Funeral Ceremonies and New Beginnings
Editorial Remarks

Gi Hyung Keum  Director-General of ICHCAP

For the first volume of 2019 and as the first volume in which I am participating as the Executive Publisher, I’d like to express my warmest regards to our readers. I am proud that the ICH Courier has contributed as a communication tool to provide information on international trends in relation to the 2003 Convention and safeguarding activities as well as issues in the Asia-Pacific region for almost ten years.

In Windows to ICH, volume 38, we are presenting various forms of funeral ceremonies, that have been and will continue to be one of the most symbolic cultural events of humanity. We are starting the year under this topic to stress the idea that in many cultures, death is seen as a new beginning, not necessarily the end of a life. Through funerary rituals and ceremonies, the living celebrate the lives of the dead and make offerings for a new beginning by letting their loved ones go. In this volume, we highlight some of the funeral ceremonies of Mongolia, Nepal, Fiji, and Bali of Indonesia as a way of gaining insight to the different ways death is experienced in the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition, we are tackling a topic of increasing global interest, especially in the wake of global migration trends—namely, superdiversity and the role of intangible cultural heritage in the context of superdiverse societies. Superdiversity refers to the phenomenon of people from different cultural backgrounds living together in a society due to migration or the influx of refugees. In the past, migrants tended to assimilate into their new communities, which were dominated by the majority population. In current superdiverse societies, multiple ethnic groups strive to coexist in equal harmony without assimilating or conforming to the majority population. In this environment, intangible cultural heritage may contribute to integrate people who have different cultural backgrounds through shared social memories and cultural identities for the newly built community. On this topic, we invited an expert contributor who presents a case study of Rotterdam as a superdiverse city. Through the vignettes presented, we meet some of the people who make the city special and inclusive.

In the Field Report, we look into a case study of masked dances for Ramayana: Intangible Heritage without Borders. In addition, we are tackling a topic of increasing global interest, especially in the wake of global migration trends—namely, superdiversity and the role of intangible cultural heritage in the context of superdiverse societies. Superdiversity refers to the phenomenon of people from different cultural backgrounds living together in a society due to migration or the influx of refugees. In the past, migrants tended to assimilate into their new communities, which were dominated by the majority population. In current superdiverse societies, multiple ethnic groups strive to coexist in equal harmony without assimilating or conforming to the majority population. In this environment, intangible cultural heritage may contribute to integrate people who have different cultural backgrounds through shared social memories and cultural identities for the newly built community. On this topic, we invited an expert contributor who presents a case study of Rotterdam as a superdiverse city. Through the vignettes presented, we meet some of the people who make the city special and inclusive.

In the Field Report, we look into a case study of masked dances for Ramayana, which is inscribed on the UNESCO ICH list. The case study focuses on the list as a cultural map rather than a ranking list. In addition, we also include the activities of the Island Ark Project Foundation for the Pacific region as well as those of the National Intangible Heritage Center of the Republic of Korea and the Bangladeshi Manipuri Theatre.

In closing, I would like to wrap up with a promise to keep delivering a wide range of information and timely issues through the ICH Courier. We request your continuous attention and support.
Superdiversity and the Challenge for ICH Safeguarding

Albert van der Zeijden
Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to UNESCO’s Culture Urban Future: Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Development (Paris 2016), over half of the world’s population is now living in urban areas. Because of the heterogeneous background of these city populations, superdiversity has become a permanent feature not just of conurbations such as Singapore, Bangkok, and Mumbai. Also Europe is struggling with this challenge, which might create tensions and conflicts and the emergence of old and new cultural practices, reflecting new social identities and shared social spaces (Vertovec, 141). The Dutch city of Rotterdam, in the Netherlands, harbors immigrants with at least 160 different ethnic backgrounds, everyone bringing along his or her own intangible cultural heritage. What is intangible heritage in such an ethnically divided society? There is evidence that in such a superdiverse context, ICH can contribute to community building and more generally to sustainable development.

Jinai Looi was born in Singapore but raised in Rotterdam. She now runs a cooking workshop in Rotterdam, where participants can learn about different cuisines from all over the world. Jinai does not betray her background; she is specializing in Asian cooking. The course workshops include Chinese Cooking: The Basics and Chinese Cooking for Advanced. Especially for vegetarians is the Vegan Asian workshop in which she combines the taste of Asian cuisine with vegan preferences that are now very much in vogue in the Netherlands. Jinai calls her shop het Zesde Geluk, referring to the Chinese well-being wishes—wealth, good fortune, longevity, joy, and prosperity. In the new diverse atmosphere of West-Kruikade, the flavor of het Zesde Geluk is definitely Asian.

Jinai’s cooking workshop contributes to the cosmopolitan character of West-Kruiskade, where a broad array of different food cultures is present in the street. In the Thai Soup & Noodle Bar, West-Kruikade 63, traditional Thai dishes such as klang kiew waan and kad med mumuang can be ordered. In the nearby Vietnamese restaurant Pho, you can buy popular take away dishes. The Pepper Trail is an Indian restaurant, further up in the street. Ilyra restaurant has a Turkish menu. Ryad and Safir are Moroccan restaurants in Rotterdam. The only restaurant that seems to be missing is one that serves traditional Dutch dishes.

Building on Social Memories

Because of the large number of Chinese shops, even before the Second World War, West-Kruikade was called Chinatown. It is therefore no surprise that the yearly celebration of the Chinese New Year, this year in February, is very popular. The colorful procession of dragons attracts many visitors from West-Kruiskade and beyond. In addition, because of the influx of so many migrants from all over the world, West-Kruikade now harbors multicultural festivals from everywhere. Nowadays the Vietnamese restaurant Pho, you can buy popular take away dishes. The Pepper Trail is an Indian restaurant, further up in the street. Ilyra restaurant has a Turkish menu. Ryad and Safir are Moroccan restaurants in Rotterdam. The only restaurant that seems to be missing is one that serves traditional Dutch dishes.

Rotterdam is no exception. The same trend is discernible in superdiverse cities such as Paris and London. Swiss-based German migrant historian Monika Salzbrunn explored the Paris city district of Belleville, where she noted the same trend of multicultural festivals as in Rotterdam. London’s Notting Hill Carnival is noted as one of the biggest street festivals in Europe. It is almost as popular in the Netherlands as Rotterdam’s summer carnival, with a strong Caribbean flavor but now also popular with Rotterdammers of Turkish or Moroccan decent. In my view these new evolving and exciting communal festivals can be interpreted as intangible heritage manifestations that build on social memories.

