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Guest Editors' Introduction

Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asia
Traditions in Transition

This special issue is structured around six case studies from China, India, Japan, and Malaysia, conducted by scholars from Asia, Europe, and America, with interdisciplinary training in folklore, anthropology, and ethnomusicology. We combine both top-down and bottom-up approaches to illuminate various discourses and practices surrounding the definition, listing, and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) within particular social, political, cultural, and economic contexts in Asia. The key themes that emerge across the six case studies include: (1) an Asian paradigm of the safeguarding of ICH; (2) listing, nationalism, and the reification process of ICH; (3) international, national, and local politics surrounding ICH; (4) the interplay of ICH, tourism, and economic development; and (5) ICH and communities in discourse and in practice. This special issue will contribute to a broader understanding of the intersection of global policies and on-the-ground practice in cultural transmission and heritage protection as well as vernacular perspectives and ideas of tradition and heritage within local communities in Asia.

KEYWORDS: Intangible cultural heritage—tradition—power—politics—economy—communities

Drawing upon different case studies ranging across Asia, this special issue combines both top-down and bottom-up approaches to illuminate various discourses and practices surrounding the definition, inscription, and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Asian contexts. Through ethnographic and historical analysis of specific case studies, we examine the conflicts and challenges faced by Asian nation states and local communities as they seek to list, define, and promote the continuation of expressive culture and traditions perceived as endangered by rapid cultural change, globalization, political movements, and religious change. This special issue contributes to a broader understanding of the intersection of global policies, national agendas, and on-the-ground practice in cultural transmission and heritage formation as well as vernacular perspectives regarding tradition and heritage within local communities in Asia.

Since World War II, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has supported a series of world heritage initiatives that have had a significant global impact, most recently the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH). The Convention defines ICH as follows:

> The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.
>
> (UNESCO 2003)

The emergence of ICH and the adoption of the CSICH is the result of a long-term process by UNESCO, designed to answer the need for safeguarding oral and intangible culture, and is embedded in a complex network of concepts with political and historical stakes. With the promotion of UNESCO and its state parties, the concept of ICH has rapidly influenced the field of cultural policies and the international academy. Situating ICH discourses and practices within particular social, cultural, economic, and political contexts in Asian states, we address several inqui-

ries within this volume: What happens when the CSICH is ratified by a specific Asian state? How, do UNESCO's global efforts interact with local, regional, and state efforts to transmit, produce, and reproduce local traditions in an Asian state? How has (or has not) the recognition or non-recognition of a form of expressive culture as ICH by UNESCO created change in the presentation, expression, and practice of the nominated traditions within local communities? How have local communities, groups, and individuals responded to the ICH nomination, selection, and designation? What do we learn from this process? (Bendix, Eggert, and Peselmann 2012; Foster and Gilman 2015; Noyes 2016; Hafstein 2018; Smith and Akagawa 2009; Akagawa and Smith 2018.)

The cultural heritage field is often described as "primarily Euro-centric in its origin, premise, and praxis" (Silva and Chapagain 2013, i). This heritage landscape is challenged by the geopolitical shift in this new "Asian century," as the economies of China and India continue to grow and the nations of Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asia rapidly modernize. Asia has had a significant impact on heritage discourses and practices. Zeynep Aygen and William Logan (2015) argue that in identifying ways in which Asia may influence our understandings of heritage discourse and practice in the coming years, the sheer size and complexity of the Asian continent and the diversity of its communities need to be recognized, and representations of "Asian" heritage discourse and practice must be carefully made. They suggest that we move away from a simplistic East/West binary and invite us to acknowledge the significance of "Asian" agency in the heritage field, particularly the complexity of cultural reproduction within particular social, cultural, political, and economic contexts in Asia.

