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Village Guardian Rituals and Communities



ichcap

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Editorial Remarks

Kwon Huh *Director-General of ICHCAP*

ICHCAP's main functions involve building systems to ensure effective information sharing about ICH safeguarding. In line with this objective, ICHCAP held the Workshop on Using Website Templates to Safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage (21–22 November) in Koror, Palau. This workshop was organized to provide institutions and organizations with support to operate their own independent information management and service systems. Institutions in need of digital ICH data management, including the Sonsorol State, Belau National Museum, Palau Community College, Bai Study Group, and Palau Resource Institute, participated in the workshop. The issue of providing adequate support for sustaining the operation of an information management system after distributing the web templates is a challenge we will have to tackle in the future.

In September, ICHCAP held the third Southeast Asian Collaborative Meeting on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Penang, Malaysia, as a follow-up to the first meeting in 2012 in Indonesia and the second in 2015 in Vietnam. ICH NGOs, communities, government representatives, and UNESCO workshop facilitators gathered in George Town, a world heritage city, to discuss integrated approaches to safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage, under the topic of "Enhancing Viability in Intangible Cultural Heritage Community."

At the meeting, participants explored the potential value of intangible and tangible heritage as well as the relationships between the two. They also discussed ways of applying integrated approaches to heritage protection policies in their respective states, within the framework of the 2003 UNESCO Convention. It was an opportunity for communication and collaboration among the policymakers, experts, and various stakeholders of the respective Member States in the Southeast Asian region.

ICHCAP focuses on ICH in relation to the 2030 SDGs. Recently, in particular, on ways that ICH supports peace, gender equality, and sustainable development. In this volume, we look at ICH in areas of armed conflict, where day-to-day lives are disrupted and destroyed along with a community's ICH. We ask whether there are legal measures to safeguard ICH in such situations and look for examples in which ICH has contributed to the cultural integration of members in modern societies. Also in this volume, we examine and compare the communal rituals of Kazakhstan, Japan, India, and Bhutan and introduce a case study involved with introducing non-formal transmission techniques in modern education systems through in relation to traditional komuz training in Kyrgyzstan.



COVER ART

Biye baylau, villagers' worship for the well-being of people and horses © National Historic, Cultural and Natural Reserve-Museum 'Ulytau' (Kazakhstan), 2017

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ICH in Armed Conflict: What Protection Can International Law Confer?

Dr. Christiane Johannot-Gradis

Former Delegate, International Committee of the Red Cross & Co-founder and Co-director, Traditions for Tomorrow

Tragic examples of cultural heritage destruction have recently filled the news. While they rightly caused dismay among the international community, it is, however, essential to acknowledge similar events perpetrated in the same circumstances to the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of people caught up in the turmoil of war. Harm to ICH is, certainly, less visible than that to tangible property, yet the effects are just as devastating.

War does not take things into consideration; it destroys without distinction visible and invisible. Two sites on the World Heritage List can, among others, illustrate this. Besides their reputation, it is also of interest to mention them since harm occurred at different stages of an armed conflict: during hostilities, then following combat, when the population falls into the enemy's hands. Aleppo's Old Souk, first, was destroyed during hostilities, but many cultural expressions, ancestral skills that Aleppines gave life to, were also affected and disappeared with the Souk. The other refers to the Timbuktu mausoleums and their destruction, which was the subject of an ICC judgment of the utmost importance. Those populations' ICH was moreover also affected, as onsite ceremonies were prohibited. Again, added to the visibility of destroyed Mausoleums is the invisible, as ICH expressions were silenced. Such cases illustrate the tangible and intangible dimensions of heritage, of which one prevails according to region, culture, and conflict evolution.

These distinctions, between tangible and intangible, between different stages of a conflict, are also found in the norms aiming at protecting cultural heritage in armed conflict. They are numerous, pertaining to various legal regimes, yet they exist, and by ratifying such treaties, states subscribe to the obligation, when war breaks out, of complying with them and thereby of preserving cultural heritage.

History of Protection

While wars have always existed, attempts to regulate them also date back to time immemorial. Man has always felt the need for rules to ensure community life. This is true for land management, life cycles related rituals, and also for war. These rules were gradually specified, and one of them, which made its way through centuries and continents, aims to protect the spiritual sphere, the "sacred."

Even though frequently violated, these rules existed and, when respected, they contributed to preserving the populations' cultural and spiritual heritage. They were mainly to prohibit combat near sacred sites to protect these as well as to ensure ceremony celebration and everyone's participation. This protection focused on the site, celebration and individuals who fulfilled it and took part, a protection suggesting the future safeguarding of ICH.

The first treaties of the law of armed conflict applicable primarily in the event of war also established this rule. The 1907 Hague Conventions governed the conduct of both world wars. While their provisions did not prevent all harm to heritage, they

nonetheless contributed to its preservation. The Nuremberg Tribunal also punished as a war crime the violation of their norms aimed at preserving cultural heritage.

The law of armed conflict was then enriched with the 1949 Geneva Conventions dedicated to the protection of human beings in armed conflict. Their 1977 Additional Protocols extended it to “cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples,” including in internal conflict. Then followed the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which also contributes to the safeguarding of ICH. Its scope, beyond objects and buildings, is indeed also extended to sites and centers that can involve ICH expressions. Its Second Protocol of 1999 specifies this indirect protection it confers.

Other treaties were later adopted, such as the 1966 UN International Covenants on Human Rights, including two provisions protecting cultural rights. Not belonging to the law of armed conflict, some of their norms, theoretically applicable at all times, can however be restricted in the event of war. The UNESCO culture conventions then followed, such as the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH.

What Law Protects ICH in Armed Conflicts?

Most armed conflicts in the past decades were internal and of a cultural, spiritual, or ethnic nature. Cultural heritage plays a key role therein as it can become a stake in the conflict, its destruction being an act of war sometimes described as “cultural cleansing.” Indeed, by attacking the symbols of the opponent populations’ identity, it is their dignity, their own existence, which are aimed at. The history of humanity provides many examples of this.

When acts of hostility aim at intangible heritage, they contravene rules pertaining to multiple instruments, unlike tangible property. A recent example of an ending conflict can illustrate it. It involves the Ette Ennaka people of Northern Colombia, particularly harmed by this long war.

In addition to displacements and massacres they were exposed to, they also faced the loss of essential ICH elements, such as access to their numerous sacred sites, scattered throughout a vast territory. There, Elders made pilgrimages in which ancestral knowledge was ritually passed on to the next generations, including traditional pharmacopoeia. What applicable law would protect this tradition then?

The regime applied as a priority is the law of armed conflict. Yet, when it is imprecise or incomplete, resorting to other norms that meet more accurately a given situation, such as those of the 2003 Convention or the 1966 UN Covenants, is in principle possible, as was ruled by the ICJ.

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols protect individuals in armed conflict, in particular their



Author with Ette Ennaka people on a field in their territory, Magdalena, North of Colombia © Christiane Johannot-Gradis

life, their physical integrity, their dignity, their religious freedom, yet not traditions nor the group that brings them to life, particularly in internal conflicts, as fewer norms then apply. The 2003 Convention’s norms provide a precise protection to Ette Ennaka ICH expressions, such as article 11, which sets the obligation of States Party to take necessary action for the safeguarding of ICH, or article 15, which requires the aforementioned states to ensure community participation in activities for the safeguarding of their ICH. The applicability of such norms in this instance could thus be invoked.

Human rights, theoretically applicable during the conflict, like cultural rights requiring the right to one’s own cultural life and access to one’s heritage, the freedom of expression, of movement, of reunion, can also be invoked to ensure the fulfillment of these ceremonies. Yet, in a situation of serious disturbance of public order, such as war, they can, unlike religious freedom, be restricted or even suspended. In addition to these rights, various norms of the 1989 ILO Convention N° 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples enshrine their right to conduct their cultural and spiritual practices.