Superdiversity

There is now an extensive amount of literature reflecting on the topic of superdiversity. The phrase itself was coined ten years ago by British sociologist Steven Vertovec. According to him the new concept of superdiversity much better reflects the new situation in most conurbations in Western Europe and supersedes the older concept of multiculturalism. The old situation of multiculturalism commonly referred to one dominant ethnic group confronted with only two or three minority groups, in the case of the Netherlands labor migrants from Turkey, Spain, and Morocco, who came to the Netherlands in the sixties and seventies. Because of the large influx of
refugees from all over the world from the nineties onwards, the picture has been completely altered. In the case of Rotterdam, we already noted the coexistence of more than 160 ethnicities, without any dominant group, and many small minorities. It presents these conurbations with new and unprecedented social and economic challenges.

That the new superdiversity also has implications for UNESCO and for intangible heritage safeguarding was signaled in UNESCO’s Culture Urban Future: Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Development (Paris 2016). This report includes a contribution by Steven Vertovec on the new cultural dynamics of superdiversity. Until now there has not been much literature focusing on superdiversity and intangible heritage, with the exception of Albert van der Zeijden’s writing about Rotterdam and about the initiative of the Alliance West-Kruiskade to nominate the ‘The Diversity of Intangible Cultural Heritage in West-Kruiskade’ to the Inventory of intangible cultural heritage in the Netherlands.

In connection with intangible cultural heritage, three things stand out:

1. In superdiverse city districts, there is evidence of emerging cosmopolitan cultural practices that build on social practices brought along by migrant groups;
2. These new cosmopolitan practices in all their diversity constitute new intangible heritage in these cities, reflected in public festivals and celebrated in the public space of West-Kruiskade;
3. The inhabitants of West-Kruiskade not so much identify with ‘their own’ specific ethnic cultural roots. In a superdiverse city district, people identify with diversity. It is this diversity that marks the cultural identity of West-Kruiskade.

Entrepreneurial Model

The example of West-Kruiskade is interesting because of the leading role of the city government and the strong supporting role of entrepreneurs. As with so many superdiverse cities in the world, West-Kruiskade faced social and economic challenges, especially in connection with drug use, high unemployment rates, and high criminality figures. Rotterdam invested in what was described as a problem area. It is interesting that in this process of city improvement, West-Kruiskade became Rotterdam’s flagship for using intangible heritage as a way to promote social cohesion and for using an entrepreneurial model in trying to achieve this.

From the perspective of intangible heritage safeguarding, it is useful to make a distinction between heritage bearers, custodians, city governments, and heritage institutions such as museums. The heritage bearers are of course the migrants who brought along their different cultural practices when coming to Europe. It is interesting, at least in the case of Rotterdam, that there are also quite a number of groups and individuals who take on the role of custodian. In the case of West-Kruiskade, these were shopkeepers or entrepreneurs, such as Jinaa Li Mass, Gunzo Zwakke, and Fred Fitz-James.

We already met Jinaa Li Mass, the shop owner organizing cooking workshops on Chinese cooking. Fred Fitz-James runs a shop where you can get all the information about Surinam Winti rituals and buy associated products. Gunzo Zwakke represents the Foundation Shared Past Shared Future that organizes the yearly Ketikoti festival. The aim of the Foundation Shared Past Shared Future is to increase the knowledge and awareness of the history shared by native and immigrant residents of Rotterdam to increase mutual understanding and respect and strengthen the multi-ethnic society in the present and future. It was Alice Fortes who brought all these different stakeholders together to make a joint nomination of ‘The Diversity of Intangible Cultural Heritage in West-Kruiskade. Alice Fortes is what you might call a powerful cultural broker, bringing people together and organizing things. She is employed by the city government of Rotterdam.

Challenge

How to organize ICH safeguarding in a superdiverse city district is at stake. Part of the success of West-Kruiskade is derived from the steering role of the city government wanting to create sustainable development in a strong partnership with the different local ethnic entrepreneurs engaged with intangible heritage. In a certain way it was a win-win model that furnished the city government with a strong group of individual custodians wanting to engage with intangible heritage and also having the private means to finance the whole project. What might be a challenge is that the model so much depends on the role of individuals. For example, there is the recent decision by Jinaa Li to move to another Rotterdam city district, leaving West-Kruiskade to start a cooking workshop in Kralingen, another city district of Rotterdam, which leaves us to question whether there will be someone to replace her. On the other hand, it might also open up the Kade 2020 Group, because one should always remain open for newcomers and for new entrepreneurs representing new aspects of intangible heritage in West-Kruiskade. In this sense, as it is put in the text of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, ‘processes of globalization and social transformation can [AndZ:] and in the case of superdiverse city districts should create opportunities for renewed dialogue among communities’. Among and, I may add, inside these communities, if superdiverse communities want to remain successful, they should be as open and inclusive as possible, creating opportunities for all the different ethnic groups to identify with West-Kruiskade’s diversity of intangible heritage.

The other challenge is the strong role of the city government. The greatest challenge in the near future will be the withdrawal of the city government from the project. Now West-Kruiskade is a success, the city government no longer feels the urge to remain involved. Alice Fortes was offered another job and, potentially, is also threatening to drop out, which again raises questions of who is going to take over her role as a powerful cultural broker. The Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (DICH) is now working on a policy model for safeguarding intangible heritage in a superdiverse context, in which we are going to explore the entrepreneurial model of ICH safeguarding in Rotterdam and compare it with other superdiverse cities in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Last year DICH organized an international conference, during which Tim Curtis made some reflections about Bangkok, where he worked in the UNESCO office before going to Paris to become secretary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. For DICH, the most challenging aspect is in how we can contribute to favorable circumstances, what role the city government should have, and where entrepreneurs should step in. There could also be a facilitating role for heritage institutions such as the Rotterdam Museum. On all these issues, the DICH is now preparing a policy recommendation that inventories possible success factors and policy recommendations for city governments dealing with social and cultural challenges in superdiverse city districts.
The 2018 inscriptions of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) on the UNESCO lists has raised again global attention to variations of Hindi-influenced masked dance in Southeast Asia, which retell the story of Rama, the god-reincarnated king who defeats the demon king Ravana.

In November last year, UNESCO announced the concurrent inscriptions of Thailand’s and Cambodia’s masked dance known as Khon and Lkhon Khol, which unfortunately drew ire from some people in both countries who are immersed in historical hostility.

Questions have come from many directions, in particular, on why these lists can inscribe similar traditions and which ones deserve better recognition. Indeed, such inquiries have been made within other contexts of heritage protection, which have no relevance to intangible cultural heritage.

Most people are familiar with the concept of World Heritage, which concerns built heritage, from archaeological sites, palaces, settlements, ancient cities to cultural and natural landscapes. The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties can be defined by one of ten criteria, such as being unique evidence of human ingenuity, the manifestation of important historical events, the last reserve of distinctive biodiversity, etc. The realization of these characteristics comes from technical experts and scientific and historical backing. Such an analytical process requires comparison between different properties, to demonstrate each site’s importance in its national and international contexts.