This special issue explores the following questions: How does the listing, study, and safeguarding of ICH reflect a global shift toward Asia? How have specific Asian ideas and practices of cultural transmission and heritage protection influenced and continued to influence ICH discourse and practice globally? How might Asian perspectives contribute to our understandings of ICH discourse and practice in the future? Six scholars from Asia, Europe, and America trained as folklorists, anthropologists, and ethnomusicologists explore ICH discourses and practices from ethnographic and historical perspectives through case studies from East, Southeast, and South Asia. The six case studies are drawn from the People's Republic of China, India, Japan, and Malaysia. The elements of ICH considered by the authors are as diverse as the cultural and political contexts in which they have been studied and include traditional theater, dance drama, festival, religious ritual, local beliefs, and cuisine. Three case studies from the People's Republic of China address different traditions from different regions, ethnic groups, and cultures. The wealth of response from scholars of ICH in the People's Republic of China reflects the rising influence of the PRC in ICH scholarship. The People's Republic of China currently has the largest number of inscriptions on the ICH lists and is poised to become a world leader in ICH discourse and practice.

Each case study focuses on a specific tradition of expressive culture that has been nominated for or is being discussed in terms of the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage developed out of UNESCO's 2003 Convention.

The objective of the volume is not only to explore state and global policies and discourses involved in nominating an expressive form of culture to the Representative List but also to listen to the voices of people in the affected communities from which these forms of expressive culture originate. We connect the experiences and ideas of local communities, groups, and individuals with state and global policies and discourses regarding the safeguarding of ICH. In other words, we explore ICH policies and practices from both bottom-up and top-down approaches, providing insight into the intersection of global decisions and local efforts about cultural transmission and heritage management. The key themes that emerge across these six case studies include (1) an Asian paradigm of the safeguarding of ICH; (2) listing, nationalism, and the reification process of ICH; (3) international, national, and local politics surrounding ICH; (4) the interplay of ICH, tourism, and economic development; and (5) ICH and communities in discourse and in practice.

An Asian paradigm of the safeguarding of ICH

UNESCO's ICH program is generally viewed as originating with a letter written in 1973 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion of the Republic of Bolivia to the director general of UNESCO (Hafstein 2014, 2018). In this letter, the Bolivian minister suggested that UNESCO should consider protecting folklore alongside tangible culture and natural heritage. Valdimar Hafstein (2004, 2018) has termed the initial phase of UNESCO's ICH program as belonging to a "European-inspired archival paradigm" that emphasizes expert knowledge and materiality via documentation. Hafstein describes the second phase as an "East Asian paradigm" that emphasizes the continued transmission of knowledge from generation to generation (2004, 2018). This "East Asian paradigm" was heavily influenced by Japan and South Korea (Hafstein 2018). In this volume, Leah Lowthorp argues for an expansion of Hafstein's regional characterization beyond East Asia and suggests the possibility of a wider "pan-Asian" heritage paradigm distinguished by an emphasis on intergenerational transmission of expressive culture and an explicit acknowledgment of the dynamic nature of ICH.

Asia has already had a significant influence on the world heritage field, with Japan, South Korea, and China at the forefront of the ICH movement. Japan has long had a strong national system for protecting tangible and intangible heritage. Japan's active engagement in heritage protection regionally and globally is related to its "cultural diplomacy" after World War II (Akagawa 2014). Japan became the largest financial contributor to UNESCO when the US, United Kingdom, and Singapore left the organization in the mid-1980s. In 1999, Japanese diplomat Kōichirō Matsuura (b. 1937) was elected to a six-year term as the director-general of UNESCO, and he was re-elected in 2005 for a further four years. Under Kōichirō Matsuura's leadership, UNESCO moved its heritage system to embrace the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage, first with the program of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (2001–2005), and then with the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH) in 2003, with its new system of committees, inscrip-

tion, and monitoring processes. This paradigm shift toward intangible forms of heritage reinforced efforts to protect "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" (UNESCO 2003).

Reflecting East Asia's focus on ICH, Japan and China were among the first, in 2004, to become state parties to the CSICH, with South Korea following a year later. By 2018, 508 elements corresponding to 122 countries were included in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices by UNESCO. Considering only the countries included in this volume, 40 of the 508 inscribed elements are from the People's Republic of China, 21 are from Japan, 20 are from the Republic of Korea, 13 are from India, 9 are from Indonesia, and 2 are from Malaysia. Together, these 6 Asian states have 105 (or 20 percent) of the world total of elements inscribed in UNESCO's ICH lists.

