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people is vividly expressed in such fields as oral folklore, folk performance arts, festive rituals, techniques and technologies related to traditional craftsmanship, musical instruments, clothing, cuisine, traditional games, and, traditional knowledge systems.

The Kyrgyz Republic has adopted a number of important laws to strengthen the legislative framework in the field of intangible cultural heritage: On the Protection of Traditional Knowledge (2007), On the Epic Heritage (2011), and On the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Kyrgyz Republic (2012).

The national body responsible for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding is the National Committee for the Intangible Cultural Heritage, under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic. Other state bodies responsible for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage are the Institute of Languages and Literature and the Institute of History and Cultural Heritage of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences, and various NGOs and associations of ICH practitioners, which implement an array of activities aimed at safeguarding and promoting the intangible heritage.

The Inventorying Process of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Originally, inventorying the intangible cultural heritage on the current territory of Kyrgyzstan started in the 1950s. It was initiated by the scientists and ethnographers of the Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Soviet Republic with

Sacred site Shudugur-Ata © National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO

Inventory-making process in the Issuk-Kul region © National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO
A significant amount of work on recording the oral folklore and instrumental creations was carried out back then. There have been collected fragments of epic heritage and elements of traditional games. All the gathered documentations were stored and preserved at the Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Soviet Republic. However, there was a considerable disadvantage of the inventory activities—that is, all the materials were edited and became subject to deliberate falsification, misrepresentation, and unification in order to meet the principles of soviet ideology. The inventory was carried out without the appropriate participation of bearers and practitioners of traditional knowledge.

In the present time, a process of identifying and inventorying intangible cultural heritage elements started in 2007. It is being implemented under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences with participation of ICH practitioners, non-governmental organizations, and intangible cultural heritage experts. The objective of this process is to reveal and identify the intangible cultural heritage elements and inscribe them in the intangible cultural heritage National Inventory for safeguarding measures. As a result of this work, the national inventory was formed in 2008 and was updated in 2011 and 2012. At present, it includes 114 elements from 7 domains: oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, festive and ritual culture, techniques and technologies, national games, traditional knowledge, and ornaments.

Non-governmental organizations working in the field of ICH and acting on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic achieved great success in inventorying ICH elements. As a result of their activities, the databases on traditional handicraft techniques, traditional healing, epic heritage, and traditional knowledge and manifestations of pre-Islamic religious beliefs related thereto were formed. All the work was carried out with the direct participation of bearers and practitioners. The abovementioned collected data is available on each non-governmental organization’s website and was also submitted to the Centre for Documentation of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Findings of the study made it possible for Aigine to define an outline of the Sacred Geography of Kyrgyzstan. It contains an inventory of 920 sacred sites, which includes locations and descriptions with pictures of the places, recognized by local people as sacred or holy. Besides the inventory, the study investigated intangible cultural elements such as the historical and contemporary dimensions of sacred sites as well as beliefs, rituals, and traditional practices.

To learn more about the Aigine CRC’s activities please visit the centre’s website (www.traditionalknowledge.org) or see some of our videos on YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/AigineCRC/videos) or here on Namba (www.serials.namba.kg/serial.php?id=17451.)
ICHAP, since its establishment in 2011, has been working to serve its mandate as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre by extending the reach and effectiveness of UNESCO’s programs and activities related to promoting the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Through its undertakings, the Centre has been endeavoring to fulfill its mission of implementing and supporting ICH safeguarding activities in two strategic functions: information and networking. However, there is now a current need to further explore and more clearly define the ways in which information and networking serve as tools for ICH safeguarding. Investigating and identifying how these functions perform critical roles can provide us with valuable insight into the past so that we can become more organized and refined as we move toward the future.

Therefore, in 2014, ICHAP, working with a team of independent research experts, performed exhaustive research on the main function to evaluate the Centre’s projects in the respective categories and establish more organized strategies for ICHCAP as the Centre moves forward into the future. The research outcomes were reported during a series of briefing sessions in Seoul and Jeonju in December, January, and February 2014. Today, I would like to share some of the contents of these briefings as well as additional information related to ICHCAP’s future activities.

Evaluating ICHCAP’s Information Projects and Establishing Future Strategies

From July to December 2014, the research team analyzing ICHCAP’s strategic information activities held eight meetings to examine ICHCAP’s relevant work with the aim of evaluating the Centre’s activities and providing consultations related to the Centre’s information strategy. The researchers studied the concept, meaning, and significance of information within the context of ICHCAP’s information activities. They also examined relevant projects and made suggestions for improvements and countermeasures.