Conclusion

This brief overview of the law applicable to ICH in the event of armed conflict shows that its safeguarding implies the implementation of several legal regimes and instruments. The law of armed conflict, ensuring respect for individuals, their cultural and spiritual identity, their dignity, applies in priority. However, to fill the gaps of these regulations with regard to ICH preservation, resorting to provisions that precisely meet a specific case is needed, as ruled by the ICJ. This involves mainly the 2003 Convention’s norms and, in particular, those enshrining the states’ obligation to ensure the safeguarding of ICH and the communities’ right to give life to it.

The joint applicability of various cultural heritage related instruments to improve its preservation in armed conflict is a constant concern of UNESCO. Efforts are made to implement synergies between the 1954 Convention and the 1972 Convention, in particular, and now also the 2003 Convention.

The applicability of this instrument in armed conflict has been discussed during the last 2003 Committee sessions. This was the case in Windhoek in 2015 when was adopted an ethical principle on the applicability of the 2003 Convention in such circumstances, and in 2016 when the Committee decided during its Addis Ababa session to continue addressing the issue of safeguarding ICH in emergency situations, which also include armed conflicts. In December 2016, the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict confirmed its previous year’s decision, seeking to implement synergies with the 2003 Convention.

To conclude, similar concerns are also expressed at the UN where the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights presented her report on the intentional destruction of cultural heritage and cultural rights before the General Assembly in 2016, stressing the serious harm also committed to ICH in the event of armed conflict. ■

Using Folk Traditions for Developing Integrated Traditions

Parakrama Niriella
Artistic Director, Janakaraliya Cultural Foundation



It is imperative that the material development of a country be linked with cultural development. Such cultural development should pave the way to develop an integral citizen with knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes enabling him or her to appreciate and honor others' traditions and beliefs. If not, material development and the connected technology will create an inhumane and disoriented person bent on disruption. A rejuvenated man from contemporary cultural decadence will be created through proper educational methods, righteous religious philosophy, true mass media application, and appropriate arts and cultural practices and applications. Janakaraliya drama and theater arts program primarily supports the development of a proper education system and application of arts and cultural practices.

Instead of developing an education system that recognizes different cultural and religious traditions of different communities in our country and promote inclusiveness among them, the contemporary education system in Sri Lanka tends to stimulate division and conflict among different communities. Many schools (both state and private) are divided as follows:

- by ethnicity, as Sinhala, Tamil, and English schools
- by religion as Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim schools
- by gender as male and female schools
- by attendance as popular schools and none-popular schools
- by geography as urban and rural schools
- by economic status as rich and poor schools

Individuals entering society after being educated from these schools are naturally influenced with divisional mind-sets, and some of them become targets for rabble-rousers and for conflicts among different societal segments. No programs develop or create cohesive relationships, even among schools situated in the same educational zone or in the same city. Although there are opportunities to participate in inter-district and inter-provincial sports meets. These opportunities, however, are used for increasing competitive mentality for victory at the expense of others, not for creating positive and cohesive relationships among students.

Even at the university level, the education system does not provide enough opportunities for students to learn and appreciate cultural traditions of other communities. For example, there are few provisions for Sinhala students to learn the Tamil language and for Tamil students to learn the Sinhala language. As such the present education system prevents

students from learning about each other's cultural and artistic traditions or about each other's concerns or joys.

Using Folk Arts on Education for Social Cohesion

We proposed a school program called Theatre for Social Cohesion to help address the situation in the school system. The Ministry of Education accepted the program proposal, and a pilot program was conducted in the Bandarawela Educational Zone in Uva Province and funded by the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ). One-day workshops were held in two Sinhala schools, two Tamil schools, and one Muslim school within the zone, and all together fifty students were selected for further training (ten students from each school). Thereafter, a three-day residential workshop was held for teachers to train them how to use drama and theater as tools for teaching and social cohesion. They were advised to conduct short surveys with the selected students about traditional folk arts of other communities. They were also required to study and train students in two or three folk songs and dances with the aim of performing them at the next workshop.

Ten teachers and fifty students participated in the next five-day residential workshop, so students could get to know each other and develop relationships through theater exercises and games and to develop storylines for dramas. Three mixed teams were created representing all five schools, and they created storylines based folk drama traditions. Janakaraliya advised the students to develop dramatic characteristics that furthered the given objectives.

During the third five-day residential workshop, the three best dramas were selected commenced with the completion of dramas. Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim students performed the dramas in their local dialects with their traditional music and songs. A distinct characteristic of these three dramas was that they were created with three different structures and were infused with mixture of folk drama and musical traditions of every ethnicity.

All three dramas were performed at the five schools the students represented. The audiences were made up of the multi-cultural students and their parents. A performance by Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim students in the same space was a rare event and had a positive impression on the audiences. During the dialogue sessions after the performances the audience shared the view that the social integrity and inclusiveness could be developed through the education system. These collective creations infused a mixture of folk traditions of three communities and instilled love and affection in the audiences.

Interior of the Janakaraliya Mobile Theatre
© Janakaraliya Cultural Foundation

Subsequently, four similar programs were implemented Matala, Polonnaruwa, NuwaraEliya, and Ampara. The Ministry of Education pledged to continue the project.

A Modern Drama with Folk Traditions and Dealing with the Past

In general, dramatists study traditional dramas and folk arts to enrich established mainstream theater. After that, folk artists are forgotten, and no steps are taken to protect or preserve traditional arts or artists, who are subjected to decline due to influences of contemporary society. Under this situation, Janakaraliya uses folk traditions and artists to serve a wider audience and cater to the development of folk art and artist. Janakaraliya chose Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* for this purpose. This drama was translated into Tamil by veteran dramatist Dr. Kulandei M. Shanmugalingam from Jaffna of northern Sri Lanka.

The first phase acquainted traditional Tamil dramatists with identifying ancillary arts related to drama creation. We were fortunate to associate with traditional Tamil dramatists of northern Sri Lanka who live outside of southern Sri Lanka where majority Sinhalese live. First, the workshops were conducted in three locations. Traditional dramatists of the Therukuttu, Kattavarayan Kuttu, and Isaei styles and skilled traditional folk singers including Villupattu as well as youthful amateurs participated in these workshops.

Of the workshop participants, fifteen members from Jaffna performed in the drama, *Venkatti Vattam*, along with fifteen Sinhala and Tamil performing artists from Janakaraliya. The dramatic setting involves war and conflict, with the story developing through a string of incidents connected a riot in a palace. The queen abandons her child in the riot, and a servant woman with motherly instincts carries the baby to safety. The queen later tries to reclaim custody of the child, but an unconventional judge hands custody over to the servant after recognizing her dedication and love for the abandoned child. In creating characters and situations, efforts were made to bring true-life experiences of the northern Tamil population to the stage; as such, the drama portrayed original characters rather than a translation.

Four months were spent production and a further two months to perform it. During this time all the participants and supporting staff lived under one roof, sharing bread and board engaged in training, rehearsals, and performance. It was a wonderful period of sharing traditions, life experiences, and joyfulness. Food provisions, production management, stage management, and costume making were done as a collective effort. The premiere was held on 22 July 2016 at the

Weerasingham Hall, Jaffna. Infusing Sinhala and Tamil traditions enriched the drama and generated dynamism.

As the drama included some historically accurate portrayals of the Tamil experience during the war, Sinhala audiences better understood the hardships Tamil communities experienced. During post-performance dialogue, Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim audiences agreed that preventive measures should be enacted to avoid similar situations in the future.

