ICHCAP and the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology co-organized 2015 Sub-regional Meeting for Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding in Southeast Asia, which was held from 6 to 7 October in Hanoi, Vietnam. Southeast Asia, a wide area with abundant ICH, has been dedicating substantial efforts toward implementing the 2003 Convention and raising the visibility of ICH in the region.

UNESCO has been highlighting the importance of ICH bearers and communities, who are the main actors in the practice and transmission of ICH. Because of this importance, the “Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage,” which emphasizes the important role of ICH communities, groups, and individuals, was adopted at the tenth Intergovernmental Committee for ICH safeguarding that was held in Namibia in December.

ICHCAP and the eight Southeast Asian Member States, including Vietnam, agreed to collaborate on the ICH Stakeholder Mapping in Southeast Asia project that will be implemented from 2016 to 2017 to collect information and build networks among ICH stakeholders especially ICH NGOs and communities. The two-year collaborative project consists of four sub-projects—co-publishing a directory of ICH stakeholders and databases, jointly publishing a casebook on good practices with ICH networks, publishing ICH photo collections and ICH photo galleries, and co-organizing the 2017 sub-regional meeting for ICH safeguarding in Southeast Asia.

The first working group meeting was held on the occasion of the sub-regional meeting held in Hanoi. The ICH experts and representatives from governments and NGOs (Cambodia Living Arts, etc.) discussed effective methods for implementing the collaborative projects, and they agreed to make common efforts to let the ICH stakeholder directory be used by stakeholders. To implement the project, ICHCAP will designate several focal points in the participating Southeast Asian states and develop the projects through working group meetings.

Expert Workshop on ICH Video Documentation in Central Asia

ICHAP, in cooperation with the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS) and the National Intangible Heritage Center of Korea, held the Expert Workshop on Video Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Central Asia from 9 to 15 November 2015 in Jeonju, Korea. The meeting was aimed at establishing a two-year joint project on ICH documentation, educating the participants about the details of the Video Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Central Asia project and the video documentation project guidelines, and strengthening the capacity of the Central Asian participants through training. Experts in ICH and video documentation from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Mongolia participated in the workshop.

The workshop provided the participants with an opportunity to discuss and follow up on the project guidelines and to review documentation approaches for each state. The participants were also able to discuss the elements that would be documented during the project implementation.

In addition to reviewing sub-regional case studies for each of the participating states, the participants also engaged in lectures based on the theory and practice of video documentation. These lectures provided valuable exposure to resources that were tapped into during the participants’ field training on days four through six of the workshop.

In a larger sense, the workshop and documentation project are playing a role in guarding fragile cultural heritage against the side effects of modern living—namely modernization and globalization—which in many ways are influencing younger generations to adopt foreign customs as their own. Creating video documentation can give younger audiences exposure to their own traditional culture in an easily digestible format. By raising awareness among the youth through video, it is expected to reignite interest in cultural heritage and to hopefully reverse the global trend of transitioning into a monoculture.
The tenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place at Windhoek, Namibia, from 30 November to 4 December 2015. A non-governmental organization forum took place on the eve of this session, before the opening ceremony, which included live performances and speeches organized by the host country.

During the session, the Committee treated a total of forty-five files for the Urgent Safeguarding List, Representative List, and International Assistance greater than US$25,000 in the course of the 2015 cycle. The committee also reviewed the States Party’s 2015 reports, including twenty-four reports on implementing the Convention, one periodic report from a non-State Party, and three reports on the current status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. In addition, NGOs submitted fifty-four new accreditation requests in the session.

The committee inscribed five elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and twenty-three new elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and approved financial assistance requests from Malawi and Kenya.

The Committee added a new chapter to the operational directives for implementing the Convention and for meeting the United Nation’s 2030 sustainable development goals. Moreover, to acknowledge the crucial role of communities in maintaining and managing their culture and heritage, the Committee adopted twelve ethical principles.

The next annual meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will take place from 28 November to 2 December 2016 in Addis-Abeba, Ethiopia, and will be chaired by Yonas Desta, Director General of the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage.

The year is drawing to a close with just a few days remaining. 2015 has been a whirlwind for me and my new colleagues since my appointment as the second Director-General of ICHCAP in April. We conducted a wide range of cooperative projects and participated in a number of major events and meetings.

The biggest challenge for ICHCAP this year was the evaluation process to renew the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Korea and UNESCO, which is the document that established the Centre. The evaluation is carried out once every six years. And through this process, it has become clear that ICHCAP has achieved much in the past five years, thanks to the participation of States Party, the caring advice from UNESCO Headquarters, and the commitment of our staff. However, we also have to admit that the process of implementing our numerous projects has not been without trial and error and even disharmony among stakeholders. We humbly accept the criticism and promise to apply our best efforts in the areas that need improvement. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to everyone involved in ICHCAP’s activities.

Finally, I would like to share some thoughts about my first participation at the Intergovernmental Committee Session, which was held in Windhoek, Namibia. This was a chance to reflect on the activities of NGOs and their potential. I came to understand that NGOs are key partners to ICHCAP, which primarily exists to serve the functions of networking and information. With this understanding, we must work to build more active and specific ties with NGOs.

I would like to conclude this message with an acknowledgement to Ms. Cecile Duvelle, who will be moving on from heading the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Section at the end of this quarter. Thank you for your hard work over the years.
Updating: Time for Stakeholders

Dr. Marc Jacobs (UNESCO Chair on Critical Heritage Studies and the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Vrije Universiteit Brussel; Director of FARO. Flemish Interface for Cultural Heritage (www.faro.be))

Edward Freeman defined a stakeholder as any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives. In business management literature, stakeholders are people or groups who have the power to directly affect an organization’s future. Others stress that it is necessary to consider a very broad range of individuals, groups, communities, and organizations, including the less powerful: the affected that can also affect, when taken into consideration. Thinking in terms of stakeholders and using mapping techniques, grids, and tools to identify relevant stakeholders have become crucial steps in strategic planning in the twenty-first century, not only in business contexts but also in culture management. In contexts of consensus building, the central process of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, it is an important technique not only for bringing together as much potentially relevant information and experience as possible but also for trying to act in an ethical way and cultivate sustainable development.

