

'LIVING HUMAN TREASURES' FROM A LOST AGE: CURRENT ISSUES IN CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

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In 1962, the government of the Republic of Korea enacted legislation aimed at conserving the intangible heritage. A system of appointments developed that by September 2001 saw 108 performance arts and crafts nominated as Intangible Cultural Assets (*Muhyong munhwajae*). In keeping with the intangible nature, in which an art or craft is held within people and can be seen only in a created product, each is assigned 'holders' (*poyuja*)?commonly known, after a term coined by the late journalist and folklorist Ye Yonghae, as Human Cultural Assets (*In'gan munhwajae*)?who are required to preserve, perform or create, and teach. The system has undoubtedly been a great success, but by the mid-1990s it had become clear to many scholars, critics and policy makers that reform was needed to reflect Korea's rapid economic, social, and political transformation. After 40 years, little in Korea was still recognisable, and 'holders' were from a lost age. Reflecting this, a reform plan was announced to the press in December 1999.

UNESCO launched its own programme to develop strategies to preserve and protect the non-physical heritage during the 1980s, mirroring programmes for the tangible world heritage that, for example, already provided assistance and international recognition for World Heritage Sites. This evolved into cultural policy statements, a body of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures that could provide the basis for cultural action (after Baumann 1991: 22) and a recommendation on safeguarding traditional cultures adopted at the 25th session of the General Conference in November 1989. In 1993, the 'Living Human Treasures' policy was announced at the 142nd session of the executive board (as 142 EX/18 and 142 EX/48). This was followed in March 2001 with the appointment of 19 representative 'Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity'. By this time, parallel systems to that in Korea operated in Japan, Thailand, the Philippines and France; since 1993, Romania and the Czech Republic have both passed legislation to establish their own systems. A series of workshops, promoted primarily by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, was inaugurated to explore how other member states might be encouraged to establish systems; seven workshops were held between 1998 and 2001, attracting representatives from 37 UNESCO member states.

A number of my earlier writings have explored specific genres appointed within the Korean system for conserving the intangible heritage (Howard 1989, 1990, 1995, 1998). Here, I contrast the Korean system with practices and policies elsewhere. What are the challenges that face Korean policy makers, and how can the Korean system become a model for UNESCO's 'Living Human Treasures'?

The Korean Preservation System

As South Korea emerged from the Japanese colonial period and the devastating Korean War, so modernisation led to the rapid decline of traditional performance arts and crafts. Legislation to conserve actually dates back to the Temple Act (*Jisatsurei*) initiated by the governor-general of Korea's occupying force in 1911. This required an inventory to be made of all movable and immovable properties in sites considered worthy of conservation, and by 1923, 385 relics and buildings had been listed for protection (Maliangkay 1999). Much of the legislation was left intact after liberation?44 wooden and 104 stone structures were still listed in 1959?but Article 2 of Law 961, passed in 1962 by the incoming military regime of Park Chung Hee, the Cultural Asset Preservation Law (*Munhwajae pohobop*), rescinded all previous legislation. (It is of note that the former legislation remains largely in force in North Korea, compounded by the protection of sites and structures connected to the independence struggle or to the incumbent leadership; see Howard 1996.) The 1962 act distinguishes four categories for preservation: Tangible Cultural Assets (*Yuhyeong munhwajae*), Intangible Cultural Assets (*Muhyong munhwajae*), Folk-Cultural Properties (*Minsok charyo*) and Monuments.