Based on the researchers’ reports, when stipulating information, ICHCAP should manage all “useful knowledge and data/materials related to ICH safeguarding.” They defined information processes as the entire process involved with information, “including collecting, refining, preserving, distributing, and sharing comprehensive information in the real world and the digital world.” They also suggested that ICHCAP bear in mind that the Centre can “give shape to definitions on information provider and user” when establishing strategic plans. More critically, the researchers pointed out that ICHCAP’s strategic objective is unclear and recommended that ICHCAP build its “mission statement, overarching objectives, regional priorities, and strategic objectives” in a more systematic manner.

Reviewing ICHCAP’s Networking Projects and Developing Future Strategies

The networking research team, which operated independently from the research team analyzing ICHCAP’s strategic information activities, conducted its research project from August 2014 to February 2015, aiming to review and analyze ICHCAP’s overall networking projects and developing a systematic strategy for the future.

Based on 2003 Convention and 2010 Agreement between Korea and UNESCO, the research reveals that the overall networking projects of ICHCAP seem to fulfill their objectives and functions. However, the research team also evaluated information-sharing projects between ICHCAP and related institutions and found that this area of collaboration seems to be insufficient. Also reported was that while ICHCAP networking projects correspond to the overall UNESCO strategy, more specific and specialized projects showing ICHCAP’s identity need be developed.

The researchers also conducted a survey with experts who have been involved with ICHCAP’s projects. Many respondents (22.5 percent) want ICHCAP to play a role in building a platform for ICH discussions by organizing international conferences, and 22.4 percent of respondents want to see ICHCAP complement its networking strategy by strengthening the continuity of networking meetings. The information collected through survey will be reflected in establishing ICHCAP’s future networking strategy.

The research team suggested that ICHCAP function as ‘general service center for ICH networking in the Asia-Pacific region’ by diversifying the project types and targets. The three main mid-term strategies suggested included strengthening the Centre’s specialty, establishing an infrastructure for regional cooperation, and implementing sustainable management strategies.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the research, ICHCAP is going to develop a mid-term strategy (2017-2021) by having close consultations with the UNESCO ICH section, which is expected to be an important part of ICHCAP’s future project development.

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The Kazakh National University of the Arts the Research Institute, named after Korkyt Ata (KazNUA), was established to achieve the lofty goals in science and education development. The main objective of the institute is to study and promote traditional Kazakh art. Investigations into the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh people are conducted in folklore, literature, culture, and art. Since the institute’s main objective is to study the national culture, the employees search for artifacts and collect information related to folk art, in Kazakhstan and other countries.

The folklore laboratory at the institute is working to collect folk music (archives), organize workshops and masterclasses, and take part in government and international research grants.

Researchers of the institute took part in a musical and ethnographic expedition, “Kazakh National Art: The Continuity of Traditions” through which the goal is to collect, study, inventory, identify, and archive ICH and related information.

A musical and ethnographic expedition, The Art of the Turkic Peoples: The Continuity of Traditions, was held in October and November 2012 in the areas of Bayan Olgiy and Cobden, Mongolia to showcase musical folklore in audio-video formats. In 2014, the researchers published a seven-volume collection of selected works, Song Competition of Akyns.

At this time, the members of the institute have developed a three-year work plan to develop, develop, and publish a twenty-five-volume anthology on traditional Kazakh art.

Research and expeditions have been carried out in several stages:

1. In conjunction with TURKSOY, the International Turkic Academy, the Kazakh Ministry of Culture, and the research institute at KazNUA in cooperation with Turkish researchers and undergraduate students from KazNUA, the folklore and ethnographic expedition was held in the Karaganda region. At the end of the expedition, there was a workshop to present video and audio recordings of traditional singers from the expeditions.

2. Field work has been carried out throughout Kazakhstan. Currently, the collected materials are being processed, systematized, inventoried, and archived in addition to being transcribed.

3. The music album, Modern Kazakh Music, was released. It contains sixty samples of musical-poetic heritage of the Kazakh people and other materials from the 2010-2012 expedition.

4. ICHCAP assisted in facilitating the ICH inventory and the use of interactive tools in the third stage of the project (2013-2014). The results of which led to opening a new Internet portal, etnofolk.kz, and later the Database of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kazakhstan will be placed at this site.