Between 2003 and 2016, a strategy of the organs of the 2003 UNESCO Convention was to reduce the vocabulary to a limited set of appropriate words, primarily those used in the authoritative French or English versions of the Convention. The organs tried to be careful and restrictive when expanding that set of words in the subsequent operational directives, in the official nomination and request forms that were used, and in the decisions taken by the Intergovernmental Committee and the General Assembly of the States Party of the 2003 Convention. However, as time progresses, it will be useful or even necessary to introduce new terms like, for instance, “cultural brokerage,” “mediation,” “access and benefit sharing,” or “stakeholders.” A number of problems related to commercialization, commodification, market mechanisms, the range of actors having a stake, and sustainable development were put on the agenda in the 1999 Washington Assessment and analysis of why the 1989 UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore had failed. These issues have been put in the fridge between 2001 and 2003 to reach consensus about the Convention text and later about the subsequent operational directives. But in 2016 they are back, with a vengeance. This is why we need to explicitly activate the aforementioned new words.

While the marathon of expert meetings in UNESCO Headquarters in Paris was going on in 2001, 2002, and 2003, dedicated working groups were working on a glossary. The word “stakeholder” is not mentioned in the final document. The word stakeholder is also not used in the authoritative text of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. For a participatory agenda, the core article of the Convention and the 2003 safeguarding paradigm is article 15.

Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavor to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management. This is what the concept of “stakeholder” is all about, but the concept itself is not used, neither in the section about national implementation, neither in the section about international cooperation. Until 2015, the word “stakeholders” was not used in any of the four versions of the operational directives (2008; 2010; 2012; 2014). In several of those directives, there is, for instance, an extra specification about prior and informed consent, which implies a process for which stakeholder analysis is needed.

But in the Evaluation of UNESCO’s Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector Part I—2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Final Report (2013), the concept of “stakeholder” is manifestly pushed forward. The Internal Oversight Service of UNESCO underlines that safeguarding should be done in a participatory manner and through negotiation within the relevant community and between all stakeholders concerned. In the discussion of the growing need for the culture sector to cooperate with other sectors on policy/legislative development and implementation. The conclusion of IOS was that it was high time to address these challenges and chances. Luckily, from 2015 onwards, there is a real chance to write a new chapter in the history of the 2003 Convention. During the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee in Windhoek in December 2015, the notion of updating unexpectedly turned out to be the central theme. Updating the urgent safeguarding plans by changing the report forms, transferring an item from one international list to another, devoting specific attention to periodic country reports and the role of stakeholders in that process, and supporting closer collaboration between the Secretariat and States Party to fine tune international assistance requests by revising the form ICH-04—these were all addressed during the Windhoek meeting and resulted in decisions.

For all these updating activities, thinking in terms of stakeholders is crucial. In the decisions of the Windhoek meeting, the word “stakeholders” is used many times, including in the new draft chapter of the operational directives and in the decisions about the codes and tools of ethics that should be updated “through a participatory process involving communities, groups and relevant stakeholders.” Henceforth, “stakeholders” is officially part of the appropriate language of the 2003 safeguarding paradigm—just like the sleeping beauty, “updating” has finally been awakened and activated.

ICH NGO Forum in Namibia

On the occasion of 10.COM that took place in Windhoek, Namibia, the ICH NGO Forum and Symposium took place on 29 November 2015.

In addition to reporting on the developments in the ICH NGO Forum in 2015, members and presenters shared information about sustainable development and ethics in relation to ICH; #Heritage Alive, an online ICH NGO journal to exchange experiences from the field; and ICH heritage in conflict areas, such as the Middle East.

For more information about the ICH NGO Forum and its activities at 10.COM please visit ichngoforum.org.
Experiencing Healing Rituals of the Philippines

Windows to ICH provides an introduction to examples of intangible cultural heritage practice from countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region related to a chosen theme. This issue looks at healing rituals. In these examples of intangible cultural heritage from the Philippines, Fiji, Russia, and Korea, you can explore healing rituals around the Asia-Pacific region.

Raquel C. Gocuyo (Researcher, National Commission for Culture and the Arts-Intangible Cultural Heritage Unit)

The Filipinos believe in a two-dimensional world: one of the living and another in a parallel spiritual plane. When the living unintentionally disturbs the spiritual world, unexplained ailments, and misfortunes befall them. When medical science in the world of the living cannot cure unexplainable conditions, Filipinos resort to traditional methods, reaching out to the spiritual world in various ways.

Among the Tagalog, the manghihilot is recognized as one who has the ability to heal anybody who suffers from body pains. With the use of coconut oil, the manghihilot massages and frees the knots that cause the pain.

Coconut oil is also an important medical application for the albularyo or herbal ritualist. Unlike the manghihilot, however, the albularyo uses herbal concoctions, prayers, and incantations for specific ailments and maladies.

Personal experience with an albularyo happened to me when I was in grade school and suffering from tagulabay, a skin condition. For more than a week, patches of various sizes slowly appeared exactly at twilight, completely covering my skin throughout the night. At sunrise, the rashes disappeared, leaving only reddish marks.

It was around this time that an old woman, an albularyo, visited our house in Quezon City, located near the boundary of Manila. Not as populated as it is now, that area had a mini-forest at the end of the street, with water flowing down the creeks in front and surrounding our house. Old folks say this waterway is “buhay na tubig” (living water), where they believe unseen elements reside.