However, these criteria of physical comparison cannot be used to judge the value of intangible heritage, which includes oral traditions, performing arts, traditional craftsmanship, local wisdom about nature and the universe, different aspects of social practices, festivals, rituals, food cultures, sports, etc. Being immaterial in appearance and living in nature, the value of intangible heritage is defined by communities, groups, or individuals who have practiced it as part of their tradition and constantly transmit and recreate its forms and meanings in the ever-changing environment.

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) governs the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, with element inscriptions decided by an intergovernmental committee. What is often overlooked is that the Convention goes beyond the Lists and Register. It highlights the role of communities, groups, and individuals concerned as key players in identifying and transmitting intangible heritage that is vital to their way of life. It requests each State Party to the Convention to take necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, whether or not they are on the lists, and to respect the widest participation of communities, groups, and relevant individuals, especially in identifying, inventorying, and safeguarding their ICH.

That said, what is the most interesting in the value of masked dance about Ramayana, as a group of intangible heritage, is not how beautiful they are as art forms, or how they are made prize possessions of countries in the process of nomination. Instead, they are most interesting as local traditions that are still viable to many different communities across the region, so all of them practice and pass on the skills and passion to the next generation. These masked dance variations have
At that time aimed to help create awareness about practitioners’ livelihoods under threat from commercialization.

On top of that, this year is not the first time that two Ramayana masked dances were nominated at the same time. The year 2008 also saw Ramilila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana in India, being nominated to the Representative List alongside Cambodian Royal Ballet. Ramilila recounts episodes of Ramayana in a storytelling form that is popular in northern India. The series of performances lasts from ten days to one month and is organized chronologically to the storyline by hundreds of towns and villages during the Dussehra season to celebrate the legend of Ramayana.

To look at this epic in much larger context, there are many other artistic and ritualistic expressions rooted to different degrees in the Ramayana epic in South and Southeast Asia. India, as the birthplace of Ramayana, also in 2010 nominated Chhau dance, a masked dance from eastern India that blends the Mahabharata and Ramayana epics with local folklore and abstract dance. Cambodia also showed that Ramayana does not have to be portrayed only through masked dance when it nominated Sbek Thom, Khmer shadow theatre, in 2008.

In fact, there are many more expressions of Ramayana not yet inscribed to the 2003 Convention’s lists. Nonetheless, they have proven to bear immense value to the practicing communities. Phra Lak Phra Ram in Lao PDR and Hikayat Seri Rama in Malaysia and Southern Thailand, for instance, are the oral traditions of Ramayana that have influenced numerous festivals and dances that fuse local cultures and beliefs to the Hindi origin of the story.

Recollecting that masked dance and many more throughout the history of UNESCO ICH listing, we can see that the emphasis of these lists is not to show which one is the best or deserves higher recognition. The lists welcome nominations of similar traditions and encourage the country to prepare joint nomination proves their function as cultural maps rather than ranking lists. In this case, they map how masked dance for Ramayana, as a collective art form by diverse groups of people sharing beliefs and appreciation, can extensively represent the great diversity of the intangible heritage of humanity.
Funeral Ceremonies and New Beginnings

Regardless of culture, religion, or world view, one universality of life is death. The ways in which various cultures and communities mourn or celebrate the soul shuffling off this mortal coil could not be more different, whether it be in the form of a new beginning for the deceased or a new life for those who remain. However, the different rituals help the living cope with their losses. In this volume of the ICH Courier, we will look at the funeral ceremonies of communities in Mongolia, Nepal, Fiji, and Indonesia.
Traditional Funeral Rituals of Mongols

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eolithitic tombs prove that humans were living in Mongolian territory around 4000 BCE. A tomb with a man buried in a hole in a sitting position was discovered in Dornod Province and provides such evidence.6 Bronze Age square tombs were prominent in central and eastern Mongolia. Between the 1930s and 1940s, Nosov, who examined, researched, and classified these tombs into three shapes7 and classified the rituals and functions into two structures—funeral and sacrificial.7 At the end of the 1920s, Debets and Borovka dated the tombs between the sixth to eight centuries CE. Scholars believe that the Khirigsuur culture that spread from central Mongolia to the Altai ranges used sacrificial funerary structures. A common buried feature in south-shaped tombs included burying the deceased's belongings with the deceased's head facing west and the body to the left and the feet bent together. In the case of square-shaped graves, the sacrificed animal was put in the same grave; in case of the Khirigsuur, the sacrificed animals were put in independent stone structures. The number sacrificed animals depended on the deceased's social status.

The Xiongnus left numerous funeral memorials.4 The Xiongnu tombs in Mongolia and Zabaykalsky are from the third century BCE to the first century CE. Early Xiongnu tombs are spread throughout Inner Mongolia.8 There are two Xiongnu burial structures: one for nobles and another for commoners. The Xiongnu dug burial holes facing north while placing the deceased facing east with sacrificial food and a horsehead placed on the upper side. Inside the Xiongnu tomb structure, the deceased looked upward in a stone box or wooden coffin below the ground, and the head was placed northeast or southwest. During the Tureg and Uighur periods between the sixth and ninth century CE, the tradition of erecting stone statues that were buried with another person. Under the influence of Buddhism, traditional funeral practices and rituals changed, and new traditions evolved.

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From the 1920s to the 1930s, big changes in Mongolian socio-economic life were reflected in funeral rituals. Mongolians performed tasks and rituals similar to those in Russia and Europe, such as creating cement tombs with granite and stone memorials and statues. Funeral rituals are done on Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays without regard to the date of death. After the funeral ritual, the dirge is done and some actions are forbidden until mourning is finished. It is forbidden to bring items in or out from home, attend celebrations, and kill animals for food within forty-nine days.

References


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Death: Funeral as a Departure to a New Beginning

Alina Tamrakar
Architect, Working to conserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

According to newa, a Buddhist belief system, death is one of the ten major events in one’s lifetime. While death is the end of a life, it is also taken as a beginning of another life, a cycle that continues until the state of Nirvana is achieved. Hence, death rituals, apart from funerals and lamentations, include rituals carried out to prepare the deceased for the journey after death.

Believing firmly that the ultimate truth of life is death, families associate themselves in a social organization called guthi, which help carry out the funeral rituals. Guthi members are informed as soon as a person dies, and they are responsible for arranging resources like the decorated covering sheet and the funeral palanquin required for the cremation. The daughters of the dead are responsible for sharing the word of death to the neighborhood by taking the name of the deceased while crying out loudly. The space around the dead body is disinfected using cow dung. The sons of the deceased then use a needle to prick the body of the deceased as a symbol of confirming the death. Personal belongings of the dead, like his straw mat, a set of clothes, etc. are disposed in a crossroad, called chhwasa, nearest to the house that determines a community’s boundary, and declares the death to the community.

The immediate family members of the deceased come together for the thirteen-day mourning period, which is usually beside a river, accompanied by musical instruments played in a procession.

Once the dead body is prepared for cremation, the sons perform a ritual of serving water to the deceased to symbolize a last offering to the physical body. Next, a mound of river sand, called pinda, is prepared and used to represent the physical body to be cremated, prior to lighting the pyre.