The dramatic production paved the way to a novel tradition of infusing Tamil and Sinhala traditions and having multiple communities share the same space, a novelty appreciated by all the audience members. It was an exhilarating experience where Sinhala and Tamil performers shared the same performance space for the first time in decades.

Memory Work with Folk Arts

People step into the future remembering good and bad experiences as lessons learned. Good experiences should be used for a righteous future, and bad experiences should be used as reminders to prevent similar occurrences in future. But in a larger society, negligence, and pressures of prevailing state authorities can lead to repeated bad experiences. This is visible in Sri Lankan society today. Inclination of repeating communal conflicts is visible in both northern and southern Sri Lanka. Callous Sinhala Buddhist racism is raising its head in southern Sri Lankan society against Tamils and Muslims. They are not aware of trauma and hardships faced by the northern Tamil society during the war since these topics are not publicized in the media, which is biased to the Sinhala population. It would be better to develop dialogue among the Sinhala people in the south about the negative effects of war and conflict. Drama and theater arts could be used as powerful tools for this purpose.

The latest program proposed by Janakaraliya for this purpose is to create a series of dramas based on the war and postwar experiences of Tamil people and hold performances in the south for Sinhala audiences to raise awareness about the true situation about the northern Tamil population and help erase biases. In these dramas, traditional styles, folk dances, and songs will be used in place of the Tamil language while verbal exchanges will be in Sinhala to enhance understanding for the Sinhala audience.

Using Free Theater Spaces Resembles Folk Theater

For performances, Janakaraliya uses any space where people can assemble—proscenium theaters, open theaters, playgrounds, threshing floors, etcetera. As such Janakaraliya can address limitless audiences, regardless of class. A Janakaraliya

custom is to associate and use traditional drama styles and folk arts as much as possible. Janakaraliya prefers the participation of folk drama artists rather than being influenced by traditional arts. These folk artists spontaneously inculcate their styles and methods in Janakaraliya dramas, which enhance the performances. Also Janakaraliya teaches positive techniques and qualities of mainstream dramas to enhance their creations. As a result, Janakaraliya can provide aesthetic and entertaining dramas for people of all levels of society.

The Mobile Theatre, the regular performance space of Janakaraliya, is constructed based on the performing spaces of folk dramas, where performances can be watched from all sides. As such, all Janakaraliya dramas are watchable at close quarters, providing closer relationships between the audiences

and performers. Whenever drama festivals are conducted, opportunities are provided for the regional artists to perform their creations in the mobile theatre for larger gatherings. We launched into this process when creating the drama *Sekkuwa* (Oil Press) in 1976, before starting Janakaraliya. The drama associated traditional folk dramas *Sokary* and *Kolam*, portraying the distorted political system and the poor rural farmers who are subjected to exploitation by the political system. Enriched with traditional dances and songs, now it still performed by the Janakaraliya drama group. The drama *Sekkuwa* was the curtain raiser at the Bahuroopi International Theatre Festival conducted by Rangayana Drama and Theatre Arts Institute, Mysore, from 13 to 18 January 2017. ■



Selvaraj Leelawathy in the
Tamil Caucasian Chalk Circle
© Janakaraliya Cultural Foundation

Village Guardian Rituals and Communities

As part of community traditions throughout the Asia-Pacific region, rituals and beliefs related to communal deities make up an essential part of understanding the world. These beliefs are rooted in the unique agricultural or sociological atmosphere in which they develop. In this volume, we take a closer look at the guardian deities and the associated rituals and festivals in communities located in Japan, Kazakhstan, Bhutan, and India to better understand how these events enrich the communities that practice them.

INDIA—A local woman with an offering; according to local faith, the Lord solves all problems. © banglanatak dot com

Traditional Spring Festive Rites of Kazakh Horse Breeders

Yelena Khorosh

Scientific Researcher, National Historic, Cultural and Natural Reserve-Museum, Ulytau



A triad of spring festive rites—*biye baylau*, *ayghyr kosu*, and *kymyz murundyk*, identified and documented in Terisakkan Village in the northern outskirts of Ulytau District, Central Kazakhstan—is a testimony to nomadic culture surviving up to today. Regarded by its bearers as the most important annual festive event, it starts in early May with first spring warmth, new grass, flowers, and foals, opening a new year-round cycle of life reproduction and a new season of making koumiss, an ancient sacred drink.

These rites feature the remnants of ancient cults and beliefs inherited by the Kazakhs from their nomadic ancestors, notably of the cult of horse and the related cult of Qambar Ata. The latter personage is present in the folklore of Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Tajik, and other peoples of Central and West Asia as not only a herdsman and a patron of horses and horse breeders but also as an epic hero and a musician. Among the Kazakhs he is equally known as Zhylkyshy Ata, “the ancestor of herdsmen.”

One meaning of the word *qambar* is “a stud-horse.” Accordingly, the personage of Qambar Ata in Kazakh folklore is associated with a stallion:

Horse Patron, Qambar, is a stud-horse of herd,
The origin of increase and a source of wealth.¹

Up to now, old Kazakh horse breeders mention Qambar Ata in the traditional wording of worship, blending both pre-Islamic and Islamic concepts, at the start of the festive rites:

Qambar Ata, the Horse Patron,
May God make every wish come true!
May there always be many mares,
May koumiss always be in abundance.
May all children be healthy,
All relatives live in concord
And our alliance be stable.
God the Great!²

Then the oldest man of the village gives his blessing to all, thus launching *biye baylau* (tethering a mare), an ancient ‘first milking’ rite, the initial part of the spring festive triad. Biye baylau incorporates several ritual components. The first one is *zheli tartu*—driving pegs in the ground and straining a rope (*zheli*) for tethering mares and foals. The first peg is always driven by the elected honored man. *Zheli maylau* (buttering a rope) is another ritual act of biye baylau. Women generously grease ropes and pegs with fresh butter, asking Qambar Ata to

grant an abundance of milk and ‘to fill the roots of everything with butter.’³ One of the most important ritual components of biye baylau is the offering of ritual food (mainly butter, cream, homemade bread, and sweets) to all who may come. Every family serves it near their tethered horses. Nobody can pass it by, everyone must try some food, wherever it is offered, and say a good wish.

A culmination of biye baylau is milking. Mares are milked by women. Men assist them, bringing foals, one by one, to mares for suckling and then taking them back to allow for milking. Everyone is silent, because speaking to those performing the first spring milking of mares is not allowed. To protect horse milk against evil spirits, every housewife performs a *qubini ystau* ritual, treating a wooden barrel for making koumiss with butter and then with a smoke of fresh juniper kindled in a samovar.

Ayghyr kosu (stallion’s marriage) is a rite for the adjoining stallions in herds. It represents the second rite of the spring festive triad and takes place on the same day as biye baylau. Women grease stallions’ manes and tails with butter, asking Qambar Ata to give good offspring to the herds. Men lead stallions out and keep them in check for a while. Then they take bridles off and let stallions join their herds. This day ends with celebrations accompanied by music performances and traditional competitive games.

Kymyz murundyk (initiation of koumiss) is a crowning part of the spring festive triad, a rite of sharing the first koumiss, opening a season of its making and drinking. It starts when the first koumiss is ready. One after another, all families invite each other to taste their koumiss. The oldest woman of the village always comes first. She ties a piece of white cloth to a *qubi* (barrel), whips koumiss and says: ‘clear soul, high-minded wishes.’ Then she and the other elderly women occupy the most honorable places at the table. The elderly men and then all the other guests follow them and seat themselves. Prior to the ritual meal, the oldest man enounces his blessing that starts with the name of Qambar Ata regarded as an inventor of koumiss.⁴ The meal ends with koumiss and good wishes to the hosts. *Kymyz murundyk* lasts several days until koumiss sharing ceremonies in all houses of the village are over. ■

Notes

- 1 Toktabai A. U. 2004. “Horse Cult of the Kazakhs”. (Translated title.) Originally published as “Культ коня у казахов.” Almaty. p. 25.
- 2 Ibid. p. 24.
- 3 Ibid. pp. 25–26.
- 4 Ibid. pp. 26–27.