The albularyo made each family member lie on our wooden couch in the living room. With a lighted candle, she recited some prayers, made a sign of the cross on our bellies as she applied coconut oil and ash from the match she lit. She sprinkled an orange-flavored soda drink as she offered prayers around the house. After her visit, the rashes never made another appearance.

In 2014, while doing field research in Manabo, Abra, I met then 29-year-old Arsenio Norzales, a local healer from Mogpog, Marinduque. Known as a mantatawak, people flock to his house in Barangay Janagdong for his tawak, a local brew he prepares annually only during Holy Week. The tawak serves as an antidote against animal bites, specifically dogs and snakes, which farmers like him are prone to.

A combination of leaves, herbs, barks, and vines, the ingredients of the tawak are collected as early as Holy Monday in the forests and mangrove. When all the ingredients are gathered, Norzales prepares them for brewing on Holy Thursday. It takes at least four hours for the tawak to turn red, the indicator that it is ready for drinking. By early morning of Good Friday, people start to come to get the first taste of the brew. They drink as much as they can before returning home with a bottle or two for other family members.

The traditional ways are as numerous as there are practitioners who vary their practice according to their individual predilection.
Many of the practices of Fijian medicine arise from the traditional explanations of Fijian society. The main functioning unit of Fijian society is the mataqali or land-owning unit. In mythology, each mataqali is descended from an ancestral spirit or vu who continues to inhabit his portion of land and monitor the welfare of his descendants. The vu is one of a larger group of spirits or nitu, although it is the only one who is associated with land in this way. Humans may communicate with vu or nitu through dreams or visions. Ceremonies associated with yaqona are another way of obtaining this inspiration.

In Fijian tradition, many minor illnesses are classified as mate vayago, including coughs and cold, cuts and wounds, boils, scabies, ringworm, and other minor illnesses. These are generally given little attention. However, if one of these diseases is more severe or lasts longer than usual, it is possible that it might be a mate ni vanua instead. The only way that this could be diagnosed is through the use of a traditional healer or vuniwai. (It should be noted that this is also the name now given to Western healers.)

The term vuniwai is derived from the words vu meaning the ultimate cause or source, and wai meaning water, medicine, or liquid. The vuniwai is therefore a healer who provides wai. The vuniwai may diagnose any illness as being mate ni vanua, but there are also a number of diseases that never result from incidental circumstances. These include diseases that affect the head—such as headaches or toothaches and severe attacks of fever associated with difficulty sleeping—and said to be due to boils inside the spine or abdomen.

Traditional Fijian therapeutics involved two main groups of therapeutic practices: those aimed at immediate relief of symptoms, and measures adopted to deal with the ultimate causes of the disease (as discussed above). Both lay people and the vuniwai were aware of a number of herbal and surgical remedies that were thought to provide immediate symptomatic relief. These remedies make up the bulk of present-day collections of Fijian herbal medicines. In addition, the vuniwai was able to use wai that were often very specialized for certain diseases or could sometimes receive revelations in visions or dreams to make up other prescriptions.

There are also those who heal specific injuries and ailments. In Fiji, famed firewalkers of Beqa Island, have the power to walk unharmed over hot stones whose heat can be felt at least three meters away. In the olden days, a water spirit by the name of Tui Namoliwai gave the gift over heat to a prince called Tui Qalita by promising that his generations will walk on hot stones till the end of the world. Tui Qalita’s generation from the male line belong to the Sawau tribe in Beqa, and they have become its traditional high priest. In addition, Tui Qalita’s generations are endowed with the power to heal any burns of any degree if they are the first to tend to it. Numerous anecdotal stories abound in Fiji about this amazing healing power, which can bring complete healing with no scars or pain within four days after continuously and softly touching an effected area. Intermarriage has resulted in this gift passing to the children of Sawau women who marry into other tribes in Fiji.

Just recently, an iTaukei Fijian, Waisake Naholo a winger on the New Zealand All Blacks, suffered a cracked fibula, which almost saw him out of the rugby World Cup. He headed back to Fiji to seek traditional healing. He was healed within ten weeks by Isei Naiova, an uncle of his from Nadroumai Village in Nadroga Province on mainland Vitilevu, whose family was endowed with the power to heal bone fractures. According to Naiova, locally grown kawakawarau leaves were wrapped around his legs. After four days, the leaves were removed. Treatment included gentle massages and regular application of the kawakawarau leaves according to their traditional heritage.

These are but two examples of specialized healing endowed only on specific families or clans. There are many more instances in Fiji regarding healers and their healing gift ranging over minor to serious injuries.
Background

In the Buryat tradition (and in the Mongolian as well), “shamans” were not pure shamans in the classical sense of the word. Those involved with medical affairs were considered mediums between the lower sphere of the Eternal Blue Sky (Khukhe Monke Tengeri) and land inhabitants. Eternal Blue Sky worship was a traditional religious belief of Mongolians. Cross-cultural influences with the neighboring Tunguso-Manchurian people, whose religious traditions may be identified as classical forms of shamanism, introduced the ideas of ‘shaman’ and ‘shamanism’ to the Mongols.

It is now known that the Mongols, before adopting Buddhism, were followers of the Tengrianic religious system and had rituals similar to the shamanic rituals of the Evenks and Manchus. The mediators between people and local deities and different protectors in the Buryat tradition were called boo (male) and udagan (female). In the classical form of shamanism among the Evenks (the Tungusians), a mediator is called cam, and the Manchu term, saman. Evidence accumulated over the past thirty-five years indicates that the term and phenomenon of ‘shamanism’ in the context of the Buryat religious traditions is based on an anthropological mistake of labeling the rituals of the Buryat, Evenks, and Manchus traditions under a single umbrella term “shamanism.” This oversight is the result of the European missionaries’ ignorance of indigenous people’s lifestyle, ethnicity, etc. Regardless of technical issues with the nomenclature, I will use ‘shamanism’ and related terms because they are already established in the cultural anthropology field.