The results of the ethnographic expeditions from the past few years can be seen through the questionnaire survey, inventories, and identification and registration of our national values. From this, it is possible to evaluate and draw conclusions relating to safeguarding ICH in each region. Unfortunately, the problem of safeguarding ICH in Kazakhstan is at the lowest level.

Other than cultural activities identified nationally, special programs for ICH safeguarding are still not provided to secure traditional life and customs. In this regard, here are some suggestions from vendors and suppliers of ICH and individuals with an interest to our region:

- create conditions to develop ICH in government, educational institutions, and informal organizations to open training workshops, studios, schools, etc. in regional district centers and in villages and provide financial assistance
- provide material and moral support for ICH suppliers to obtain social and public status
- create a database of ICH to identify and inventory
- unite non-government organizations to develop ICH

To safeguard Kazakh ICH just now is a great experience, and assistance from UNESCO and others is needed to preserve this and other unique cultures because people still retain the most valuable and sacred heritage of humanity. Therefore, we must safeguard this unique property.
The 2003 Convention at a Glance

The popularity of the 2003 Convention is unparalleled. In just over a decade, there has been an 82.5 percent participation rate among UNESCO Member States. To keep this in perspective, it took twenty-eight years for the 1972 Convention to reach the same level of acceptance. While inscribing ICH elements on the lists is not the goal of the 2003 Convention, the listing mechanism does give us some measure of community participation since community participation is a criterion for being listed. As such, we can see that the 2003 Convention has been meeting its goal of raising awareness of ICH at the community level, and the existence of multinational inscriptions also points toward an environment of collaboration.

We can see that the percentage of nations listing in each region is 50 percent or more; however, the regional distribution of inscriptions shows an over-representation in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, the inscriptions also point toward a preference for nominating elements to the Representative List.

1. All geographic data and related lists are based on UNESCO’s electoral groupings, so countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, for example, are included in Eastern Europe, not Asia-Pacific.

References

Michael Peterson (ICHCAP)
ICH News Briefs

[UNESCO-CRIHAP] Training of Trainers Workshop on Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region

From 19 to 23 January 2015, the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (CRIHAP) hosted and generously supported a training-of-trainers workshop on safeguarding plans and policy support. At the center of the event, which was co-facilitated by UNESCO, were two questions: What knowledge and skills are required to develop effective intangible cultural heritage safeguarding plans? How does one acquire these competencies successfully?

The training workshop included eleven expert facilitators and ten UNESCO culture officers, including Mr. Rieks Smeets and Ms. Janet Blake who are both senior specialists on the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and others who are involved in implementing the global capacity-building strategy for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region.

During the five-day workshop, the facilitators discussed issues related to building Member States’ capacity to implement intangible cultural heritage safeguarding measures, improve safeguarding policy measures, and build a framework for sustainable development. The participants tested a new interactive methodology that UNESCO developed for this purpose, and they discussed new training approaches in two other thematic areas as well: policy development and gender.

[Source: UNESCO]

[UNESCO] Towards Codes of Ethic for Intangible Cultural Heritage

From 30 March to 1 April 2015, twelve experts from around the world gathered in Valencia, Spain, to reflect on the main lines that should figure into codes of ethics for intangible cultural heritage. Concrete examples in fields related to intangible heritage were discussed (cultural heritage, museums, anthropology, folklore, tourism, the media, and intellectual property). Also on discussion were the different approaches that are possible for ethical codes or codes of conduct, and whether the goal should be a single model code or several different ones addressed to different sectors.

The key areas covered during the meeting, which was organized by UNESCO and the government of Spain, included discovery of the core values and ethical principles—drawn from the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage—that ought to guide all safeguarding efforts and whether they should be undertaken by states, communities, civil society, or the private sector. Also on topic were ideas about how those core values and principles can be integrated into one or more model codes of ethics that could orient the work of different actors in different contexts and whether a model code could be translated effectively into concrete, practical tools that can be used in the day-to-day work of safeguarding.

The Director-General of UNESCO and representatives of Spain and local institutions welcomed the participants and inaugurated this important meeting. The final results of the meeting will be presented to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage during its tenth session, which will convene in Namibia from 30 November to 4 December 2015.