China officially joined the CSICH in August 2004, and on March 26, 2005, the Chinese State Council issued the official document "Recommendations on the Strengthening of the Safeguarding of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage," which recommended establishing a list of China's national ICH and protecting "representative transmitters" of national items of ICH. In 2005 the State Council also issued the "Circular on the Strengthening of the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage," which further established the principles and policies of the safeguarding of ICH and established the second Saturday of June as "Cultural Heritage Day." The Intangible Cultural Heritage Law (ICH Law) was enacted in China in 2011. It put forward normative requirements of the safeguarding of ICH as three aspects: a survey system, directory system, and transmission system. With this law, China has developed a legal framework to nominate and safeguard ICH. With the participation and promotion of the Chinese central government and local governments, this project soon spread as a national political campaign throughout China (You 2020).

Since the election of Xi Jinping as the president of China in 2012, he has promoted the dream of "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." This program reveals the strong appeal of using both tangible and intangible heritage as a platform for nation-state building and nationalist imagination in contemporary China. As Philipp Demgenski describes in this volume, Xi Jinping has attached great importance to China's need to develop "excellent traditional culture," and the focus on "excellence" affects the ways in which ICH is understood, interpreted, and reconstructed in the Chinese context.

Asian states are increasingly playing more and more important roles in cultural and heritage protection. Speculation regarding distinctive "Asian" heritage thought and practice has been very controversial. An emphasis on the harmonious relationships between people and the natural world, the spiritual meaning associated with heritage sites, and religious hybridity are sometimes described as distinctly Asian cultural characteristics, but these concepts are not exclusive to Asian cultures and are also found in many other cultures around the world (Aygen and Logan 2015). Asia is an incredibly diverse region, with many cultural, linguistic, and

religious traditions. How then, might one describe an "Asian" approach to defining heritage and enabling its protection? In this volume, Lowthorp argues that the "pan-Asian" heritage paradigm at work is distinguished both by its emphasis on the intergenerational transmission of expressive culture and by a dynamic conception of heritage. We agree with Lowthorp's findings and think that an "Asian Paradigm" of ICH opens opportunities to investigate continuity and innovation in cultural transmission and reproduction, vibrant and dynamic hybrid forms of creative cultural expressions, and the recognition of the complexities of political, religious, and historical fields that cultural practitioners have to negotiate for their traditions to continue to resonate with local communities, government patrons, and international sponsors.

LISTING, NATIONALISM, AND THE REIFICATION PROCESS OF ICH

When Asian states ratified the CSICH, they often combined this global effort with preexisting national efforts to preserve traditional culture (see articles by Hardwick, Konagaya, Lowthorp, and Zhang in this volume). In the process, state agents incorporated their vernacular and nationalist understandings of tradition and heritage into international heritage discourse. This is not necessarily a new phenomenon, nor is it particularly unique to Asia. Nicolas Adell, Regina Bendix, Chiara Bortolotto, and Markus Tauschek note that heritage-making in the nineteenth century was "profoundly linked to nation-building" (2015, 7). Indeed, heritage has become a way to emphasize "a partial or even transnational imagined community, maintaining the potential political thrust of heritage making even while administered by UNESCO" (ibid.). The concept of ICH has been constructed, interpreted, and applied by different actors within different social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. The case studies in this volume explore the diversity of ICH discourses and practices in Asia. They also detail how the Asian nations of China, Japan, India, and Malaysia have incorporated the concept of UNESCO ICH designation into their national heritage discourses and practices.