Ayghyr kosu, a rite for adjoining stallions in their herds. © National Historic, Cultural and Natural Reserve-Museum, Ulytau, 2011



The sacred Lhamo'i Mang-cham performance in the Tashichhodzong courtyard © Sanga Dorji, NLAB

Lhamo'i Drubchen: The Vast Accomplishment of Palden Lhamo (Maha Kali)

Yeshi Lendhup
 Librarian, National Library & Archives of Bhutan

Lhamo'i Drubchen, or colloquially Lhamo'i Dromche (with a corrupted form *drubchen*), is a grand religious ritual and mask dance dedicated to Palden Lhamo, the principal female guardian deity of Mahayana Buddhism. It is conducted in Thimphu Dzong (Thimphu Fortress) by Zhung Dratshang (Central Monastic Body) and is the most highlighted annual event that takes place before the monastic body leaves for the summer residence in Punakha Dzong.

Drubchen

The term *drubchen* means 'vast accomplishment.' An exceptional group practice of yogis or monks, it is led by an accomplished master practitioner who epitomizes the depth, power, and precision of Vajrayana in Buddhist traditions. It combines intense visualizations, mantra recitations, music, and dance to appease the deities,¹ which aid in accomplishing a complete awakening of body, speech, and mind to become authentic and beneficial sentient beings. Making the Mandala, *tormas* (sacrificial cakes), and *tshok* (sacred substances offering) and performing a sacred dance called *cham* are the

principal drubchen components. Drubchen is believed to expel the negative world forces and help promote inner peace, community peace, and world peace. Thus, Guru Padmasambava said, "For someone engaged in a group drubchen, the benefits are the same as practicing alone in a three-year retreat."²

Lhamo

Lhamo refers to the general title for goddesses. But here, the title ties in with Skt. Mahā Kali, Kali Devi, or Shri Devi, who are believed to be the wrathful form of Goddess Skt. Lakshmi and Sarasvati in Hindu Vedas. In Buddhism, she is a principal female deity appearing in twenty-one forms, which is why she has many dissimilar titles, such as Lhamo Ré-ma-ti and Lhamo Du-sol (in the Kargyud Pa and Sakya sects), Mak-zor Gyal-mo (in the Ge-lug sect), Dorji Rab-ten Ma (in the Zha-lu tradition) and, Sid-pa'i Gyal-mo (in the Bon school in Tibet).³

Lhamo normally appears on mural paintings and *thang-ka* (cloth scrolls) in deity shrines called Gön-khang. Her wrath is depicted through a dark-blue or an indigo complexion with one face, four or two hands holding wisdom tools, and being

mounted on a mule galloping from a blazing fire and smoke. She wears human skull crown, ornamental human bones, and human and animal skins and is surrounded by cloud retinues.

Origins of Lhamoi Drubchen

According to Bhutanese texts, the Lhamoi Drubchen is credited to Gyalsey (prince) Gana-pai aka Je (abbot) Kuenga Gyaltsen (1689–1713), who was believed to be the reincarnation of Gyalsey Jampal Dorji, the son of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (unifier of Bhutan).

He [Gyalsey Gana-pai aka Je Kuenga Gyaltsen] received a monastic education and further philosophical knowledge, empowerment, oral transmission, and instructions from highly accomplished spiritual masters who helped him to experienced extraordinary achievements of frequently visualizing tutelary deities and even mingling with them. After his installation as the successor to Gyalsey Jampal Dorji in Thimphu Dzong, it was believed that Lhamo Düd-sol Ma appeared in form of a maiden and exhibited the sacred dance accompanied by her retinues while in the state of deep contemplation. He penned down every sequence.... The text became the mask dance guideline.⁴

He also realized it was the the protective deity's prophecy for him to establish the drubchen in dedication to her. He thus taught the steps and acquired costumes, successfully founding the event between 1705 and 1709. The drubchen takes place over two weeks with an extensive performance ritual in the *du-khang* (assembly hall) and another performance for the public in the main Thimphu Tashichhodzong courtyard on the sixth day of the eighth month of the Bhutanese calendar.

The Performances

Different dances are performed during drubchen. One dance, which is called Nang-cham (the secret performance),

is exclusively performed in the shrine with the performers wearing black-hat costumes while circumambulating the Mandala, and the other two—Lhamo Tso-mo'i ku-cham (a Palden Lhamo performance with her four principal retinues) and Lhamoi Mang-cham (a Palden Lhamo performance with all her retinues)—are showcased to the public.

The rituals and offerings in the drubchen are made to appease the goddess so practitioners can receive blessings and ward off evil spells, adversity, strife, famine, epidemics, thus making way for peace, tranquility, and happiness to prevail. According to folktales, spirits disguised as humans attend the sacred dance to receive blessings. The event awakens the Buddhahood nature primordially residing within all beings, socializing and integrating with protective deities and living harmoniously in the human and spirit worlds. Thus, the day has been declared a government holiday in Bhutan. ■

Notes

- 1 Rigpa Shedra. 2017. "Drupchen." Rigpa Shedra, Last modified 20 August 2017. <http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Drupchen>
- 2 Dharma Talks. 2017. "Benefits of a Drubchen." Dharma Talks, Last modified 1 June 2012. <https://neozen888.wordpress.com/2012/06/01/benefits-of-a-drubchen/>
- 3 Himalayan Art. 2009. "Shri Devi: Palden Lhamo: Glorious Goddess." Himalayan Art, Last modified 25 September 2009. <https://www.himalayanart.org/news/post.cfm/shri-devi-palden-lhamo-glorious-goddess>
- 4 Sangay Dorji. (2013). *Gzhung 'bral dus chen nyal gso'i nam bshad: A Guide to Official Holidays of Bhutan*. 2nd Ed. Dzongkha Development Commission, Bhutan: Thimphu. Pg. 38-43.



With no priestly interventions, anyone can offer their prayers in their own way. © banglanatak dot com

Boro Kachari: A Tale of Faith, Fear, Desire, and the Holy Ghost

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In India, a land of faith, there are numerous occasions and venues where fear, desire, spirits, and rituals converge, leaving logic to take a back seat.

It is said that Hindus—constituting 80 percent of India's population—have 330 million deities who are worshipped round-the-year in myriad names and forms across a country of 3.3 million square kilometers. Understandably, almost every village in India has its own village deity and festivals to celebrate their deities' greatness and invoke them to shower their benevolence on the faithful.

Boro Kachari, literally meaning “grand court,” is one such place in West Bengal, barely twenty kilometers from Kolkata. It was originally called Bhoot Kachari, meaning the Ghosts' Court, over which Shiva, one of the Hindu trinity gods along with Krishna and Brahma, and the master of ghosts and spirits, presides. Significantly here, Shiva is called Bhootnath, the Lord of the Ghosts, one of his myriad names.

The Boro Kachari shrine at the foot of a sacred fig tree, locally called Ashvattha, is an exceptional place considering the conservative nature of practicing Hindus. The priestly class, the Brahmins, has no role to play, and the faithful—cutting across all divides of Hindu castes and non-Hindus like Muslims—pray at Bhootnath's shrine. This makes Boro Kachari a reflection of traditional communal harmony in West Bengal.