The immediate family members of the deceased come together for the thirteen-day mourning period, which includes intricate rites and rituals of offerings for the deceased as well as purification of the relatives. Since Buddhism believes life-energy journeying to another entity/ies after physical death, the death ritual also includes symbolic activities believed to facilitate a new life of the deceased. As the relatives come back from the cremation site, they disinfect themselves with a ritual called chwokabajijiwolougi in which the person is circled with a handful of beaten rice that is then disposed of in the chhwasa to help relieve negative energy that may have been attached to the person from the cremation site.

Secondly, this ritual helps bring family members back to their normal senses (from a state of shock), and food is served. On the second day of mourning, all relatives and the guthi members visit the mourning family and take care of their food and wellbeing. This culture mainly depicts the social milieu and its role during the difficult state of the mourning family. The third, fifth, and seventh days after the death are dedicated to special worship to wish for better placement of the deceased in their next life. A special feast, lwocha baji, is served to the mourning members on fourth day. The seventh day is the last time rice is offered to the deceased, and symbols bidding formal goodbye. Members wash clothes and clean the house on eighth and ninth days, and on the tenth day, each member of the family involved in the mourning process goes through a cleansing process by taking a bath and clipping the nails. Also, men shave their hair and eyebrows in the process. On this day, sons and the spouse of the deceased wear white clothes, and continue to wear them for the whole year as a symbol of lamentation. On the twelfth day, members consume meat and other edibles that they avoided until as part of mourning in a feast called ghu su bhwoe. The thirteenth day concludes the mourning period for all relatives, except for the children, spouses and parents of the deceased, with an elaborate worship ritual.

Apart from major worship rituals each month for a year, the forty-fifth day and the hundred and eightieth day are also important, when half-day rituals take place to remember the deceased and wish them a better place of birth in their next life. The death rituals of the year consider the deceased’s journey until their new birth in another realm. After the second death anniversary, responsibility of the deceased is completely handed over to their new destination, and death rituals are complete. In the following years, the deceased is remembered annually.

Note
The number of mourning days and a few other details vary according to different clans even within the newa. Only the case of the Udaaya clan is taken here.

Resources
Ritesh Bajracharya and Nitesh Bajracharya (practicing priests of the Bajracharya clan based in Kathmandu).

Participation in a funeral procession with incense © Alok S. Tuladhar

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For life to continue, grieving must have a start and end. That for life to continue, grieving must have a start and end. (soh-ma-teh), with which literally translates to ‘having contracted death.’ When death occurs, the universal Fijian word for funeral is somate (soh-mah-teh), with meaning ‘gathering’ and mate as ‘death’ or ‘dead.’ Like other parts of the world, in this gathering, people come to offer and provide emotional, spiritual, physical, and even financial support towards the surviving family members in grieving and also in the farewelling of their loved one.

Grieving is an important part of funerals and is a necessary process to go through to move forward without our loved one. Funeral rituals give grieving people some semblance of structure during a time when their world has been turned upside down and are associated with milestones for a reason. That for life to continue, grieving must have a start and end.

Today, some communities in Fiji taboo small areas of reefs and/or river from a hundred nights to a year following the burial of a loved one to allow the fish population to recover. The goal is to increase catch rates when the taboo area is harvested. The catch is used in a memorial feast for the deceased and signifies the end of mourning period. In the 1800s, however, the reasons for taboo of the waters was very different. The body of a chief, when alive, and in death, is considered taboo. When he dies, select people known as euros (bub-ooh-tah) are the only ones that can handle his body (Fison, 1881, p. 135), which makes them unclean. For this reason, they isolate themselves to the outskirts of the village, and they put a stick as marker on the reef or river where they bathe, so that people will avoid it. So, taboos in the past were because of uncleanliness, but today it is to increase fish catch as food for the memorial feast.

Changing Expressions of Grieving in Indigenous Fijian Funerals

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If there’s one thing that is sure in life, it is that death is inevitable. It happens to all regardless of gender, age, and socioeconomic status—even to the healthy and fit. In Fijian, the word for ‘sick’ is tauvi mate (tah-oo-vee mah-teh), synonymous with sacrifice or taboo, which is the notion of giving up something that is important to a person(s) or community. In the past and present, crying in Fijian chiefly funerals is substituted by the blowing of conch shells or constant beating wooden slit drums. This becomes the cry of the land and its people (Fison, 1881, p. 146). However, other expressions of grieving have changed in form and/or function over time. For example, prior to the 1800s following a chief’s death, a major sacrifice involved the strangling of people like the chief’s friend (Thomas, 1909, p. 714), his favorite henchmen (Fison, 1881, p. 139), servant (Frazier, 1915, p. 446), and many women, including his wives and sometimes his mother as well (Fison, 1881, p. 137). Their bodies were placed at the bottom of the grave like grass or mat known as coco (tho-tho) over which the chief’s body was then placed (Fison, 1881, p. 137). With Christian missionary intervention, this sacrifice changed from strangling women to the cutting of their index fingers, which were buried with the chief (Crocombe, 1973), before the practiced ceased altogether.

Other sacrifices were food related. On the island of Vanua Levu, people would fast for ten or twenty days following the burial of their chief (Adams, 1890, p. 68). Today, instead of fasting, a big feast is held immediately after burial. A different form is practiced today in the province of Nadroga on the main island of Viti Levu, where people would avoid eating either the last food that the deceased ate, or his or her favorite food, for a period of about a hundred nights. This food taboo is known as lauva benu (loo-vah beh-noo) and is still practiced today.

In the past, it was the belief in Fiji that we punish ourselves to show the spirit of the deceased that their death pains us (Frazier, 1915, p. 452). In so doing, it supposedly gives comfort to the spirit of the deceased that they are missed, so they won’t haunt us, thereby leaving us, and them, in peace.

The expressions of punishment as part of grieving is more synonymous with sacrifice or taboo, which is the notion of giving up something that is important to a person(s) or community. In the past and present, crying in Fijian chiefly funerals is substituted by the blowing of conch shells or constant beating wooden slit drums. This becomes the cry of the land and its people (Fison, 1881, p. 146). However, other expressions of grieving have changed in form and/or function over time. For example, prior to the 1800s following a chief’s death, a major sacrifice involved the strangling of people like the chief’s friend (Thomas, 1909, p. 714), his favorite henchmen (Fison, 1881, p. 139), servant (Frazier, 1915, p. 446), and many women, including his wives and sometimes his mother as well (Fison, 1881, p. 137). Their bodies were placed at the bottom of the grave like grass or mat known as coco (tho-tho) over which the chief’s body was then placed (Fison, 1881, p. 137). With Christian missionary intervention, this sacrifice changed from strangling women to the cutting of their index fingers, which were buried with the chief (Crocombe, 1973), before the practiced ceased altogether.