Buryat Healing Rituals

Buryat healing rituals in so-called shamanic culture developed mainly from popular Buryat folk medicine. The healing ceremonies are fixed and subdivided into rituals connected to the psychological state of the patient and those related to the physiological state of the patient. Rituals related to psychology include calling to the spirit of a yet-to-be-conceived baby of infertile parents, pacifying mentally ill patients, and extending a patient’s life cycle. Physiological rituals are for treating internal disease, exchanging the life of a patient with the life of an animal, trimming a patient’s hair at a predetermined age, etc.

In Buryat beliefs, the Eternal Blue Sky is a Universal Supreme deity on which everyone’s life and health depends and the shaman is an intermediary between heaven and earth. So, the shaman performing the healing ceremonies and rituals is possessed with special transcendental abilities or can enter a transcendental state during rituals.

Rituals to treat general malaise or to target specific internal diseases involve covering the patient with the warm internal organs of a specially butchered animal, often a sheep or horse, and wrapping the organs against the body of the patient with the animal’s hide. For example, to treat liver disease, the shaman would place the warm liver of a just-slaughtered sheep on the patient and then wrap the organ against the patient’s body using the sheep’s hide.

Rituals to induce pregnancy in women having trouble with conception involved presenting gifts—usually white dairy products to symbolize heavenly origins—to the deities, reading prayers, and attaching color tape to tree branches. Through the ritual, the winds inform the gods of the patient’s desire to have a child.

Another kind of ritual is for the health of an entire family. In these cases, the shaman would select one animal from the family’s herds—usually a goat or horse—and attach sacral tape to the back of the animal. Once the animal goes through the ritual, it is considered sacred, and the family is no longer allowed to use it for work or other economic gain.

The healing rituals presented here are just a few of a larger and quite varied repertoire of traditions used by Buryats.
In the days before modern medicine, severe illnesses were thought to be the mischief of spirits. Thus, the best way to cure a disease was to exorcise the disease-causing spirit through a byeong-gut (shamanistic healing ritual). This ritual went by different names according to the region. In Hwanghae Province, it was known as the toesong-gut or hajik-gut; in Seoul and the Gyeonggi Province region, it was called chibyeong-gut; and in the Chungcheong region, it was known as the judangpuri-gut.

The gut, or shamanistic ritual, held during epidemics was called sonnimmama-gut, the word sonnim for guest and mama for measles, a disease that used to cause widespread suffering. A sonnimbaesong-gut (sending off a guest ritual) was held to send away the measles spirit when one fell ill to the disease.

Shamanistic healing rituals usually fell into the category of byeong-gut. Ancient Koreans used to think that there were various spirits in charge of their respective diseases. The sonnim spirit, found all over Korea, used to refer to a measles spirit, but the scope was later expanded to include all diseases. Although the ssitgim-gut (washing ritual) of the Honam region and byeolshin-gut of the east coast are not strictly categorized as byeong-gut, they include sonnim-gut held in honor of the measles spirit and thus can be thought of as a kind of byeong-gut. In Seoul and the Gyeonggi region, an unmarried female spirit whose life was taken by measles was called a hagu spirit. Having passed away from measles, a disfiguring disease, the female spirit is shy to show her face and enters the gut stage, covering her face with her red skirt. She asks for money to buy powder and a mirror so that she can let down her skirt as she leaves and bless the gathering. The people donate willingly, eager to chase away the disease.

As part of this belief, village shrines in Seoul, where the various patron spirits of the village are enshrined, have pictures of hagu spirits to pray for good health and recovery from diseases. In the bugundang (village patron spirit shrine) of Yongmun-dong in Seoul, the hagu spirit is called haguassi (mistress hagu) and enshrined in the form of various paintings. Spirits that controlled diseases were called byeolseong spirits in many islands around Ganghwa Island of Incheon. They were thought to be greedy spirits who had to be appeased through reverence and respect at all times. Many spirits were embodied in various physical forms and worshipped to avoid disease.

Although byeong-gut were performed during outbreaks of disease, disease spirits —hagu, byeonseong and sonnim—were included in ordinary rituals such as jaesu-gut (good fortune ritual) and jinogi-gut (ritual to send off the dead into heaven). Caution was exercised in everyday life and all gut included some form of disease-related ritual to prevent outbreaks.

The judangpuri-gut is a primary example of a healing ritual still being performed today. The shaman lays the patient down and mimics chasing away spirits with a variety of tools. The patient is also covered with a cloth and exorcised of the ill spirit through the power of the patron spirit. All participants, including the shaman that performs the ritual and the family of the patient praying that the disease will be chased away, firmly believe in the effectiveness of the ritual.

Even with the development of science, byeong-gut are still carried out around the country, based on the belief that the fate of humans is not up to their own will, that there are larger powers at play. Therefore, the continuing existence of byeong-gut in the present day shows the humility of people who believe in powers greater than themselves.
O
f the fifty-four ethnic groups in Vietnam, the Kinh (also known as the Viet) people account for 85 percent of the entire population of Vietnam while the remaining 15 percent of the population is made up of the other fifty-three minorities. Within the group of minorities are the Nung people who have a population of around one million and reside in the northern mountainous provinces on the border with China.

Nung language is in the Tay-Thai language group, which is part of the Tai-Kadai language family, a family of highly tonal languages of southern China, northern Vietnam, and other countries of Southeast Asia. The Nung ancestors were related to Choang (Zhuang) group of China and began immigrating to Vietnam three hundred years ago. These ties to ancient China can still be felt today as the Nung of Vietnam are commonly subdivided into different groups based on their pre-migration residence in China—namely, Nung An (An Ket district), Nung Inh (Long Anh district), Nung Phan Slindh (Van Thanh district), Nung Chao (Long Chau district), Nung Loi (Ha Loi district), Nung Quy Rịn (Quy Thuan district). Another form of categorization is based on the groups’ traditional costume. For example, the Nung Khen Lai are recognized by clothes’ sleeves grafted with colorful fabrics.