Many national efforts have focused on the lists of ICH elements made regionally, nationally, and globally. These lists are the most visible products of their efforts in safeguarding or promoting expressive culture. They are also constructed in a hierarchy, with UNESCO's list on the top and the local list at the bottom. For instance, after China ratified UNESCO's 2003 CSICH, the state used existing mechanisms of the government system to reshape the administration system at the national, provincial, prefecture, and county levels to engage in the safeguarding of ICH. In this system, the ICH elements to be protected must be established from bottom to top, which means that any ICH item must be selected, declared, and approved at the county and prefecture levels first, and then at the provincial level, before entering the national-level ICH safeguarding system (Zhang 2015). In total, 1,372 elements were designated as China's national ICH by 2014; 13,087 ICH elements were designated at the provincial level by 2016 (CICHPC 2016). As of December 2019, the State Council has issued five national ICH Representative Transmitters lists containing 3,068 people (CICHN 2020). Dorothy Noyes

notes that folklorists have characteristically been provincial intellectuals, and that the "nation-state was made stable by the labor of provincial intellectuals trying to integrate their local realities and the overarching order into a viable whole. Today provincial intellectuals are wrestling with globalization" (2016, 12). Social capital, relationships, and networking between officials, scholars, and local communities have played a significant role in promoting local traditions from the bottom to the top (Chan 2018). Scholars in this volume report similar discoveries, and the successful designation of ICH at the national and global levels relies heavily on the relationships between state agents, heritage experts, and officials.

ICH is "a list" and the list is "the context for everything on it" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 57). Everything on the list, whatever its previous context, is connected within the hierarchical system of ICH designation. UNESCO's recognition stands on the top of this hierarchical system but means different things to different communities. As Michael Dylan Foster summarizes, that UNESCO designation could be seen as "a financial boon," or "a point of pride and identity," or "a burden," or "an adornment," or the designation may not matter at all, depending on how it is situated and interpreted in different places (2015, 152).

Hafstein argues "the system of heritage is structured on exclusion: it gives values to certain things rather than others with reference to an assortment of criteria that can only ever be indeterminate. . . . Heritage lists fuse esthetic, ethical and administrative concerns" (2018, 53). ICH is a category designed for decision-making and action-taking. As envisioned by UNESCO, ICH is a universal category that supposedly supersedes local designations. In reality, many local practitioners seem to know little to nothing about the meaning of this universal category, and they continue to use vernacular terms when referring to their own traditions (see articles by Konagaya and You in this volume). Even when recognized, this category seems to have a limited impact on performers, audiences, and ritual participants in local communities (see Hardwick, this volume). What prevents traditions being transmitted to the next generation are social, political, religious, and economic changes that affect local communities and their ways of life. When ICH is reified as an object, it can lose relevance as a lifeway and become a commodity packaged as cultural patrimony for local and international consumption.

Indeed UNESCO recognition can even inspire list-based iconoclasm. Islamist movements like the Taliban, ISIS, and Ansar Dine have targeted the destruction of UNESCO world heritage sites perceived to be at odds with their politico-religious philosophies. These attacks also became symbols of their disregard for UNESCO and contempt of the West (Hafstein 2018). Formal UNESCO recognition raises the profile of heritage sites and intangible cultural heritage and elevates it to the world stage, however, this listing process also invests these sites and practices with international cultural symbolism that can lead to targeted list-based iconoclasm (Hafstein 2018, 84). In this volume, Patricia Ann Hardwick explores how the Malaysian Islamic Party (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, PAS) government representatives in Kelantan have responded to formal demands by UNESCO to eliminate their ban on *mak yong*, which was listed as a UNESCO Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage in 2005.

In this volume, Hideyo Konagaya argues that the concept and classification of intangible cultural property remains the same in Japan even after the introduction of the concept of ICH. However, adopting the UNESCO category of ICH has brought with it a global perspective that allows performers and supporters to look at cultural property and heritage from outside the national boundaries. Konagaya further argues that the creation of this new category allows Japanese scholars to understand how the concept of ICH is produced at the convergence of the global economy and politics. It also lays bare the way in which ICH discourse incorporates local and national cultural practices.