Other sacrifices were food related. On the island of Vanua Levu, people would fast for ten or twenty days following the burial of their chief (Adams, 1890, p. 68). Today, instead of fasting, a big feast is held immediately after burial. A different form is practiced today in the province of Nadroga on the main island of Viti Levu, where people would avoid eating either the last food that the deceased ate, or his or her favorite food, for a period of about a hundred nights. This food taboo is known as lauva benu (loo-vah beh-noo) and is still practiced today.

Today, some communities in Fiji taboo small areas of reefs and/or river from a hundred nights to a year following the burial of a loved one to allow the fish population to recover. The goal is to increase catch rates when the taboo area is harvested. The catch is used in a memorial feast for the deceased and signifies the end of mourning period. In the 1800s, however, the reasons for taboo of the waters was very different. The body of a chief, when alive, and in death, is considered taboo. When he dies, select people known as euros (bub-ooh-tah) are the only ones that can handle his body (Fison, 1881, p. 135), which makes them unclean. For this reason, they isolate themselves to the outskirts of the village, and they put a stick as marker on the reef or river where they bathe, so that people will avoid it. So, taboos in the past were because of uncleanliness, but today it is to increase fish catch as food for the memorial feast.

From the few examples given above, it can be seen that indigenous Fijian funerary culture aids in grieving and is associated with sacrifices and taboo. Like other cultures and their rituals, they have been changing over time and will most likely continue to change into the future. Both in form and function. Major drivers of change include, but are not limited to, Christianity, cash economy, and westernization to name a few. The challenge now is not to let the change in our culture be driven by external forces but to create safe spaces and forums that will allow indigenous Fijians to openly and respectfully discuss ways forward.

References

Numerous ritual ceremonies are under the theme of rite de passage among the Balinese Hindu community. One of the most complicated and exotic is the ritual death ceremony known as ngaben or pelebon (cremation ceremony).

In Balinese Hindu belief, all components of the human body are borrowed from nature and classified into five main elements called panca mahabutha—pertiwi (soil, solid component), apuh (water, fluid component), teja (fire, energy), bayu (air), and akasa (ether, void). As such, the physical human body is seen as a mirror of nature that is enlivened by atman (soul).

When someone dies, the borrowed elements must be returned to nature. Only after the return can the soul be released to heaven. The fastest and best way to return these elements is by burning.

Since ngaben is the last ceremony dedicated to the dead (mostly to the elder of a family), it has become intricate, complicated, and costly. Before the 1970s, it was not uncommon for farmers to sell their land for the sake of ngaben. Later, after guidance from religious authorities, the ngaben ceremony was simplified; although extravagant ngaben is still practiced among rich families.

Raw and Symbolic Ngaben
For wealthy families, the ngaben ceremony can be done right after the death of the family member. In other words, the dead are directly and ceremonially burned, which can be quite expensive because the family must pay all costs. This kind of ngaben is also practiced for religious or customary leaders, such as a village priest, temple priest, or high priest.

If a family doesn’t have resources to do ngaben, the dead are buried. Some years later, after the family secures enough money, the bones are dug up and collected to be burned in a ngaben ceremony. In most cases, the bones are not literally collected but replaced by a sandalwood effigy symbolizing the dead.

Individual and Mass Ngaben
For raw ngaben, all associated costs are a family burden. To reduce the burden, the village or groups of extended families, or a maxima-clan in the village, organize a mass cremation (ngaben massal). Here, those whose family members were buried organize a ngaben ceremony together and share the costs. This reduces the individual cost, as the needed materials can be made for all the dead. This is the most popular ngaben practice in Bali.

Complicated Procedures
The procedures are principally the same for all ngaben. It mainly consists of two stages: 1) burning the physical body and 2) burning the spiritual body, called nyekah. This staging is based on the belief that the body has three layers: physical body, spiritual body, and the permanent soul. The first stage (the ngaben) aims to burn the physical body while the second stage is to burn the spiritual body so that the permanent soul can go to heaven to receive rewards and punishment before being reborn into the world.

Before burning the body and throwing the ashes into the sea or river, ngaben starts with cleansing the dead. The cleansing ritual is complicated, detailed, and full of symbols. It is concerned with all parts of the body and the wishes on how the parts are expected to be in future reincarnations. For example, a mirror is put on the eyes to wish that in future reincarnations, his/her eyes will be clear. The white garment used to cover the corpse; called kapang, is also unique because different clans have different sacred formulas that must be written on the garment.

The most exotic part of ngaben ceremony is the cremation tower construction, called wadat or bade. Every clan has its own “right” with regard to the number of tower tiers, whether five, seven, nine, or eleven tiers. This tower is merely a property to transfer the corpse from the house to the cemetery.

At the cemetery, another exotic property is placed—the burning coffin, called patulangan. The form and color of the burning coffin varies by clan. Popular ones are white bull, black bull, red lion, and elephant–headed fish, and the most prestigious is the dragon (nagabanda). As these properties are very heavy (sometimes dozens of tons), hundreds of people are needed to move them from the house to the cemetery. This exotic performance is a famous tourist attraction in Bali. After the corpse is burnt, the bones are collected, crushed to ash, put into a young coconut, and thrown in to the sea in a special ritual. This is the end of the first stage.

The second stage, nyekah, starts by inviting the soul from the sea, burning the soul, throwing the ash into the sea (or river), inviting the soul back, taking the soul to a number of temples, and putting the soul in the family temple. On an auspicious day in a special ceremony, the soul is invited to sit on an effigy made of banyan leaves. Similar to the first stage, this effigy is burned, and the ash is put into a young coconut and thrown into the sea. This symbolizes washing away the spiritual body to purify the soul. Afterward, the purified soul is invited back, to sit on a prepared effigy and taken on a pilgrimage to a number of temples, most will visit Besakih Temple, the mother temple of Bali. Coming from the pilgrimage, the soul is put into family shrines. Now, the soul’s status has changed from a human soul to “universal shine,” deva or betara, a life that exists above humans. All descendants pay homage to this betara on auspicious days or during holy days.

Although philosophically the cremation ceremony is simply to return nature’s borrowed elements; in reality, this is the most complicated religious ritual found in Bali, and in most cases, it is a showcase of one’s power or prestige in the community.
Public Education Programs—Case Study of the Korean National Intangible Heritage Center

Seung Bum Lim
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Background to ICH Experience Education
Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to the non-physical aspects of cultural heritage. We can preserve tangible cultural heritage, such as buildings and artifacts, to pass them down to the next generation. It is, however, difficult to determine what specifically should be preserved when it comes to ICH. Generally, ICH elements are selected and then practitioners of the arts or skills are designated to preserve and transmit the elements. The essence of ICH preservation, therefore, is to transmit the arts and skills of ICH from people to people and from generation to generation.

In Korea, the importance of ICH transmission is well represented in the Act on the Safeguarding and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was established in 2015. It is worth noting that the Act stipulates that ICH transmission education can be part of public education systems, as conventional apprenticeship training alone cannot ensure sustainable transmission of ICH.