Nung people’s diverse treasure of literature and art is teeming with storytelling, narrative poetry, and folk music. The literary themes in these arts include romantic ties, love for country, and ethical lessons. Folk songs play an important role in the Nung’s daily activities, from birth to death. Included in the repertoire are lullabies, love-exchange songs, wedding songs, funeral songs, and more. Even more notable is that music is part of even the most common activities, such as ceremonial prayers for abundant harvests and prayers for safety. While the music of the Nung takes on several forms, two-part singing is among the most prominent.

Two-Part Singing of the Nung Ethnic Group

Two-part singing among the Nung takes on special characteristics among the different Nung subgroups. These differences will be explored in a moment. For now, let us explore some common attributes among the different forms of Nung two-part singing. For example, they all share points in the purpose, time, venue, and texture of the performance as well as in performing methods.

Songs for two-part singing are often performed for love-exchange, on the way to festivals, longevity wishing ceremonies, or on special occasions to celebrate the New Year, moving to a new house, first birthdays, and weddings. A full session of two-part singing takes part in three phases—namely, the greetings, love-exchange singing (the main part), and the farewell. When taken as a whole, the multiple long phases can make a session last the whole night and day.

Two-part singing always happens between a couple of males and a couple of females without musical accompaniment. A member of each group sings the high part, and the other sings the low part. The two members have to harmonize their vocals with each other and ensure that they both pause at the same moment and on the same note. As is common with other types of love-exchange singing, the lyrics of the Nung’s two-part singing are improvised. In fact, the competition of lyric improvisation is what really fascinates people about two-part singing.

As mentioned, each Nung subgroup has developed its own features in poetry genre, rhyme, expletives, singing style, vocal harmonization method, and so on. For example, the ha leu songs of the Nung Loi subgroup and sli giang songs of the Nung...
Giang subgroup mostly employ a seven-meter verse, so a singing section is a combination of two seven-meter lines. However, the rhyme styles of ha leu and sli giang are different from each other. In ha leu singing, the fifth word of the second line rhymes with the seventh word of the first line; whereas in sli giang singing, the seventh word of the previous line rhymes with the fourth word of the latter line.

Unlike ha leu and sli giang, heo phjun and phuon ngan singing use a five-meter verse instead of a seven-meter one. Four five-meter lines constitute a singing section, which correspond to a single exchange between male and female singing. The rules for making rhyme in heo phjun and phuon ngan are not as strict as those of ha leu and sli giang, but the relevance in content of the lyrics is more important.

Among the eight subgroups of the Nung ethnic group, there are many other differences like those highlighted here. These specific characteristics of two-part singing among the Nung subgroups of Vietnam contribute to making this form of folk music so diverse.

**Challenges Facing Two-Part Singing**

Two-part singing of the Nung has long been part of their cultural identity. In the past, all Nung could sing traditional two-part songs, but today few can. Because of changes in social life, economic development, mass media saturation, people now have exposure to different cultural and art products. Along with these changes, people’s tastes in art and patterns of consumption have also changed and have contributed to the decline of this folk singing. The younger generations pay little attention to folk art in general, and they refuse to learn two-part singing because they believe singing these songs makes them oldfangled. So while young people are not learning, the older people who can sing these songs are passing away, so the number of tradition holders is falling.

The performing space of two-part singing is also different from the old days. Singing sessions were once performed as part of daily life, but today they have become directed performances on the stage. While such a change may seem minor on the surface, it is actually having a major effect on the art. Since the singers are being directed, the audience can no longer enjoy the lyrics through the improvisation competence of two-part singing practitioners.

To preserve and bring two-part singing back to daily life, we need to facilitate transmission from older to younger generations and encourage young people to perceive traditional cultural heritage in a new way. A long-term aim of Vietnamese cultural managers and music researchers is to help the next generation recognize, respect, and love the values of the cultural heritage invented by their ancestors so that the younger generation will voluntarily preserve the valuable cultural heritage and become a new generation of tradition holders who can pass this knowledge into the future.
Today, it is generally acknowledged that indigenous culture and knowledge around the world is under threat by globalization, rights infringement and violation, and other effects of modernization, including the general lack of respect for traditional culture and the individuals or communities through which that culture is manifested.

Over the past several decades, the loss and rapid deterioration of cultural heritage has prompted an international effort to safeguard cultural heritage in general and intangible culture heritage in particular. The emphasis on intangible cultural heritage should not come as a surprise since such cultural heritage represents the creativity of the communities that have created and applied it to their daily lives. Since developing any form of intangible cultural heritage is dependent on the environment, lifestyle, and context of the individual community, these cultural elements can be seen as representations of a community’s identity. This is why safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is so important. Not safeguarding it would erase the identity of a people and force communities to move toward an international monoculture based on foreign ideals.

**Department of Cultural Promotion**

In Thailand, as part of its national effort to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, the Department of Cultural Promotion (DCP) has launched a series of projects with a primary mission to inventory the intangible cultural heritage of the nation. The inventorying projects show the country’s dedication to safeguarding its people’s heritage and promote community involvement, which ultimately increases the communities’ sense of pride in their local traditions.

The DCP has been operating under the following objectives related to intangible cultural heritage.

- To record the background history, wisdom, and identity of the intangible cultural heritage
- To create a database on the intangible cultural heritage of Thailand
- To enhance community, group, or individual pride in intangible cultural heritage
- To promote and develop the rights of communities to conserve, perpetuate, restore, and safeguard local and national intangible cultural heritage
- To prepare the groundwork for Thailand becoming a State party to the UNESCO 2003 Convention of the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural heritage
- To draft laws on the continued protection and research of intangible cultural heritage

As part of these objectives, from 2005 to 2009, the DCP compiled Thailand’s first national inventory of intangible cultural heritage through fieldwork and collaboration between researchers and local communities.
From the inventory listing, 318 elements or forms of intangible cultural heritage have carefully been studied and further selected to receive recognition as part of Thailand’s national cultural treasures.