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL POLITICS SURROUNDING ICH

UNESCO relies on nation states to cooperate on their own accord in the ICH mission, and states often make decisions on the safeguarding of ICH that suit their national interests. The expansion of ICH-making depends on the particular institutional nature of "heritage regimes" that are organized according to Western bureaucratic logics (Bendix, Eggert, and Peselmann 2012). Once created, bureaucratic institutions continuously legitimize their existence and their search for new fields of action, and expansion is accompanied by the need for money and requires legitimation. Contestation over ownership escalates as states become more engaged in making ICH under CSICH. Motives for ICH safeguarding extend beyond concern for the transmission of expressive culture and can include interest in the acquisition of international status and the expansion of tourism. The inscription of the Gangneung Danoje Festival in the Republic of Korea on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2005) has sparked disputes between Chinese and South Korean internet users regarding which nation can claim the Duanwu Festival as their cultural patrimony. Most Chinese believe that the Danoje festival originated from the Chinese Duanwu festival and thus should be considered part of the heritage of China (An 2008). South Koreans claim the Gangneung Danoje Festival as their cultural patrimony. International conflicts over the ownership of cultural patrimony usually have a longer history of animosity and develop for a variety of reasons. However, ICH becomes a powerful symbol for national, regional, and local claims.

Conflicts over the national ownership of cultural patrimony can become particularly problematic in a region like maritime Southeast Asia where people and their traditions have a long history of migration, exchange, and transformation (Foley 2014). Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore have often been drawn into "culture wars" when a particular nation makes a formal international claim to a tradition or is perceived as appropriating another nation's cultural patrimony for tourism or commercial gain. Historical territorial claims and economic disagreements exacerbate the political nature of these disputes of ownership of cultural patrimony. There are many examples of heated disputes over the ownership of intangible cultural heritage that echo the deeper social, economic, and political conflicts between Malaysia and Indonesia. Usually Indonesia will file a formal claim of ownership for a particular aspect of cultural expression like a song (*Rasa Sayang(e)* 2007), or

a traditional dance form performed in Malaysia as part of local tradition or even as an international tourist advertisement. These conflicts have included controversies regarding the cultural ownership of East Javanese *Reog* from Ponorogo (2007), Balinese *pendet* dance (2009), Mandailing *Tor-tor* dance (2012), *Gondang Sembilan* (2012), and Javanese *Kuda Lumping/Kuda Kepang* (2017). Debate continues within Malaysia and Indonesia over which country can claim exclusive cultural rights over the *batik* manufacturing process. However, the 2009 UNESCO acknowledgment of *batik* as Indonesian ICH is often perceived in Indonesia as a verdict that confirms exclusive ownership of *batik* as Indonesian cultural patrimony, thus making null and void any attempt to claim it as ICH in the territory of Malaysia. This process continues with the current acrimony between Malaysian and Indonesian representatives over several UNESCO candidature files, with the current compromise being applications for the recognition of shared heritage by UNESCO for *Pantun*, *Pencak Silat*, and other forms of expressive culture.

Hardwick, in this volume, notes that *mak yong* is a tradition found in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Southern Thailand. Indonesian officials are attempting to build upon the success of Malaysia's single successful ICH inscription of *mak yong* as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (2008) to gain recognition for the Indonesian form of *mak yong*. To this end, the Indonesian non-governmental organization Asosiasi Tradisi Lisan, the Oral Traditions Association, submitted an application to have Riau Archipelago *mak yong* documentation submitted for inclusion in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2011. UNESCO-level recognition of ICH reifies modern nation-state borders and can become a flashpoint between neighboring nations when an ICH designation is used to claim ownership of an aspect of ICH to the exclusion of all other states. In an era in which ownership of intangible cultural heritage is often contested in Asia, there is a need for more studies to explore the historical and contemporary influence of cultural exchange in the region to provide perspectives on the ways in which people and forms extended across Asia in the period before colonial rule and the emergence of modern nation states.

International "food fights" also have the power to divide or unite maritime Southeast Asia as one nation or another often makes claims to the exclusive ownership of a particular dish, cooking style, or even street food culture. Individuals in Singapore and Malaysia have adopted UNESCO terminology and have begun to view and speak about their culinary traditions as intangible cultural heritage, and Singapore is in the process of creating a UNESCO candidature file for the recognition of hawker culture as ICH. Indonesia has officially announced plans to propose tempeh, a foodstuff made of fermented soya beans, as ICH in 2021 (*The Jakarta Post*, March 22, 2018). While debates over the ownership of ICH have the power to divide nations within East and Southeast Asia, a perceived attack on ICH, particularly upon food traditions shared across several nations of maritime Southeast Asia, can also have the power to unite nations against a perceived common foe. In April 2018, a Malaysian-born chef was knocked out of a British cooking competition after judges noted that her chicken *rendang* (meat stewed in curry and coconut milk) was not crispy. This led to a massive outpouring of support for

the Malaysian cook in newspapers and on social media from citizens of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Singapore challenging a perceived colonial imposition on a traditional Southeast Asian foodway. This incident was so high profile that Vicki Treadell, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, included an apology regarding the "crispy *rendang*" incident in her June 14, 2018, Malay-language greeting to Malaysians for the Muslim festival of Hari Raya Aidil Fitri (Treadell 2018).