In addition to specialized education for practitioners, it is also important to raise public appreciation and enjoyment of ICH, as it can motivate practitioners to further enhance their skills. If ICH is absorbed into our daily lives, it will be naturally and actively transmitted.

Extensive education of ICH is vital for systematic transmission of ICH. In other words, it is necessary to provide the general public with easy access to ICH education, so they can appreciate various fields of ICH in everyday life. By acknowledging the importance of education, the National Intangible Heritage Center (NIHC) has been operating ICH experience classes and career exploration camps for people and especially the youth. NIHC is also opening public workshops and Saturday workshops on ICH.

The details about such activities that were held in 2018 are introduced in the following section, which also explains the achievements and significance.

Relevant Programs
ICH Experience Education
NIHC has been providing the ICH experience education program, especially for elementary and middle school students, since the center opened in 2014. The program begins in March or April, every year when the new semester starts. The NIHC staff who manage experience education select a specific genre or element of ICH and then assign a practitioner of the element as the instructor. Instructors are selected among the practitioners of about twenty national intangible cultural properties. While practitioners are experts in relevant fields, they are not skilled at teaching. So, to help them develop teaching skills, NIHC launched an ICH teaching skill enhancement program. Graduates of the course can work as instructors.

For instance, practitioners who completed the program in 2018 are given a chance to teach for the center’s 2019 program. NIHC is now seeking ways to offer graduates a chance to teach as after-school instructors at elementary and middle schools in cooperation with city and provincial education offices across the country.

ICH experience education is not just about experience. As the program is aimed to ensure that ICH can be appreciated by more people, it also involves theoretical education about ICH (i.e. the significance and value of the given ICH element). Hands-on experience is offered based on such an understating of ICH. The program, therefore, includes about an hour of theoretical session along with hands-on activities.
ICH experience education is not just effective in promoting ICH among the general public, but it also provides ICH practitioners opportunities to teach people. ICH experience education is further expected to help develop teaching methods on ICH and enhance expertise in ICH education.

ICH Career Exploration Camp
The ICH career exploration camp is held for one night or two nights with the goal of providing students with hands-on experience about ICH and introducing ICH-related careers. Most of the participants are young students aged around 15, who usually have little knowledge about or are unfamiliar with ICH. The camp has provided students with a chance to experience and learn about various ICH elements and discover their hidden talents.

In the camp, the students attend basic learning classes about three to four ICH elements. Then, they can attend an in-depth class by selecting one of the elements. The camp also provides featured programs, such as mission games and puzzles about ICH, to arouse their interest in ICH.

In addition, there is a field trip to cultural heritage sites in Jeonju where NIHC is located. The students can visit, for example, Gyeyongjeon Shrine and Jeodong Cathedral in the Jeonju Hanok Village and catch fish in Jeonju Stream. Students, who might have been forced to participate in the camp by their teachers or parents, eventually find themselves immersed in the activities and practicing what they have learned all night. After the camp is over, many of the students say they want to join the camp again.

On the last day of the camp, the students demonstrate the ICH that they have learned. For example, students who have learned taekkyeon (a traditional Korean martial art) perform it in front of other students. Those who have learned a mask or sword dance present a short performance of the dance. There is also an exhibition of simple artworks or handicrafts made by students in the camp.

ICH Workshop for Citizen
The ICH workshop for citizen program was launched to promote the value and understanding of ICH through practical education. The program provides beginner-level classes related to traditional craft skills. It was conceived to offer the general public a chance to experience and enjoy ICH as well as to nurture future practitioners.

The program has garnered a positive response from residents in Jeonju and Jeollabuk Province. The classes are held in the evening, as most participants work during the day. The instructors are ICH practitioners who have completed the instructor training.

In 2018, NIHC selected somokjang (minor carpenter), chimseonjang (sewing master), and sagijang (ceramic making master) as subjects for the education program. About ten to twenty people participate in each class. The somokjang class taught the participants how to make seonan (small reading table). The chimseonjang class was held with the theme of making upper garments and pants of hahwok (traditional Korean garment) worn by young boys. The sagijang class taught how to make a tea set with traditional patterns. The public workshop program gives the general public a chance to learn traditional craft skills with guidance of highly skilled practitioners who received ICH instructor training through hands-on experience.

Saturday ICH Workshop
The Saturday ICH workshop is an interview program, where a living human treasure in the field of crafts is invited to talk about his/her life and work. Interviews are held on weekends (Saturdays) so the general public can participate as the audience.

During an interview, the invited master talks with an interviewer who usually is a researcher in a related field or a professional announcer. A university student with a related major or one of the disciples of the master joins the conversion. In the audience, there are about twenty people who have come to watch the dialogue through prior application. Participants of the public workshop program are also given a chance to be in the audience, meet masters of the traditional skills that they have learned, and watch live demonstrations.

In 2018, Mun-yeol Park of duseokjang (metalcraft master), Yu-hyeon Choe of jasajjang (embroidery master), Hye-ju Gu of chimseonjang, and Jeong-ok Kim of sagijang were invited for interviews.

There were between twenty and thirty people in the audience for each interview, and a total of 116 people for the 2018 program. In addition, the interviews were broadcast live on Facebook, attracting more viewers.

Challenges
In Korea, there is this word, gwi-myeongchang. Gwi means ear, and myeongchang means a master singer. The word, therefore, refers to a person with an ear for great sounds of great singers. ICH experience education programs aim to expand such gwi-myeongchang. Any master work or exquisite performance would lose its meaning if it were not appreciated by people. There should be more people with a discerning ear, which will encourage great singers to further craft their skills.

In that regard, ICH experience education should be provided in a more active and systematic way. Enhancing teaching skills of ICH instructors is essential to that end. At the same time, proper teaching materials need to be developed. ICH has been long taught and passed down orally. High quality textbooks are instrumental in delivering systematic education.

Meanwhile, ICH education should be connected to public education systems centered around schools. ICH would not be properly transmitted if it were not covered in public education. In the same context, ICH would not survive if the general public did not know of its presence nor pay any attention.

ICH, in other words, will be transmitted as living cultural heritage only if the practitioners and the public are all involved in learning and sharing ICH.
Manipuri Theatre in Bangladesh—
In a Quest for Identity

Shuvashis Sinha
Founder, Manipuri Theatre

Manipuri Theatre, established in 1996 at a remote village of Ghoramara in Kamalganj Upazila of the Moulvibazar district of Bangladesh, has become an example of theatre excellence. The main objective of the organization revolves around safeguarding Manipuri culture and to showcase the ICH traditions of the community’s struggle against British colonial oppression, a chapter nearly forgotten in modern historical narratives. The first official national-level recognition came in 2008. Until that time, it was our only bilingual production in Bengali and Bishnupriya languages. The story was set in a period of historic cultural crisis in Manipuri society.