While most people seek the lord's blessings to have children, Bhootnath is also worshiped for other problems, including anything from property disputes and career crises to diseases, skewed love affairs, and matrimonial discord. Believers tie wish chits with red thread to the temple railings. Faith has it that such written petitions in the court of the Holy Ghost never fail to draw his attention, and the chit is somewhat a guarantee that one's plea will be heard.

Among the people who seek children, those who have sons return to offer their thanks with, among other things, an idol of Gopal, a symbol of Lord Krishna. As for those blessed with a daughter, they return with a fresh harvest of crops and vegetables. The blessed children are brought in ornamental attire with their foreheads and cheeks decorated with sandalwood paste. In a pond within yards of the shrine, devotees perform ablutions before entering.

The smells of the omnipresent incense sticks, candles, and milk poured over the Shiva Lingam (a stone-shaped phallus that represents Lord Shiva) create an ambience of its own. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, one can see endless streams of visitors heading to and out of Boro Kachari, with women in the lead and quasi-modern music instrument bands loudly belching out popular Hindi and Bengali film songs. The cacophony reaches a crescendo during the main annual village festival held in mid-April during Neel Puja, which begins after a fortnight-long carnival, and the cops look the other way as the Decibel Devil dance.

Boro Kachari's history is almost entirely based on oral narratives. During the time of the last Muslim rulers of Bengal in the early 1740s—the reign of Nawab Alivardi Khan—Maratha marauders, coming all the way from their western Indian kingdom, started making forays into Bengali settlements in the region, pillaging houses and, often, setting them on fire. The harassed villagers sought refuge in the adjoining jungle that was home to an open-air crematorium of the Hindus, locally called Shawshan. The Marathas, being devout Hindus, refrained from venturing into the jungle, which was home to the burning ground, fearing that they might earn the wrath of the ghosts.

During this time, an old Hindu monk suddenly appeared and took shelter near the burning ground. As villagers slowly approached him to seek redress of their grievances and cures for illnesses, the monk obliged with great success. Over the next few years, the Maratha raids stopped; the villages became prosperous; and all illnesses were cured.

After the monk's death, his followers buried him at the place where he lived. Within days, a sacred fig tree (Ashvattha) sprouted from the grave, confirming the villagers' belief that the monk was an incarnation of Shiva. They also “inferred” that he returned as the tree to protect his believers.

However, there is a twist in the tale. In 1978, devastating floods spared the shrine but damaged the tree. The faithful, not to be cowered down, planted another sacred fig tree beside the original one, and soon, the new one started growing over the old one. The rest is history. ■

The Harvest Festival of the Four Villages on Ishigaki Island, Okinawa Prefecture

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Ancient Okinawan religious beliefs do not focus on a single, absolute deity. Okinawans believe that people have spirits and are born into this world with physical bodies, but when the body dies, the spirit goes to the other world (the world of spirits). Of those spirits, those that are particularly powerful can influence this world. Okinawans have long paid their respects to the world of spirits, even fearing it.

In Okinawa, prayers are offered in places called *utaki*; this word means 'mountain' as mountains, in ancient times, were believed to be where spirits dwelt or were places that led to the world of spirits. *Utaki* are not the kind of place where anyone can casually go to pray. Spiritually gifted individuals, known as *noro* on the Okinawa Main Island and *tsukasa* on Ishigaki Island, pray there on specific days. Village representatives can also enter *utaki* during special festivals though the *noro* act as intermediaries in offering prayers and petitions.

Ishigaki Island is located 400 kilometers southwest of the Okinawa Main Island, and harvest festivals, or *hounensai*, are held around the sixth month of the lunar calendar across the island. Among these, the two-day harvest festival that takes place in the four villages in the central part of the island is well known for its size.

On the first day of the festival, *tsukasa* and village representatives pray in the *utaki* of each village and offer sake made from the rice and millet harvested that year, which they also drink. At this time, a vessel of sake is waved from side to side as the harvest is celebrated in song. Drinking sake with the spirits in the *utaki*, the villagers come together to give thanks for the bountiful harvest of the year and pray for a bountiful harvest in the following year. This is the extent of the festival as a worship ceremony; this is followed by dancing and other performances, which continue until the sun goes down.

On the second day, people from each village, carrying a flag in front of them, gather at an *utaki* that is central to the four villages. There are performing arts including the villagers from each village dancing in order, but the most important event of this day is a tug-of-war, in which a male rope and a female rope are joined using a stout rod, a form of which can also be seen in the Republic of Korea. Women first purify the rod with a dance. However, this rod is not actually stout but merely a lightweight rod that acts as a symbol. A flag ten meters high is waved to invite spirits and then is enthusiastically planted; upon this, the male and female ropes are purified by a performance with a *naginata* and a sickle. Afterward, the ring at the tip of the male rope is inserted into the female rope's corresponding ring, and the two ropes are fastened with a stout rod; then, the tug-of-war begins. Joining the male and female ropes is a petition for the prosperity of one's descendants and for a bountiful harvest, and the rope is pulled to bring about a bountiful harvest and happiness for the future. ■



First day: Waving vessels of new sake and drinking in the *utaki* © National Theatre Okinawa

Performance with a *naginata* and a sickle for purifying the tug-of-war rope © National Theatre Okinawa

Sonsorol State

Laura I. Miles

Secretary to the SSWA - Dini Faruya

Jamie Nestor

Co-founder, Young Historians

Sonsorol State, one of the Republic of Palau's sixteen states, is one of Palau's most remote and inaccessible states. Almost five hundred kilometers south of the Palau's main islands and a two-day boat journey away, Sonsorol is composed of three island groups (Sonsorol and Fanna, Merir, and Pulo Anna), each approximately a hundred kilometers from each other.

Sonsorol State Islands Characteristic

Sonsorol, Fanna, Pulo Anna, and Merir are low coral islets ringed with coral sand and surrounded by fringing reef between 200 and 500 meters offshore. At low tide the entire reef is exposed above water. The islands vary in size, with Merir being the longest at 2.2 kilometers and Fanna the shortest at 0.5 kilometers. Because of the islands' size and their openness to strong ocean currents and strong westerly winds, it is impossible to build docks or anchorage on the islands.

People and Culture

Twenty people currently reside on Sonsorol; ten on Pulo Anna, and two on Merir. Two people resided on Fanna but were brought to Koror in December 2016 due to family obligations. The global population of Sonsorolese is estimated between 400 and 450, with the majority (95 percent) residing in Eang Village, Koror State, or abroad. People have migrated to Koror for their children's education, others for health care reasons, and many others for employment.

The people of Sonsorol are culturally and linguistically related to the Yap Outer Islands and the Caroline Islands, speaking a language different from the majority Palauans.

There are two elementary schools, one on Sonsorol Island with five students and another on Pulo Anna Island with the same number of five students. Currently, there is no health care nurse on any of the islands. Adult residents get basic healthcare needs through traditional herbal medicine practices. For other medical care, a report is made through radio communication via the Sonsorol State Office in Koror; the report is sent to the attending doctor of the emergency room at the National Hospital in Koror who then diagnoses the disease and prescribes further care or refers the patient the National Hospital in Koror as needed.

Traditionally, the islanders' beliefs were rooted in spiritualism, but in the 1900s with the introduction of Christianity, people were converted to Roman Catholicism. Today nearly everyone belongs to the Catholic Church. There are Catholic churches on Sonsorol Island and Pulo Anna Island.

Economy

The municipal and state governments employ most adults for two projects—the road and grounds maintenance program and the coconut beetle control program. For additional income, people produce coconut syrup while others harvest and sell coconut crabs and salted fish. In the past people used to make dried fish (*katsuobushi*). People generally live subsistent lifestyle, relying on land and sea resources.