In this volume, Konagaya examines how Kumiodori, a form of traditional Okinawan dance and theater, has been produced as a platform of cultural politics, entangled in power relations between Japan, the US, and China, within particular historical, cultural, and economic contexts. Kumiodori was originally invented in court by talented individuals in the island kingdom of Ryukyu, currently known as Okinawa. As a trading post between the Pacific Ocean and the East China Sea, Ryukyu maintained a tributary relationship with imperial China from the fifteenth century and a tributary relationship with feudal Japan from the seventeenth century. Surrounded by these neighboring powers, Ryukyuans employed music and dance performance as a diplomatic tool, at the receptions of Chinese envoys and also in their mission's visits to the shogunate capital of Edo. After the collapse of the kingdom, performers created new dance and theatrical forms for ordinary audiences and admitted female performers into their performance. Folklorists played an important role in recording, preserving, and promoting Kumiodori as a "national" performing art, making it heritage. As Konagaya explores, Kumiodori's inscription in UNESCO's list of ICH was situated in the protest against the US military base and complex national politics during the mid-1990s. The designation of Kumiodori as ICH provided a new platform for performers to reflect on their own identity and autonomy in the political tensions between the US and Japan. Overall, Konagaya suggests that the heritage-making process has involved both the contradictory dynamics of the power and protection of the cultural system, and also that of the authority and advocacy of scholarly research and practice.

In China, the national list of ICH has become a motivating focus for different institutions, communities, groups, and individuals to get involved in the project of the safeguarding of ICH, and the making of this list has led to many conflicts over ICH designation among different communities and groups. For certain cultural items or events, there have been various claims of ownership from different areas in China, and therefore the proclamation of ICH reinforced local tensions and conflicts (An 2008; You 2015). Demgenski discerns several frictions related to the conceptions of culinary ICH in China. On the one hand, the China Cuisine Association (CCA), restaurant managers, and business people want to use the ICH label for marketing and commercial purposes. Their understanding of culinary ICH focuses on the selection of representative dishes, distinctive cooking skills, and tastes, which is different from what CSICH advocates, but these concepts resonate with China's indigenous discourse on food traditions. On the other hand, officials and ICH experts are primarily concerned about the safeguarding of "endangered" living traditions and the balance of ICH elements among different regions and ethnic minority groups. The category of ICH thus became a powerful tool for different actors to interpret, reconstruct, and appropriate traditional

cultures for different purposes. In many cases, the politics and frictions of ICH are intertwined with tourism and economic development.

The interplay of ICH, tourism, and economic development

The use of the designation of ICH for tourism, commercialization, and economic development has been a widespread phenomenon in Asia (see Demgenski, Konagaya, and Zhang in this volume). Konagaya illustrates how Okinawan performing arts have been framed by the national policy devised for the economic promotion and social development of Okinawa in Japan in a long historical process. Kumiodori was used by tourist industries as a mainstay of Okinawan tourism long before it was inscribed on UNESCO's List of ICH in 2011. Both before and after the ICH designation, Ryukyuan performance is perceived as one of the vital economic resources of Okinawa, widely popularized by advertising campaigns by airlines, tourist industries, and popular media.

With the growing influence of the global market and economy, the brand value of ICH is widely recognized by various stakeholders and interlocutors. Demgenski draws on the specific case of Confucian Family Cuisine (*kong fu cai*) to illustrate how enthusiastic individuals and private entrepreneurs in Confucius' birthplace Qufu use the ICH label to brand their culinary products by simply announcing that a bid for submission to UNESCO is currently being prepared. The preparation of the application and subsequent submission to UNESCO was only announced in the media, however, the application has not yet been submitted. By trading on nationwide and even international media attention regarding a potential ICH submission, local business people and officials successfully reinforce the fame of local cuisine toward the millions of tourists visiting Qufu every year.