After that, Debatar Gus was staged in a sesquicentennial celebration of Rabindranath Tagore. The next production was Leima—emotion and philosophy was the main attraction of this production. It was designed mainly on dialogues and translated into English from the original Manipuri. A.J. Nabi and Rhyndranath Tagore were two factors.

In 1998, I joined Jahangir Nagar University in the Drama department. My nephew Aminur Rahman was my inspiration. My association with Selim Alauddin and the departmental education helped me to think about theatre; especially Selim’s Madhusudan Dutt’s Nata bhasmi and Kathakali has molded me. The style of juxtaposing tradition with modernity touched me. The story Taraleimar Pala (Story of Taraleima) was a unique one, the actors themselves took part in acting. The play was presented at the New Year festival. The next production was Ami Ahilei (Story of children and youth). The idea of the community’s struggle against British colonial oppression, a chapter nearly forgotten in modern historical narratives. The first official national-level recognition came in 2008. Until that time, it was our only bilingual production in Bengali and Bishnupriya languages. The story was set in a period of historic cultural crisis in Manipuri society.

In 2010, we got a permanent address—Noto Mandap. My friend donated the land. He passed away before the structure was completed. In 2013, the final structure was integrated an excluded community with the larger community. We have brought out the annual Manipuri Theatre Patrika for last five years. The Bengal production Kohe Birangana became a mouth-piece. Several theatre-loving groups from India invited us to present Kohe Birangana at different festivals in Assam and Tripura. Organizing finance for these was a struggle but we managed with assistance from different quarters. The presentations were a breakaway from the historical, religious, and social theatre. In 2000, we got a permanent address—Noto Mandap. My father donated the land. He passed away before the structure was completed. In 2013, the final structure was completed. Noto Mandap is made of bamboo, cane, and clay.

We have always tried to maintain a healthy thought process as we worked to revive, revitalize, and rejuvenate the language of a marginalized ethnic group caught in an identity crisis. For a community that has Chandidas, Bishupati, and Gourindas as its rich past, we tried to add Baru Chandidas, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, and O’Henry in its contemporary cultural canvas along with the traditions and rituals of the Bishnupriya Manipuri community in Bangladesh. We know our journey is not easy. Once upon a time, we were a theatre group from a tiny village beside a tiny stream. Today, we are known across the nation. We have integrated an excluded community with the larger community through theatre. Our work has just started.
The Island Ark Project: Digital ICH Safeguarding in Pacific Island States

Dennis Redeker

Co-Founder, Island Ark Project Foundation, Inc.

Intangible cultural heritage in small island states in under great pressure: the effects of climate change, changing lifestyles, and significant regional migration mean that traditional practices require more intensive and strategic safeguarding. The Island Ark Project, a non-profit organization, works to realize Internet-based safeguarding projects across the Pacific’s small island states to meet these challenges. Founded in 2015, the Island Ark Project is a transnational, volunteer-driven organization that currently focuses on ICH safeguarding in the Republic of Palau.

The Pacific is full of lived intangible cultural heritage, such as the Palauan ogugoch (first child birth) widely practiced in the island country and in Palauan migrant communities around the world. Within local communities in Pacific small island states, transmission of ICH often works well, particularly if civil society organizations, families, and state institutions work together. Challenges can arise where external stressors such as climate change and globalization affect societies and particularly where large numbers of islanders leave their home and disperse to places around the world.

People leave their home islands for myriad reasons. Among young people—the future bearers of ICH—these reasons often include education, employment opportunities, or mere curiosity. In many cases, emigres never return home and raise their children in the new country using a new language. Small island communities can perceive a loss of cultural continuity when new generations do not continue practices that are associated with their ICH. For islanders living off-island this may equally lead to a feeling of cultural loss. It is hard for them or their children to fit in again, if they ever return, without the language and the knowledge of traditional practices.

The Island Ark Project was founded on the belief that digital approaches to ICH safeguarding can be useful for meaningful ICH safeguarding across generations and places. The core technology in use for digital safeguarding are websites that can store various file types (such as images, audio, video, and text) in a systematic matter. Such an online platform needs to display ICH information in an appealing, user-friendly way, focused to make transmission of knowledge as easy as possible. ICHCAP has recently created its own version of a web template that the Island Ark Project has happily embraced as a useful tool in its toolkit. However, computer code is not everything: at the heart of Internet-based ICH work lies the conviction that new technologies must be accepted by the cultural community and that technology must always be accompanied by careful considerations regarding the nature of the practice and the way transmission works. For instance, some practices are only being taught within a family—and there is limited appetite or utility to make such information public.

The Island Ark Project’s approach is to help develop tailored online platforms that are useful for ICH practitioners and groups engaged in ICH safeguarding. Which combination of features make an online platform useful strongly depends on the specific cultural and social context. This is why it is an important part of the work of the Island Ark Project is to bring safeguarding professionals together and provide trainings to ICH safeguarding stakeholders in order to plan how digital safeguarding can be best organized for groups, institutions and communities. Especially when it comes to the question which practices are meant for broader transmission and which constitute guarded family secrets, it is pivotal that many stakeholders cooperate.

The Island Ark Project recently organized two well-received workshops for the broader safeguarding community in the Republic of Palau. The first of those workshops took place in the state of Koror, in late 2017; bringing together a number of participants engaged in ICH safeguarding. The two-day workshop attracted representatives from Belau National Museum, Sonsorol State Government, Palau Community College, the Bai Project, and Palau Resource Institute. Careful discussions of the opportunities and challenges of digital safeguarding preceded a training with web templates for Internet-based curation of ICH materials. A follow-up workshop in early 2019 continued the effort, bringing in new stakeholders and discussing concrete ways to making collections of ICH materials available online. In the future, the participants want to use these templates to make their digital content on intangible cultural heritage available to a broader audience in Palau and beyond. Both workshops were organized with financial support provided by ICHCAP. The Island Ark Project is in regular conversations with representatives of the Republic of Palau’s Bureau of Cultural and Historical Preservation to make sure that legal and social standards for the work in Palau are met.

Following the definitions of UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Island Ark Project interacts with safeguarding practitioners and specialized organizations such as ICHCAP throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The organization’s aim is to further develop and spread digital ICH safeguarding technologies throughout Pacific small island states, especially in places where climate change affects livelihoods most. For instance, at some point in the future, continued settlement in some island nations such as Kiribati—whose islands average 1.8 meters at their highest elevation—may not be longer possible. The Island Ark Project hopes that online platforms will allow islanders to discuss, curate, and thus pass on their intangible cultural heritage and to continue to engage as a political and social unit.