**Thailand’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Domains**

Thailand’s inventory is composed of into seven domains that best accommodate the range of Thai cultural expressions and complement the structure of the existing Thai database. These seven domains closely resemble the five domains of the 2003 Convention, which will help pave the way for Thailand to become a State Party to the Convention. The seven domains are described below; the numerals in parentheses indicate the total number of national cultural treasures registered under the domain as of 2015.

- **Performing Arts (67)** are expressions of emotion, feelings, or stories through producing sound (singing or music playing), through body movement (dance), through object manipulation (puppeteering), and through other gestures. The domain includes music, performance, music and performance in rituals, and folk song.

- **Folk Literature (58)** includes the stories that reflect the local way of life and are transmitted in either oral or written form. The domain includes folk literature, oral histories, incantations, folk verbal scripts, idioms and adages, riddles, and treatises.

- **Linguistic and Communication Tools (27)** are primarily focused on language as ideational and interpersonal modes and media of communication. Included in this domain are the Thai language, regional dialects of Thai, and other ethnic languages spoken on a local level.

- **Social Practices, Rituals, and Festive Events (35)** are expressions of established customary or traditional behaviors that have been transmitted for generations. The domain includes manners, customs, and ceremonies or rites.

- **Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe (40)** is made up of groups’, communities’, and regions’ knowledge, abilities, and skills for harmoniously existing with nature and the universe. Elements included here involve gastronomy and culinary arts, health care, astrology and astronomy, and natural resources management and settlement.

- **Traditional Craftsmanship (57)** is the domain applied to a group’s knowledge and skills in making handicrafts that reflect their identity, social development, and culture. Textiles and textile-product making, basketry, lacquerware, pottery, metalwork, woodwork, leatherwork, ornamentation, folk art, and other kinds of craftsmanship are included in this domain.

- **Traditional Sports (34)** are interactions or competitions between individuals or communities as forms of entertainment or recreation that help with physical and mental development, all of which are reflections on the community’s way of life and identity. This domain is made up of folk games, folk sports, martial arts, and other forms of traditional sport.

**Inventorying to What End**

DCP is currently drafting a law on intangible cultural heritage to enhance the policies and tools for safeguarding Thailand’s intangible cultural heritage. Once the law is enacted, it should further promote a larger role for local governments and communities in the inventorying process.

It is important to note that the DCP’s inventorying efforts and listing of national cultural treasures have not been designed for the sole purpose of having lists. Instead, listing can be useful as part of an overall safeguarding strategy. By listing the elements, the DCP is acknowledging the importance of local heritage and promoting cultural tourism, which can lead to sustainable development. In addition, this acknowledgement is giving local communities a greater sense of pride in their intangible heritage, and it allows communities to also see how their heritage is a reflection of the nation’s overall prestige as a unique member of global society. As Thailand moves forward with ratifying the Convention, it is important for local communities to see how their local activities can and do play a larger role for the future of humanity.
ICHCAP has been working to fulfill its mandated functions related to disseminating ICH information by publishing information and providing it to the general public through print and web media. One project that stands at the forefront of the Centre promoting ICH information is the ICH Courier, ICHCAP’s quarterly newsletter.

In the autumn of 2009, ICHCAP published the first volume of the ICH Courier. As ICHCAP’s first endeavor to circulate quarterly information about intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region, the ICH Courier has been a source of pride for the Centre. Today, six years later, readership is the thousands and is continuing to grow. During this six-year period, ICHCAP has undergone some significant changes but the overall format and content departments of the ICH Courier have remained largely the same since the newsletter was first published. To best serve the changing needs of our readership and reflect the changes that have been going on in ICHCAP, the Centre has decided to give the ICH Courier a much-needed update.

Starting next year, ICHCAP will be updating the ICH Courier by improving its layout, contents, and structure. Each volume will have more pages and include more information about ICH and safeguarding practices in the region. Furthermore, we will also be offering ICH news via a new online platform that includes a monthly e-newsletter deliverable to subscribers’ e-mail. More information about these changes will be coming soon, but for today, before moving forward, we would like to pay homage to the ICH Courier by celebrating its past as we move on to the future.

**Where We Have Been**

Each content department of the newsletter was developed for the specific needs of our reading audience. While some departments have been more prominent than others, each complemented one another to create a substantive whole covering ICH information of the Asia-Pacific region and sometimes even beyond.

We have invited experts to contribute to the Field Report, Inventory-Making Efforts, and Safeguarding Pioneers departments to highlight some of the institutional efforts and concerns related to ICH. In a similar fashion, the Expert Remarks section has served as a platform for esteemed ICH professionals to present their thoughts and perspectives about the cultural heritage field.

Windows to ICH has always been a main focus of the ICH Courier. Covering four pages, this department is a celebration of ICH and the communities in which the ICH elements are practiced. In each issue, we examined four ICH elements under a related theme. The first volume opened the Windows to ICH with articles on the representations of and practices related to goddesses of the Asia-Pacific region. Since then, we have striven to offer information on a wide range of ICH while maintaining a regional balance. On occasion, we have had a sub-regional focus offering a more in-depth look into the diverse nature of ICH on a smaller scale. For example, volume 23 focused on the Pacific sub-region.

Written primarily by ICHCAP staff, the ICH Issues and ICHCAP Inside departments have been largely dedicated to providing our readers with information about the major tasks and happenings at ICHCAP. The goal has been to ensure that our readers understand more about what ICHCAP is doing within its mandated information and networking functions.

**A Parting Message**

Next year when we launch our new ICH Courier, you can expect to see some of the sections you have grown familiar with, but there will be additional content departments and new approach that we look forward to sharing with you.