Qiaoyun Zhang studies the "cultural recovery" projects related to ICH within the ethnic Qiang villages after the severe Wenchuan earthquake in China in 2008. Her fieldwork site is in Longxi Township, Wenchuan County, Sichuan Province, which has been transformed from a previously marginalized Qiang-concentrated settlement into a Qiang heritage tourism destination. Taking the nomination of the Qiang New Year Festival as a national and later UNESCO ICH representative element as an example, Zhang discusses how the public celebration of the Qiang New Year in most villages has become a hodgepodge show of the "Qiang culture" used to promote tourism and the accomplishments of the reconstruction after the earthquake.

In March 2018, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was formed in China, foregrounding the importance of tourism. From 2004–2017, the Ministry of Culture was responsible for the safeguarding of ICH in China. The association of culture and tourism reveals the central government's ultimate goal to use culture to develop the economy. In Malaysia and Indonesia, the concepts of culture and tourism are also combined, emphasizing the economic value of cultural creation for the tourist industry. The UNESCO ICH category has become a legitimating tool for governments, officials, and experts to promote traditional culture to a worldwide audience, particularly domestic and international tourists.

The tourism industry has long recognized the economic benefits of cultural resources, and in Asia many countries have developed elements of their cultural heritage into tourist attractions (Miksic, Goh, and O'Connor 2011; Brumann and Berliner 2016). In different Asian nations, concepts of heritage ownership, political systems, and governance differ from those in the West, therefore Western solutions to problems related to ICH and tourism may not be applicable in Asia. The convergence between development and preservation is often tense, because it entails negotiation and compromise between various stakeholders with conflicting interests. Conflicts between the short term and long term, local and global, politics and economy, and preservation and innovation are enduring sources of dispute among a variety of agents and actors. Tourism in various places is highly dependent on cultural sources, and there is a need to develop effective management strategies to balance cultural preservation and economic development, and to reduce the destructive potential of the conflicting interests.

ICH and communities in discourse and in practice

"Community of practice" is a concept that was introduced in learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and applied to the "heritage complex" by Adell, Bendix, Bortolotto, and Tauschek (2015). The term "community of practice" was originally coined by Etienne Wenger to describe how individuals from diverse backgrounds could work together for a common goal. Jean Lave clarifies in *Learning and Everyday Life* that communities of practice can be found "[w]herever people engage for substantial periods of time, day by day in doing things in which their ongoing activities are interdependent, learning is a part of changing participation in changing practices" (Lave 2019, 119). Adell, Bendix, Borolotto, and Tauschek apply the term to describe the individuals on multiple levels that work together in the heritage-making process (2015). At the administration level, a community of practice is composed of actors who desire to obtain UNESCO recognition. Local experts, scholars, and politicians work together to create a nomination dossier where officials at the regional, national, and international levels interact and negotiate with the goal of a successful nomination process (Adell, Bendix, Borolotto, and Tauschek 2015). On the local level, people committed to maintaining or reviving a particular tradition can also be viewed as forming a community of practice motivated by shared political or economic interests (Adell, Bendix, Borolotto, and Tauschek 2015). Emphasis on participation is a characteristic of the ICH paradigm, and the participation of communities is viewed as necessary for nomination of a particular embodied tradition to UNESCO ICH lists (ibid.).

While the emphasis on community engagement was an attempt to empower local cultural practitioners, in the hope that international recognition might assist them in their negotiations with regional and state officials, case studies of the participatory paradigm in practice have revealed unintended results (Adell, Bendix, Borolotto, and Tauschek 2015). In this volume, Hardwick explores how interrelated traditional and national communities of practice are mindful of how they

are "situated in context" and how they engage shifting personal, historical, political, and religious fields, intentionally transforming their art as they embody it and teach it to the next generation (Lave and Wenger 1991, 4). The case studies of Demgenski, Lowthorp, Konagaya, Zhang, and Ziying You presented in this volume also examine particulars of interactions between administrative and local communities of practice as well as the intended and unintended results of this process in various contexts throughout Asia.