Rachel McLellander with participants at the 2017 workshop © Island Ark Project

Diluar Tellei with participants at the 2017 workshop © Island Ark Project

Dennis Redeker with participants at the 2017 workshop © Island Ark Project

David Gitti with participants at the 2017 workshop © Island Ark Project
Analogue Audiovisual Materials in the Yap, one of four FSM states, during the Yap State Historic Preservation Office Starting 2019 with New Leadership and Reorganization of ICHCAP 1960s. The DVDs feature videos on Yap years, since 2007. Day dances that were recorded for ten 30
VIII
Director-General. With an academic background of public administration and journalism, Mr. Keum has devoted himself to a number of agencies, serving at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, serving as the Director-General of the Tourism Policy Bureau with experiences as senior programme specialist for culture and tourism at the UNESCO Office in Bangkok and Director of the Korean Cultural Centre at the Korean Embassy in Vietnam.

With Mr. Keum’s appointment as ICHCAP’s Director-General, the Centre has undergone a series of internal meetings to improve business efficiency and be better suited to promptly respond to recent changes at home and abroad in light of the changing domestic and international environment. In line with these efforts, ICHCAP has reorganized its office into four offices—namely, Strategic Development Office, Information and Research Office, Network and Cooperation Office, and Planning and Management Office. Especially, it is noteworthy that the Strategic Development Office was newly created, and the office will work to develop new projects and strategic plans. Also a new task-force team was created to better deal with external communication matters, such as enhancing online networking.

ICHCAP expects the reorganization will help improve the execution of its core information and networking activities for ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region. ICHCAP is publishing the second book in the Living Heritage Series, Tugging Rituals and Games: A Common Element, Diverse Approaches in April 2019. Supported by Danzig City, Republic of Korea, this book highlights the cultural diversity and similarity in tug-of-war practices in seven countries: Cambodia, Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Ukraine, and Vietnam.

This publication project was organized and completed by gathering updated articles from six countries that participated in symposiums and field work held by ICHCAP from 2013 to 2016. In addition to these six, a Ukrainian author also contributed.

Areas in which this practice has been vigorously performed are predominantly in Asian countries with a background in farming culture. However, tugging rituals and games have been practiced worldwide for a long time. Historically known throughout South America, North America, Africa, parts of Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific, tug of war games have a wide distribution. With this universality and in light of this book, cultural diversity in this practice can be seen in its origins and modes of performances as well as practitioners in different areas. Tug of war events can be a ritual, festival, sport, or form of entertainment. Religious and mythical stories are also included in the tug-of-war in some areas. Even though its practice appears to be a competition of pulling a rope in opposite directions, its intrinsic value, in most cases, is based on encouraging prosperity, solidarity, and harmony among participants. These intrinsic values are similar features in tugging rituals and games.

In relation to this publication, the Korea-Vietnam International Seminar on Tug-of-War will be held on 12 April. This seminar is a sub-event for the Gijisi Tug of War Folk Festival that will run from 12 to 14 April 2019 at places across Gijisi-rin in Danzig City, including the Gijisi Jaldargi Museum, in the Republic of Korea. At this seminar, ICHCAP will debut and distribute this publication.

In 2017, ICHCAP, as a UNESCO category 2 center in the cultural heritage field, started the Living Heritage Series to promote traditional knowledge and cultural diversity.

As a follow-up to Traditional Medicine: Sharing Experiences from the Field, which was published in collaboration with #HeritageAlive, ICHCAP is publishing Tugging Rituals and Games: A Common Element, Diverse Approaches to be published in April 2019.

The official launch event was co-organized by UNESCO, UNDESA, and the members of the Steering Committee for organization of the International Year, with the participation of other relevant stakeholders. To be held under the theme “Indigenous languages and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Promoting cultural diversity, pluralism, peace building,” this event gathered high-level governmental representatives, indigenous peoples, civil society, academia, media, information and memory organizations, United Nations agencies, public language harmonization and documentation institutions, and private sector. The major objective of the official launch event was to provide a global forum for a constructive debate in which high-level speakers address new paradigms for safeguarding, promoting and providing access to knowledge and information for the indigenous languages’ users.

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**ICHCAP Releases ICH Audiovisual Collections of Fiji and the Federated States of Micronesia**

ICHCAP published audiovisual collections on ICH from Fiji and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), which are titled ICHCAP Audiovisual Collection VII and VIII. Through ICHCAP’s 2017 Program for Supporting the Digitization Project of ICH-Related Analogue Audiovisual Materials in the Pacific, five hundred hours of analogue materials were digitized with the participation of the Fiji National Museum and Yap State Historic Preservation Office of the FSM. ICHCAP selected digitized materials for the collections based on the preservation status, use, and the value of sharing, among other criteria.

The Fiji collection consists of nine CDs and one DVD. The CDs have eighty tracks of chanting, children’s songs, dance music, hymns, and folk songs recorded in daily life during the 1970s. The DVD features videos introduced in 1997 on the art of mat weaving and its sociocultural meaning.

The FSM collection consists of eight CDs and two DVDs. The CDs list twenty tracks, including ICH-related stories, legends, and myths recorded in Yap, one of four FSM states, during the 1960s. The DVDs feature videos on Yap Day dances that were recorded for ten years, since 2007.

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** RELATED ANNOUNCEMENT **

ICHCAP is calling for project partners for this year to digitize ICH information. Applicants are required to be members of public organizations or NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region that produce ICH-related audiovisual documentation. In addition, applicants must also be recommended by a ministry of culture of a National Commission for UNESCO, or another appropriate authority that can vouch for the credibility and work quality of the applying organization.

The selected organization, as a project partner for this year, will be supported with 1) a project budget for digitizing target analogue materials (350 hours’ duration), 2) technical guidelines and expert advice on digitization, and 3) the production and distribution of a promotional audiovisual selection set.

The application deadline is 19 April 2019. Further details are available through ICHCAP’s website (ichcap.org) or e-mail (digitization.ichcap@gmail.com).

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**Official Launch of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages**

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages to raise global attention on the critical risks confronting indigenous languages and its significance for sustainable development, reconciliation, good governance, and peace-building. The 2019 celebration will contribute to the access to, and promotion of, indigenous languages and to a concrete improvement in the lives of indigenous peoples by strengthening the capacities of indigenous language speakers and relevant indigenous peoples’ organizations.

The official launch event took place at UNESCO Headquarters (Room II), in Paris, France, on 28 January in 2019. This official launch event was co-organized by UNESCO, UNDESA, and the members of the Steering Committee for organization of the International Year, with the participation of other relevant stakeholders. To be held under the theme “Indigenous languages and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Promoting cultural diversity, peace building, and reconciliation,” the event gathered high-level governmental representatives, indigenous peoples, civil society, academia, media, information and memory organizations, United Nations agencies, public language harmonization and documentation institutions, and private sector. The major objective of the official launch event was to provide a global platform for a constructive debate in which high-level speakers address new paradigms for safeguarding, promoting and providing access to knowledge and information for the indigenous languages’ users.

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**UNESCO News**

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Tugging Rituals and Games
A Common Element, Diverse Approaches

Coming in April 2019
Available soon in print and at ichcap.org/publications/