[Source: UNESCO]

[IRCI-Malaysia] Meeting of Experts in Kuala Lumpur

On 26 and 27 January 2015, Dr. Gulnara Aitpaeva, Director of Aigine Cultural Research Center, attended UNESCO experts’ meeting in Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia, on safeguarding ICH in the designated regions. The meeting was organized by the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) in collaboration with the Museum of Islamic Art in Kuala-Lumpur (Islamic Arts Museum of Malaysia). Experts from Malaysia, India, Japan, Fiji, Vietnam, Korea, Iran, and Kyrgyzstan presented reports and case-studies at the meeting.

Dr. Gulnara Aitpaeva presented an article on safeguarding the Kyrgyz epic trilogy, Manas, Semetey, and Seitek through digitization. The paper synthesized the results of the successful safeguarding practices from 2010 to 2014 and described the methods for problem identification, emphasizing the leading role of epic chanters in implementing the project and incorporating the epic’s digitalized version into education systems. Taking into account that the Kyrgyz...
epic is a living heritage, safeguarding a variety of the epic versions and diversity of recitation styles were one of the main goals of the project.

All reports are to be published on the IRCI website (http://www.irci.jp/)

[Korea] The Intangible Cultural Heritage Development and Promotion Act

The National Assembly approved the Intangible Cultural Heritage Development and Promotion Act in February. It will go into effect on 28 March 2016. The purpose of this act is to aid with transmitting traditional heritage and to contribute to developing human culture by promoting ICH.

Since the Cultural Heritage Protection Act was established in 1962, the definition of ICH has been limited to skills and arts. This new act will extend the definition of ICH into seven categories that make it possible to develop and transmit a larger variety of elements:

- performing arts
- traditional craftsmanship on the craft and the fine art
- knowledge on the medicine, farming and fishing
- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
- social practices such as food, clothing, and shelter
- social rituals such as folk beliefs
- traditional games, festivals and martial arts

This act has a great historical significance that provides a new framework of safeguarding ICH under the 2003 Convention and plays an important role in raising awareness of Korean ICH.

[IRCI] The First Intensive Researchers Meeting on Communities and the 2003 Convention

IRCI held the First Intensive Researchers Meeting on Communities and the 2003 Convention: Documentation of ICH as a Tool for Community’s Safeguarding Activities in Tokyo on 3 and 4 March.

The intended purpose of the meeting was to allow researchers a venue to share good practices and discuss documentation approaches that may be used by communities as a tool to safeguard the communities’ ICH. The researchers developed a framework called “Guidelines for ICH Documentation as a Tool for Community Safeguarding,” which might be a first step toward practical safeguarding approaches in the Asia-Pacific region in the future.

[CRIHAP-Cambodia] Chinese Experts Train Cambodian Officials

A five-day training course on how digital technology can be applied to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage began on 16 March in Siem Reap, Cambodia. More than a hundred Cambodian culture officials attended the event, which was co-hosted by the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh and under the sponsorship of the International Training Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (CRIHAP).

The training workshop is part of the overall plan to build the capacity of Cambodian officials who are involved with safeguarding and inventorying intangible cultural heritage. It was an opportunity for participants to become acquainted with best safeguarding practices as introduced by the Chinese experts and UNESCO trainers.

This is the second CRIHAP training workshop for Cambodian officials; the first one was held in March 2014. These workshops are part of CRIHAP’s objective of implementing a global capacity-building strategy for effective ICH safeguarding.

[UNESCO Bangkok] Learning with Intangible Heritage for Sustainable Future: Guidelines for Educators in the Asia-Pacific Region

A newly developed guide provides teacher educators and teachers with an understanding intangible cultural heritage and explains why ICH should be integrated into the curriculum in tandem with the principles and perspectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This guide explains how strategically incorporating ICH elements and ESD principles into the curriculum can enable learners to gain the knowledge and skills that are necessary for ensuring sustainable development in the future.

Within the framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, this guide is intended to raise the capacity of teachers to incorporate local elements of ICH, and principles of ESD, into teaching and learning practices. The guide provides examples of how the teaching and learning of ICH for sustainable development has been creatively incorporated into several disciplines—such as mathematics, science, music, and social studies—in various cultural settings. It also suggests steps for preparing and assessing lesson plans.

UNESCO developed this guide based on the results of pilot projects conducted in four countries in the Asia-Pacific region, where participants developed locally customized guidelines and materials to incorporate ICH elements and ESD principles into teaching and learning in schools. The ICH examples in this guide are just illustrative samples and should not be considered more significant than other expressions, nor are they ones that should be prioritized.

[Source: UNESCO Bangkok]