Bendix emphasizes that UNESCO and heritage specialists need to reflect upon the broader practice of cultural sponsorship and patronage (Bendix 2014). In this volume, Hardwick explores the divergent ways in which the patronage and inscription of *mak yong* as a form of ICH has been entwined within local, national, global, and political-religious fields. In Malaysia, a majority Muslim nation, the *mak yong* inscription was incorporated into a battle that pit the Malaysian federal government against PAS, an Islamic opposition state government, and Malay ethnonationalism against political Islam. *Mak yong*'s declaration as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2005 was supported by the Malaysian federal government and brought international attention to the sweeping ban of traditional performance forms enacted by PAS, the Kelantanese state Islamic opposition government, for religious reasons. Since *mak yong*'s UNESCO recognition in 2005 and inscription in 2008, Malaysian federal government patrons have developed *mak yong* into an elite form of cultural patrimony devoid of ritual and healing aspects associated with *mak yong* performance in Kelantanese villages. In 2017, PAS received a sharp rebuke from a UN special rapporteur on cultural rights for their continued ban of *mak yong* in Kelantan. While the initial PAS response to this public rebuke was fierce defiance, in 2018 religious authorities of the PAS opposition party began to consider whether they might rescind the twenty-seven-year ban on *mak yong*. If this occurs, potential PAS patrons have given signs that they would require that *mak yong* be reimagined and remade to fit their understandings of revelatory Islamic practice. Hardwick also documents how local communities of practice have been pushing back against federal and state-level processes of heritage-making. Malaysian NGOs working with international sponsors like the Asia Foundation have created programs that promote *mak yong* and community engagement and reinforce the strong role of women in the *mak yong* tradition. Local Kelantanese artists have also chosen to take charge of the safeguarding of their tradition despite long-standing religious bans by channeling their performative experience into traditional healing practices to serve their local communities.

Exploring the influence of state-level patronage, Zhang in this volume critiques the complex impacts of top-down disaster management ICH safeguarding planning in Qiang communities in China after the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008. Zhang documents the process of inscription, safeguarding, and promotion of Qiang ICH elements and analyzes the involvement of state agencies and selected groups of scholars in this process of producing knowledge about the newly heritagized cultural practices. You's article also explores the issue of the influence of political patronage as she examines the complex historical interactions between Chinese state-level cultural policies and local communities of practice. You's case

study investigates religious practices of "receiving aunties (Ehuang and Nüying)" in Hongtong County, Shanxi Province. These religious practices were banned during the revolutionary period by an emergent People's Republic of China that disparaged them as harmful "feudal superstitions." You examines how the diachronic shift in cultural policies of the Chinese state over the last seventy years has led to these once-banned traditions being remade for national purposes, and how they have ultimately been reclassified as part of China's intangible cultural heritage. She argues that although we might assume that the category of "superstition" is disempowering and that of "ICH" is empowering, in actual practice both terms may disempower or empower community members. The new category of ICH should allow more space than it does for local communities to achieve equity and justice.

Chiara De Cesari (2012) points out the "ambiguous" and "conflicted" relationship between many local civil society organizations dedicated to heritage preservation and the local UNESCO office, which was viewed as allied to national authorities. Clearly, UNESCO's action frequently ends up reinforcing the power and reach of the nation-state and its bureaucracy, which is contradictory to its principle to involve local communities, groups, and individuals in heritage protection. Combining both top-down and bottom-up approaches, both historical and ethnographical perspectives, this volume illustrates how concepts such as "tradition," "involvement," "local communities," and "development" are constructed, defined, and deployed in cultural reproduction and the creation and safeguarding of ICH within particular historical, social, cultural, political, and economic contexts in Asia. We also highlight the stories and life experiences of real people who are invested in the continuity of their ICH in local communities in China, Japan, India, and Malaysia so that their perspectives regarding these heritage-making and safeguarding endeavors can be heard and understood.

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