As we move forward, ICHCAP would like to take a moment to offer our greatest and sincerest thanks to all our contributors and readers of the past six years. Without all of you, the ICH Courier would not be the success it has become today.

*Editorial Staff (ICHCAP)*
The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies

Don Niles (Acting Director & Senior Ethnomusicologist, Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies)

The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (IPNGS) was established under the Cultural Development Act, passed by the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly on 14 October 1974. Papua New Guinea had become self-governing from Australia almost a year earlier, but independence was still about another year in the future. Today IPNGS is a national cultural institution under the National Cultural Commission Act. It moved to its present location towards the end of 1976. The distinctive welded sculptures on the outside walls and gates depict the Oroko story of Aru Aru and his journey to the moon, as told by Sir Albert Maori Kiki.

Although laws, governments, ministries, and even the location of the Institute have changed over the past four decades, the main focus has remained constant: the documentation, archiving, and promotion of Papua New Guinea cultures.

Overseen by the Director, IPNGS is divided into departments for its present three main functions: Music (5 staff), Ethnology (3), and Literature (1). There are also two staff in administration, and five casual workers. Emphases have changed over the years. For example, IPNGS’s prolific Film Department moved to Goroka in 1999, where it was re-established as part of the National Film Institute, another national cultural institution. Additionally, the role of the Music Department has been considerably expanded to accommodate the activities of a dance ethnologist.

Research staff members undertake research in villages and towns, or at festivals. Such research might be on specific topics, such as clan origin stories or the variety of dances performed at a particular festival, or more general survey work, such as documenting musical traditions in a particular village. While the primary focus is on traditional expressions, attention is also given to more recently developed expressions of culture, such as those performed in church or as part of widespread popular forms.

The Ethnology Department is responsible for documenting the many myths, legends, and other oral traditions found in the country. Publications have been produced in English as well as local languages, both to promote the maintenance of this important body of knowledge and to encourage vernacular literacy.

For many years, the Literature section was responsible for promoting creative writing, especially through the running of the annual National Literature Competition. Many submissions were made for categories such as novels, short stories, poetry, radio plays, essays, etc. The results appeared in our journals such as Gigibori, Bikmaus, and Sope, or as separate publications. We hope to revive the National Literature Competition in the near future.

Intangible cultural heritage has long been collected in Papua New Guinea; but only recently, following the nation’s ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2008, has that term been used. In particular, the IPNGS Music Department has strived to develop its music archive to reflect all music-related research that has been done in the country. Although the collection can always be expanded, to a large extent this goal has been achieved.

The Music Archive presently contains about 12,000 hours of recordings on reels of tape, cassettes, discs, films, videos, CDs, and DVDs, with over 10,000 photos and 4,000 books, articles, and theses. These materials are a mixture of things collected by IPNGS staff, other researchers, commercially produced items, and historical recordings of PNG music from other archives around the world, such as those in Germany, Austria, France, Finland, Great Britain, Hungary, Australia, and the United States. These efforts in repatriation have been particularly successful. The IPNGS collection contains recordings from the present back to 1898, when the first recordings in PNG were made.

As with the other sections of the IPNGS, the Music Department has issued numerous publications. Presently, there is a series of cassette and disc recordings, a monograph series (Apwitihire), and a journal (Kulele). Our publications are widely used in the school system and have been well received overseas.

In total, IPNGS has produced about 250 publications, printed, audio, and films/videos. It has also played an important role in making materials published in languages such as German, Japanese, and local languages accessible through translations in to English or Tok Pisin.

In addition to its own activities, staff members collaborate with other institutions, such as with the National Cultural Commission in cultural mapping or the Phonogrammarchiv (Vienna) in their publication of early recordings of PNG music. Furthermore, staff members are increasingly involved in relevant international activities, such as representing PNG in the International Council for Traditional Music since 1980 and becoming increasingly involved in the governance of that organization, and participating in the World Dance Alliance and the International Association for Sound and Audiovisual Archives.

Although IPNGS has been collecting, documenting, archiving, and promoting the cultures of PNG for over four decades, the cultural diversity of the country ensures that this job has only just begun.
The Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

To Prevent Disrespect and Misappropriation of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage have been elaborated in the spirit of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and existing international normative instruments protecting human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples. They represent a set of overarching aspirational principles that are widely accepted as constituting good practices for governments, organizations and individuals directly or indirectly affecting intangible cultural heritage in order to ensure the viability of intangible cultural heritage, thereby recognizing its contribution to peace and sustainable development. Complementary to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention and national legislative frameworks, these Ethical Principles are intended to serve as a basis for the development of specific codes of ethics and tools adapted to local and sectoral conditions.

1. Communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals should have the primary role in safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage.

2. The right of communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals to continue the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills necessary to ensure the viability of the intangible cultural heritage should be recognized and respected.

3. Mutual respect as well as a respect for and mutual appreciation of intangible cultural heritage, should prevail in interactions between States and between communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals.

4. All interactions with the communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals who create, safeguard, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage should be characterized by transparent collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and consultation, and contingent upon their free, prior, sustained and informed consent.

5. Access of communities, groups and individuals to the instruments, objects, artefacts, cultural and natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage should be ensured, including in situations of armed conflict. Customary practices governing access to intangible cultural heritage should be fully respected, even where these may limit broader public access.

6. Each community, group or individual should assess the value of its own intangible cultural heritage and this intangible cultural heritage should not be subject to external judgements of value or worth.

7. The communities, groups and individuals who create intangible cultural heritage should benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from such heritage, and particularly from its use, research, documentation, promotion or adaptation by members of the communities or others.