Transportation

The Sonsorol state government charters a ship four times a year to travel to the four state islands. These field trips are the road to bring government and other services to the islands—education, health, communication, and NGOs. Additionally, they are the only link that brings people of Sonsorol to visit families and relatives. These are the only means of transportation for construction materials, food, school, and other supplies. The state's goal is to be open for local visitors and tourists, but space on the ships is always limited.

The Young Historians

In 2014, two young women from Palau Community College conducted interviews on cultural subjects. With the help of two younger cousins, they conducted interviews with the Sonsorol community elders. Through these interviews, they realized how much they didn't know about their own island culture. Having been born and raised in Koror, they were displaced from the Sonsorol Island and its culture. This realization motivated their desire to continue the effort.

Other youth heard about their project and decided to join. As a result, the group grew to eighteen members, ranging from 16 to 35 years old. They organized and called themselves Young Historians and listed their goals and developed plans.

Young Historians' Plans

- Collect and preserve the history (culture, custom, heritage, etc.) of Sonsorol State for the youth and future generations
- Help educate Sonsorol State youth about our culture, customs, and heritage
- Create programs that teach about our traditions, customs, and history.

Young Historians' Short-Term Goals

- Document and collect data (pictures, videos, documents, etc.) through research and interviews
- Present collected data to the youth through forums, seminars, and workshops
- Record family trees for every hamlet, clan, and island
- Conduct youth cultural projects during summer trips or whenever possible

Young Historians' Long-Term Goals

- Publish a Sonsorol history book for the youth
- Publish an illustrated children's book
- Build a museum to store, preserve, and display collections, such as history books, storybooks, pictures, audio recordings, and other artifacts that contribute to our history

Young Historians' Special Projects

- Document all flora and fauna
- Develop signs to stand at every hamlet on every island
- Build *fare* (canoe/men's house)

Young Historians' Strategic Plans

- Choose one general topic each month for research
- Assign a task to each group (three groups)
- Develop a questionnaire should be set and reviewed by the group prior to interview
- Ensure that each member submit at least one *fiyango* (story), *haping* (chant), *hasiwesiw* (lullaby) each month.

The group was excited to begin, but while planning, they realized they needed resources and support. They recruited the representative of Sonsorol in the National Congress for help. The congressman, a citizen of Sonsorol himself, was



encouraged by the project idea. He gave support by purchasing four digital recorders, a camera, and computer accessories for digital storage. The Young Historians also solicited help from the Sonsorol State Legislature and were granted office supplies. With these items, the group carried out their plans. The first three projects were to collect data on funeral processes, stories, and traditional chants. The second took place on Sonsorol Island. A five-member group traveled there in 2014 to collect plant samples for the Palau National Museum.

Before their trip, they solicited help from the museum for training on plant pressing and were able to borrow the museum's press. The group also visited the Bureau of Cultural Affairs to introduce themselves and discuss their plans. Both agencies welcomed the group and expressed their support.

Facing Challenges

These youths were enthusiastic and motivated to move forward; they had the desire, energy, and skills as well as support from the Sonsorol community, two government agencies, and others. But they lacked office space, adult guidance, and, most importantly, financial support. Additionally, this being a small community, every activity, be it a funeral, church feast day, or community clean up, required the involvement of all youths. Eventually, some of the leaders began families of their own, which diverted their energy and attention away from group activities, and after a while these changes weakened the group. The group essentially dissolved in the middle of 2016.

The group planned to conduct their activities voluntarily. It would have helped if there was adequate financial support to compensate members, rent adequate space, and purchase additional supplies to facilitate continued participation.

Collaboration Efforts with the Elder Women's Organization

From June to December 2016, the Young Historians collaborated with the Sonsorol State Women's Organization on a cultural project to publish an illustrated storybook of traditional children's stories. The Young Historians interviewed and collected stories from elders and drew the illustrations. This was made possible through a youth grant funded by the Indian Grant Aid through the Office of the President, Republic of Palau. ■

Komuz Teaching Methods in Formal and Informal Systems in Kyrgyzstan

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The Kyrgyz *komuz* is a national musical instrument. Traditionally, komuz was made from a single piece of wood. The instrument has three strings, which were traditionally made from dried ram innards, but in modern times, fishing lines are often used instead.

Komuz lovers and bearers preserve a legend about the origin of this instrument:

Once there was a brave Kyrgyz hunter named Kambar. He climbed high into the mountains and dealt with beasts and birds. Once Kambar was returning home and heard some melodious sounds. He noticed a thread was stretched from one tree to another. However, it turned out to not be thread, but the dried Kayberen gut. From this gut and a piece of wood, Kambar made the first musical instrument and played on it the first Kyrgyz melody. This instrument was later called komuz, and the melody that Kambar put together, and which his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren adopted from him, bears his name, “Kambarkan.”

Komuz is closely associated with the ethnic identity of Kyrgyz people. The instrument is presented in the legend about *mankurts*—people who do not remember their roots, not even their own father and mother:

Enemies trying to capture the paradise Kyrgyz lands and enslave the people stole a hundred little boys. For twenty years, the invaders raised the boys to be mankurt, with no memory of their past, parents, and motherland. After twenty years, the Kyrgyz enemies sent the mankurts to kill and enslave their own people. When the mankurts arrived in their motherland, they began to kill their brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers. But on hearing a komuz melody, they suddenly stopped the massacre. The Komuz had awakened their memory of childhood and motherland.

Today, komuz is taught in all eighty-seven music schools in the republic in the European twelve-note system. The same European system is also used in departments of folk music at higher education institutions. Learning the komuz in the European twelve-note system is a legacy dating back to the Soviet era.

Meanwhile, traditional methods of teaching and learning komuz appeared, perhaps, together with the instrument itself. Many brilliant komuz masters worked out their teaching methods and taught students according to the traditional *ustat-shakirt* (master-apprentice) system. Therefore, diverse schools of followers and students formed around famous komuz masters and players. Within the framework of this system of individual education, masters not only taught playing techniques but also explained the meaning of each melody, told the story of its origin, showed the interpretation of the same melody by various famous masters. Mentors have been immersing their students in the world of komuz and explaining that they need to play not so much with their hands as with their souls. Great komuz masters often were and still are specialists producing the instrument.

Nurak Abdrakhmanov (1947-2014) remained in the memory of modern Kyrgyz as a great composer, performer, and master of making the instrument. He began searching for his komuz teaching system back in the Soviet period when he worked as a music teacher in Ak-Talaa Village in the Naryn region. He was not satisfied with the formal education programs used in the schools. Master Nurak learned early on that the European twelve-note system did not cover the musical subtleties and possibilities of komuz, saying that the system reduces what is possible with komuz in thirty ways. Master Nurak believed that learning komuz in a traditional and cultural way helps with learning how to play komuz more quickly and easily.

The need to teach how to play komuz easily while preserving the cultural context and the need to preserve the rich musical palette of the Kyrgyz instrument explains Master Nurak’s long, almost forty-year, search for a special teaching system.

En Belgi (the system of signs), a musical note system as called by Master Nurak, is based on a simple finger framework that involves learning how to play komuz through the functions of each finger of the two hands. En Belgi teaches not only the technique of the playing but also the philosophy of the komuz, which allows for transmitting the most subtle and profound intonations of the komuz.

