

***IJIH* as a medium for inter-communication**

'Intangible heritage' has become a buzzword in the heritage sector of academia and even people belonging to the 'tangible heritage' sector have now begun to be concerned about the future of the intangible aspects of the world's cultural heritage. The very term 'intangible heritage' gives me a chance to re-think the meaning of its socio-cultural connotations in relation to culture and people within the 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. The *Convention* defines intangible heritage as something which is transmitted from generation to generation and is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and which provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO *Convention*, 2003). What I think is important about intangible heritage as defined in the *Convention* is the idea of re-creation, response, interaction and respect for people and cultures. ICH now plays an important role as intermediary, not only between people and the cultures in which particular aspects of intangible heritage were born, but also, more importantly, between people from widely diverse cultural backgrounds. In this regard, it seems natural that intangible heritage should become an essential tool for connecting people living in different cultural backgrounds in every corner of the globe. Take the articles published in *IJIH* Volume 5 as an example. They introduce and share many interesting and important ideas.

Guha Shankar presents lessons and issues from a project undertaken by a coalition of international institutions. His article will enlarge our capacity to understand debates and discussions about intellectual property, intangible cultural heritage and cultural representation.

Anne McLaren illustrates the cultural and political complexities of preserving intangible heritage in economically advanced areas of China through the example of the folk epics of the lower Yangzi Delta. Catherine Grant looks into the importance of language maintenance in the safeguarding of musical heritage. Daan Hoekstra uses fresco as an ideal model for explaining how an intangible tradition expresses itself and impacts positively on bio-cultural diversity. Thalia Kennedy introduces us to a project for the revitalisation of intangible heritage in Murad Khane, Kabul. Deborah Tranter writes about safeguarding Australian heritage trade skills by describing the National Carriage Factory project which is enhancing economic, social and cultural wellbeing for both the artisans involved and the community in general. Lastly, Park Song-Yang explains compromises between old and new ways of making Korean pottery.

This demonstrates that *IJIH* is itself becoming an important vehicle for educating people and familiarising them with what is happening about safeguarding ICH worldwide. Some of the initiatives described may be known to some readers, but undoubtedly some of them will be new and meaningful, coming from unfamiliar cultures and parts of the world about which they know little. For example, we have one article written by a Korean scholar, which tells people about the techniques of making Korean pottery; the other five articles and

the Viewpoint article are written by non-Korean scholars, providing a window through which Korean readers can experience and explore the culture of the wider world. *IJIH* as it stands reaches both a domestic and an international readership, and over and above this, it is becoming a channel through which people can share their ideas and thoughts on safeguarding ICH. This is certainly an important task which we should carry out for the benefit of future generations, but also to help us understand each other's perspectives on our cultures and the way the concept of 'intangible heritage' has captured the world. Furthermore, this feature of the role which *IJIH* plays has the potential to build a much more peaceful world in the 21st century, even at a time when we have so many on-going disputes. In other words, *IJIH* itself is a crucial player on two levels, firstly as a vehicle for connecting people and secondly as a medium where people can share, communicate, exchange, and understand ideas and experiences. I think the best word to use for this 'inter-communication'.

Therefore, I, as Director of National Folk Museum of Korea which is in charge of publishing *IJIH*, would like to celebrate this 5th publication and the level of stability we have now reached which I am sure bodes well for development in the future. I would also like to convey my deepest appreciation to all members of the 3rd Advisory Committee and Editorial Board and to Dr Pamela Inder Boylan, the Text Editor, for their passion and commitment in making *IJIH* so successful. I was very aware of this when they all came to Seoul to participate in the 5th Advisory and Editorial meeting in early February this year. Also, I would like to extend my deep gratitude to Professor Galla, Editor-in-Chief, for always being so professional, rational and warm. I believe *IJIH* takes over his life for days and nights on end, even though he is busy with so many other commitments. With the celebration of publishing Volume 5 in mind, I am very much looking forward to developing much better volumes, software and hardware in the future. Finally I would like to encourage and express my support to the staff members of the *IJIH* Publication Secretariat in the Cultural Exchange and Education Division, NFMK, for their hard work.

As *IJIH* first came out to the world in May, I would like to introduce you to an old Korean saying - *May is the queen of the four seasons*. I think this is because beautiful flowers in bloom and trees with their new green leaves can be seen all over Korea in May. In the same way, I would like to see *IJIH* Volume 5 blossom in the field of intangible heritage.

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