8. The dynamic and living nature of intangible cultural heritage should be continuously respected. Authenticity and exclusivity should not constitute concerns and obstacles in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

9. Communities, groups, local, national and transnational organizations and individuals should carefully assess the direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, potential and definitive impact of any action that may affect the viability of intangible cultural heritage or the communities who practice it.

10. Communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals should play a significant role in determining what constitutes threats to their intangible cultural heritage including the decontextualization, commodification and misrepresentation of it and in deciding how to prevent and mitigate such threats.

11. Cultural diversity and the identities of communities, groups and individuals should be fully respected. In the respect of values recognized by communities, groups and individuals and sensitivity to cultural norms, specific attention to gender equality, youth involvement and respect for ethnic identities should be included in the design and implementation of safeguarding measures.

12. The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is of general interest to humanity and should therefore be undertaken through cooperation among bilateral, sub regional, regional and international parties; nevertheless, communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals should never be alienated from their own intangible cultural heritage.

(Excerpt from Decisions of 10th session of the Committee)
Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage through the Strengthening of National Capacities in Asia and the Pacific

During the week-long event, ministry and local officials, national experts, and representatives of NGOs were trained by two UNESCO-accredited facilitators on how to prepare nomination files for the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, proposals for the Register of Best Practices, and requests for international assistance. The approach taken during the event was one that aligns with the idea that the best way to learn how to prepare international files is to understand how they will later be evaluated and examined. This was done primarily through practical and participatory sessions.

Participants explored the different international mechanisms established by the Convention and the appropriate and effective uses of these mechanisms. Following an overview of the nomination processes, practical sessions helped the participants to better understand what a complete nomination or request entails and how the evaluation process will later be carried out, with the goal of preparing more comprehensive files for future submissions.

China Offering to Train People in ICH Safeguarding

The Chinese Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education recently issued a notice that the nation intends to train a hundred thousand citizens in intangible cultural heritage safeguarding over the next five years.

The overarching goal of the training program is to boost employment and income in industries related to traditional Chinese crafts and to promote a new vision of traditional crafts by also incorporating hints of modernity into the designs and the manufacturing processes.

The initial target for the training will be traditional craftsmen, but as the program expands, the trainees will be extended to include artisans working in all fields of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding.

The government is calling to select higher learning institutions and design enterprises to provide the training programs. Thus far, about sixty institutions and around twenty companies will be involved with implementing the plan.

ICH News Briefs

Samoa Pursues its March towards Safeguarding Intangible Heritage

Apia, the capital city of Samoa, hosted another round of capacity-building activities from 16 to 20 November 2015. The event was made possible thanks to the continued generous contribution of Japan to implement the second phase of the project Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage through the Strengthening of National Capacities in Asia and the Pacific.

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Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013. As part of this project, IRCI called on experts from the six Asia-Pacific sub-regions to conduct a survey to review existing literature and research studies undertaken on the concepts, practices, and methodologies related to safeguarding ICH in their respective country. IRCI then requested Professor Alexandra Denes from Chiang Mai University to write an analytic summary of all of the national reports.

The expert meeting was held so participants could assess the surveys to take stock of the current situation of research conducted on safeguarding practices and methodologies, to identify underdeveloped research areas that should be encouraged, and to consider follow-up activities that IRCI could carry out from 2017 and later. For ensuring collaboration among C2 centres, ICHCAP participated in the meeting as an observer.

[Malaysia] International Symposium on ICH
Organized by GTWHI, Malaysia

An international symposium, “Intangible Cultural Heritage: Innovative Practices, Sustainable Strategies, and Lessons Learnt,” was held from 30 November to 2 December 2015 at the Bayview Hotel in Penang, Malaysia. This meeting was organized by George Town World Heritage Incorporated, an organization established to manage, monitor, and raise awareness. IRCI then requested Professor Seong-Yong Park, Assistant Director-General of ICHCAP, to present the keynote paper, “Implication of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding for Sustainable Development in Society.” During the meeting period, he attended working meetings with representatives of the Malaysian Ministry of Culture and GTWHI and discussed collaborative issues related to sub-regional networking and ICHCAP’s field survey project.

ICH/CAP/Korea] ICH Forum for Information Sharing

The 2015 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Forum was held in the Republic of Korea on 11 December under the theme ‘Understanding the Current Flow of International ICH Safeguarding and Local Development.’ Co-organized by ICHCAP and the Federation of Korean Cultural Center and sponsored by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the forum was prepared for participants from provincial cultural centers in Korea, who play a significant role as the mediators between local authorities and local communities.

Recently, international society in and around UNESCO has been paying more attention to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, a mainspring of cultural diversity and identity of humanity. As a result, many ICH safeguarding activities have been spreading nationally and internationally. In this sense, and given the close relationship between NGOs and communities, the roles of NGOs are becoming more important.

Reflecting this trend, the 2015 forum addressed the current flow of the international ICH safeguarding and shared cases of local development through intangible cultural heritage, targeting concerned individuals who play a pivotal role in research and development of local folk culture.

[ICH/CAP] Evaluation for ICHCAP’s Renewal as a Category 2 Center

Over the past few months, ICHCAP has been undergoing an evaluation as part of the process of renewing the Centre’s status as a category 2 centre. The evaluation is a requirement under article 19 of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Korea and UNESCO and takes place every six years. As this is ICHCAP’s first evaluation, the Centre hopes to learn a great deal so it can move forward to better serve the Asia-Pacific region.

As part of the assessment, two evaluators visited in Korea to conduct interviews with main stakeholders of ICHCAP, such as ICHCAP’s Governing Board Members, NGO experts, ICH community members, Cultural Heritage Administration staff, and ICHCAP staff.

Mr. Kwon Huh, Director-General of ICHCAP, expresses his sincere gratitude for those who participated in the interviews for ICHCAP’s evaluation and for their precious opinions and advice to ICHCAP.

ICHCAP will discuss the renewal of the Agreement and the evaluation at the 198th Session of the Executive Board in April 2016.