Master Nurak Abdrakhmanov performing by the shore © Aigine Cultural Research Center

In 2009, having learned about the idea of a great musician to spread note system as a traditional teaching methodology on komuz playing, the Aigine Cultural Research Center (Aigine CRC) worked with Master Nurak to implement the pilot project *Preserving and Transmitting Traditional Music*. The project aimed to create a training manual based on the materials Master Nurak developed over many years. The project was successfully implemented in 2009 and 2010. And the project outcome became the book *Komuz Playing with Nurak Abdrakhmanov's En Belgi Note System*. The book includes thirty-one melodies, each presented in two versions: one in the European twelve-note system and the other in En Belgi. Melodies are organized by difficulty level, so readers can choose the level that corresponds with their abilities. The book text is accompanied by a compact disc with detailed displays of hand and finger statements. Each of the thirty-one melodies are also included on the compact disc. The book's structure makes it suitable for both formal and informal education systems.

From 2010 to 2012, Aigine CRC and Master Nurak selected and trained forty music teachers from state musical schools throughout the country. After selecting state school representatives, we were guided by the strategy of entering the Master Nurak's system into formal education system through informal training. The main form of the work was seminars during the holidays. Three intensive seminars were held within a year. All the classes were built around individual communication with



Participants of the *Preserving and Transmitting Traditional Music* project © Aigine Cultural Research Center

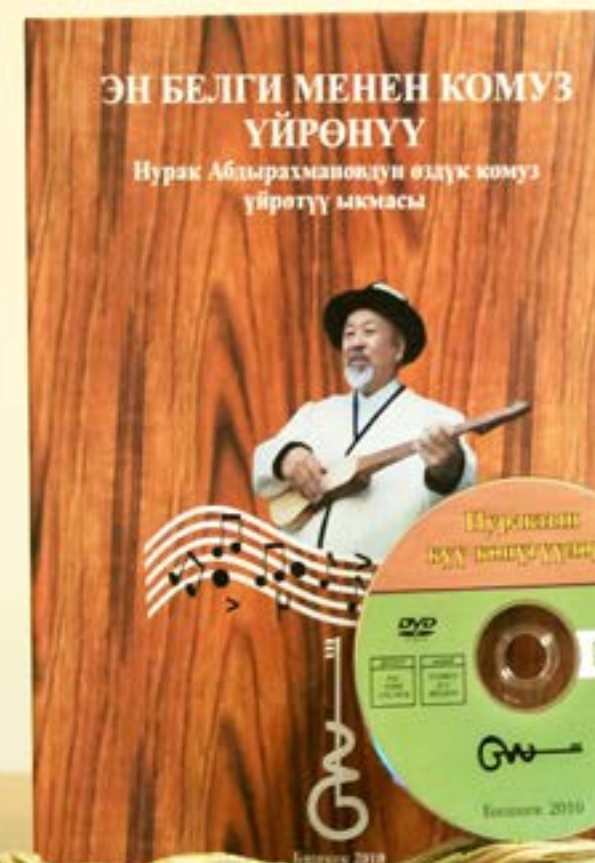
Master Nurak. Through his personality, all the participants were immersed into the world of komuz. The main tool of the seminars was Master Nurak's book on the En Belgi system.

Each participant of the project has continued teaching students in the framework of formal and informal education. Currently, the En Belgi teaching methodology is being widely implemented in many music schools and universities in Kyrgyzstan.

Twelve blind and visually impaired children were trained by the En Belgi system with the support of the Youth Program of the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan in 2013. The development of the En Belgi system and training led by Master Nurak enabled children with limited abilities to reproduce the komuz melodies, expand their worldview, learn improvisation, and acquire knowledge about the oral history of folk melodies.

Master Nurak dreamed of a performance of five hundred apprentices playing simultaneously. His students, who trained within the framework of the project, were the main coordinators and creators of a thousand-piece ensemble performed by Masha Bota at the opening of the World Nomadic Games 2016.

Forty-eight coordinators, all graduates of Aigine's projects, were the main creators of the thousand-piece ensemble, which performed "Mash Botoy" by Atai Ogonbaev. In the memory of the great teacher and musician, the ensemble was named after his original teaching system En Belgi. ■



Komuz Playing with Nurak Abdrakhmanov's En Belgi Note System, publication based on the output of the *Preserving and Transmitting Traditional Music* project © Aigine Cultural Research Center

Empowering and Strengthening Rural Communities

Shrabana Datta
Consultant, Social Inclusion and Tourism

AJJIYER Fair Trade Ltd. began working as a social business enterprise for the betterment of Bangladesh communities in 2002. It aims to strengthen the livelihood of rural agricultural practitioners, craftsmen, and artisans; empower women and children; revive cultural heritage; and ensure food and nutritional security. Through its work, AJJIYER

- helps enable marginalized people who have knowledge and skills by providing them with a platform to generate alternative income;
- protects intangible cultural heritage by practicing and honoring living culture and tradition of the country;
- revitalizes cottage industries by linking markets with private sector;
- advocates women empowerment and gender equality to claim their rights;
- shares and networks on knowledge and tacit skills collected from communities; and
- promotes community-based tourism for ethical and responsible consumption among local and foreign tourists.

AJJIYER also assists handcraft and naturally dyed fabric producers as well as organic farmers in getting fair value through trade, promotion, and deals.

In collaboration with UBINIG (Policy Research for Development Alternative), a community-based and community-led research and advocacy organization, AJJIYER began its organic farming movement in 2008 in response to commercial farming practices, by linking life, ecology, and livelihood strategies. To strengthen the livelihood of agricultural farmers in Tangail, AJJIYER introduced a new method—Movement of Farmers—and linked it with a biodiverse organic farming system that ensures seed and crop diversity by harnessing the knowledge and experiences of women. Seed conservation through a seed bank is a woman's art and is the key element in building a national seed network. Keeping seed preservation in the

hands of women develops harmonized relationships between men and women, ensuring women's command and power in agricultural production system. Sharing and exchanging seeds among farming households creates conditions that reinforces community bonds and ensures peace and prosperity.

Women empowerment is the total sum of changes needed for a woman to realize and materialize her full human rights. AJJIYER has taken the challenge to empower women in Bangladesh because women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty and discrimination. Women equipped with proper resources have the power to help their families and entire communities escape poverty. The focus on women exercising their greater choice in decisions affects their lives; reduces violence against them, builds strong social movements based on women's solidarity, and ensures the participation of men.

Safeguarding ICH is a crucial component where it is interlinked with AJJIYER's other activities. Identifying and inventorying ICH—be it in traditional craftsmanship, weaving, music, folk songs (*pala gaan*, *song jatra*), or musical



A woman making *jamdani* © AJJIYER

instruments—ensures safeguarding. UNESCO proclaimed the traditional Baul songs of Bangladesh as one of the forty-three masterpieces of oral and intangible heritage. During the Dol Purnima, a major Bangladeshi festival, there are numerous discussions on Lalon's philosophical thoughts and presentations of Lalon Music by the Bauls held at Lalon's shrine. With variety of local musical instruments, such as *ektara*, *dotara*, *dhol*, *khol*, and flute, musicians tribute their folk music to Lalon. A *mela* or fair is also held, allowing nearby villagers to sell their products.

AJJIYER contributed to reviving the Tangail *nakshi buti* by engaging women in weavers' groups, establishing sari stalls in local markets, and connecting women with urban fashion designers to sustain the value chain. *Jamdani* is considered one of the finest muslin textiles of Bangladesh. To contribute to the sustainable economic growth of jamdani weavers, AJJIYER designed the Experiencing Treasure of Textile Tour, a six-day experience tour dedicated to jamdani weaving as well as *jacquard* weaving, buti weaving, and *nakshi katha* making. Individual customers and retailers can directly interact with weavers and gain understanding of market mechanisms, including issues of quality and price. Such events also help them negotiate a fair price for high value, instead of being dependent on weekly markets, which are often dominated by middlemen and wholesalers.

With a goal to promote Bangladeshi culture, crafts, and biodiversity to the conscience tourist (local and global), AJJIYER is engaged in responsible community-based tourism where the local community is in the decision-making seat to minimize negative economic, environmental, and social effects related to tourism activities. It also connects communities with the private sector so that they can develop delivery capacity, raise funds, and maintain commercial links. Today, the program operates in four locations around Bangladesh—Tangail, Kamalgonj, Jhikorgacha, and Kushtia. Diversifying tourism activities and locations ensures that tourists experience Bangladeshi agricultural and rural craft-based lifestyles as well as traditional food, costumes, and rituals of many indigenous and rural communities. ■



Materials for natural dyes and mordants © AJJIYER

Linking Intangible Cultural Heritage with Tangible Heritage

Finding ways of applying integrated approaches in ICH safeguarding has been a fundamental issue in implementing the 2003 Convention. The situation has spurred further inquiry not only in the ICH field but also in other relevant fields. Over the past thirty years, attempts have been made to focus on the interrelationship between ICH and tangible heritage in re-organizing the concept of heritage management. Both the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) and the Yamato Declaration (2004) stress this interrelationship. Consequently, UNESCO Member States were urged to adopt integrated approaches in their heritage management policies. However, neither document provide in-depth analysis on such interrelationships. Therefore, neither was applied to Member States considering institutional improvement nor held credibility for follow-up study.

To discover good methods of integrated approaches within the framework of the 2003 Convention, ICHCAP and

George Town World Heritage Incorporated co-organized the 2017 Southeast Asian Collaborative Meeting on Safeguarding ICH, which was held from 18 to 20 September 2017 at George Town World Heritage Sites, the home of diverse and living forms of ICH.

More than thirty experts and NGO and government representatives from eleven Southeast Asian Member States participated to share information on multidisciplinary approaches in ICH safeguarding under the topic "Enhancing Viability in Intangible Cultural Heritage Community." The collaborative meeting provided an opportunity to raise awareness on the interrelationship between ICH and tangible heritage and introduced related case studies.

Session 1 presentations and discussions focused on "How to Apply Integrated Approach in ICH Safeguarding?" The Session 2 case



Discussion panel during the 2017 Southeast Asian Collaborative Meeting on Safeguarding ICH © GTWHI

studies, concentrated on "What Is the Role of the Community in ICH Safeguarding?" In Session 3, "Sustainable Development and ICH Safeguarding at the Grassroots Level" was the lead topic in the final panel discussion.

In the plenary session, the rapporteur presented summary reports and adopted outcome documents, which reflected the key discussion points of the two-day the meeting. The meeting participants addressed the importance of recognizing the interrelationship between tangible and intangible heritage as well as the involvement of relevant heritage communities. ■

Digitizing Cultural Knowledge, a Sustainable ICH Safeguarding Strategy

During the Information Officers Meeting for Safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region: Using Information/ICT in 2016, ICHCAP and information officers set up a plan to use information/ICT for ICH safeguarding activities. ICHCAP and Island Ark Project Foundation, Inc. (IAP), one of the participating organizations, began planning an ICT-based information project to share information about indigenous

cultural heritage. Through the project, the partnership developed website templates to be distributed to government offices and NGOs so that they can curate content dedicated to ICH and distribute it online to a wider audience.

On 21 and 22 November 2017, delegates from ICHCAP and IAP held the Workshop on Using Website Templates to Safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage in Koror, Palau, to introduce

the web templates to heritage-related organizations and to teach them how to use the templates. In addition to the workshop facilitators, members of Sonsorol State, Belau National Museum, Palau Community College, Bai Study Group, Palau Research Institute, and other esteemed institutes attended the event.

The workshop was organized to train the participants, so they would be able to upload ICH digital assets—text, image, video, and audio files—and apply metadata descriptions to the uploaded content. Also included was the information about developing strategies for managing online content. By the end of the workshop, the participants were fully equipped to manage their own websites independently. ■

Facilitators providing participants with on-site practice with the templates during the workshop © ICHCAP



Mongolia Held an ICH Capacity-Building Workshop for Media

The Capacity Building Workshop: On the Role of Media for Implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was held in Darkhan-Uul Province, Mongolia, from 11 to 15 September 2017. It was the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO's (CRIHAP) first capacity-building workshop conducted in Mongolia to target media practitioners.

Hosted by CRIHAP, the Council for Cultural Heritage Communication and Networking, and the Confederation of Mongolian Journalists, the workshop was organized by the Center of Cultural Heritage of Mongolia. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports

of Mongolia as well as the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO also offered support to the workshop.

The workshop was held in response to a request by Mongolian media practitioners during the 2016 Sub-Regional Meeting for Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding in Northeast Asia held on 10 and 11 October 2016 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Hosted by the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, its theme was The Role of the Media in Raising Awareness about Intangible Cultural Heritage. Jointly organized by ICHCAP and the UNESCO Beijing Office, the workshop was also the first attempt by CRIHAP to tailor a themed training to a specific field.

A total of 42 trainees who had gone through a strict selection process

represented all kinds of media practitioners in Mongolia. A minority trainee from remote West Mongolia traveled nearly 2,000 kilometers to attend the workshop. They were actively engaged in the curriculum and gave an excellent performance in their field work. Training content, the outcome of many discussions between organizers and facilitators, was well received by the trainees. Many trainees said that they understood the 2003 Convention better and realized their responsibilities in promoting ICH safeguarding through the training.

Including this workshop, trainings organized by CRIHAP have covered more than 31 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, directly benefiting 872 people. ■

UNESCO Category 2 Centers Gathered in Shiraz

Active UNESCO Category 2 Centers (c2cs) held the Fifth Annual Coordination Meeting of Category 2 Centers in Shiraz, Iran, from 10 to 11 September 2017. As designated by UNESCO through agreements with Member States, c2cs contribute to UNESCO's projects in the sectors of education, sciences, culture, and communication and information. They are committed to help implement projects and promote policies in each sector.

The UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage coordinates the activities of the seven ICH c2cs. In the annual coordination meeting, the Secretariat and the c2cs share information about project plans and activities based on the c2cs' regions and central functions.

This year's meeting was organized by the Secretariat and hosted by the Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia in Iran. The participants included representatives from the Secretariat, regional UNESCO Offices (Beijing, Bangkok,

and Havana), and all the c2cs except for the center in Africa. The meeting covered recent developments in the life of the 2003 Convention, paying attention to Document 39 C/5, also known as the Draft Programme and Budget of the Organization. The participants also discussed project plans of the c2cs, issues concerning regional ICH safeguarding, and methods for cooperation among the c2cs and with UNESCO.

The Secretariat and UNESCO Regional Offices emphasized the importance of ensuring that project aims and interests undertaken by UNESCO and c2cs are well aligned so that safeguarding activities in Member States can yield fruitful results. In this regard, UNESCO encouraged the cooperation of c2cs

while exploring ways in which c2cs' projects and UNESCO's programs can better work in harmony.

Also, citing the higher education networking project that UNESCO and ICHCAP are currently implementing, they explored the cooperation that can be created by other sectors to achieve the sustainable development goals. The participants also considered the agenda of the 12.COM, which will take place in December in Jeju, Korea, and discussed the roles of each region and c2c.

The meeting offered the participants a venue to overcome the limitations of online communications. The c2cs expressed their will to collaborate and contribute to ICH safeguarding in Member States. ■

Representatives of UNESCO Category 2 Centers at the fifth annual meeting © ICHCAP



CENTRAL ASIAN ICH VIDEO AND PHOTO EXHI- BITION

Living Heritage
: Five Landscapes

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2017**

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