Much of the act duplicates legislature dating from 1950 that was then operating in Japan and, indeed, whole categories and many Sino-Japanese terms are carried across. However, the Korean legislation is distinct in respect to Intangible Cultural Assets. The act argues that conservation will strengthen Korean identity?by inference, an identity undermined during the Japanese colonial period, weakened by the ravages of war, and threatened by encroaching westernisation. Article 1 states the purpose of the act is to both "contribute to the cultural progress of the people and to contribute to the development of human culture..." To do this required the designation of folk arts and crafts containing symbols of indigenous identity, rather than an exclusive focus on 'high' culture where the artistic watermark is more demonstrable. I suggest that one reason for this is that much court and aristocratic culture has Chinese roots. This is not to reject 'high' culture, since Asset No.1 was the court ritual music for the Royal Ancestral Shrine (*Chongmyo cheryeak*), which in 2001 became Korea's first nomination within UNESCO's 'Masterpieces of Humanity'. However, of the remaining eight genres appointed first?between December 1964 and February 1966?one represents the craft of hat making (*kat il*) but seven are folk traditions. It is clear in these appointments that the art or craft is of the greatest importance, not the artisan/craftsman. Hence, only a handful of musicians are selected to represent the large double orchestra required of *Chongmyo cheryeak*, and over the last 40 years all those selected come from the ranks of the most senior musicians at the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts (*Kungnip kugagwon*). Again, the women's song-and-dance *Kanggangsullae*, although in one book documented in locations throughout the southwestern seaboard, is split in the Asset appointment between two counties?the island of Chindo and Munnae County on the adjacent mainland?to symbolize a legendary sea battle that marked the end of the 16th-century Japanese invasion. Initially, just one 'holder' was elected, the dancer and singer Yang Hungdo (1900-68) who had been born on the island but who worked on the mainland; following her death two 'holders' replaced her, Ch'oe Soshim (1908-90) on Chindo and Kim Kirim (b.1927) on the mainland. The Korean system was, then, always distinct from the Japanese system, where appointments are made to senior artists after a lifetime's contribution, and where folk traditions are listed in a separate category from 'high' culture.

Although debate on the need to support traditions took place in the National Assembly during the 1950s and fast-forwards from the so-called 'cultural nationalists' of the 1920s, the call to preserve the intangible came primarily from scholars and journalists. Notable amongst these, Ye Yonghae worked on a series of articles for the Korean Daily News (*Han'guk ilbo*) between 1959 and 1963. The articles were collected into a book in 1963: *In'gan munhwajae* (Human Cultural Assets). Ye told me in interview on 13 August 1991:

I petitioned the government strongly. I wanted Human Cultural Assets recognised because they knew the old things which had been passed down to us but were considered part of a base culture to be despised. Koreans thought it shameful that the lowest people, the *ch'onmin*, had the best knowledge of our music, drama, and crafts. But they also felt shameful because they didn't know the arts and crafts themselves. We risked losing our heritage. We needed to raise the status of the *ch'onmin*, and I thought this could be done if the government honoured them. Giving them an honour would function as part of the rehabilitation of the arts and crafts as well as the performers and artisans.

In 1962, Law 961 required the system to be promoted, maintained, and overseen by the *Munhwajae kwalliguk* (Office for Cultural Asset Management). Reports were commissioned from scholars for the Cultural Asset Committee (*Munhwajae wiwonhoe*); the 165 volumes of Cumulative Research Reports on Important Intangible Cultural Assets (*Chungyo muhyong munhwajae chosa pogoso*; 1964–1985) are today supplemented by internal reports, semi-annual progress reports, and regional compendia. Finance was provided from 1963 onwards under the Special Accounting Law for Cultural Asset Management (*Munhwajae kwalli t'ukpyol hoegyebop*).

Reports formed the basis of recommendations to the Minister of Culture (or at times his equivalent within the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism) and heralded the appointment of performance arts and crafts as Assets, together with expert performers and craftsmen as 'holders'. Following stipulations in the 1974 Long-term Plan for Culture and Art Revival (*Munhwa chunghung changgi kyehyok saop*), 'holders' have been paid stipends amounting to roughly 50% of the average monthly wage, and are charged with performing, preserving, and teaching their art. 'Holders' are required to teach 'primary students' (*chonsusaeng*) who receive small monthly stipends, and are supported by paid 'assistants' (*chogyo*) and 'future holders' (*pojuja hubo*). Beginning in November 1986, funding has also been available for preservation associations and special scholarships.

By 1998, 103 Intangible Cultural Assets had been appointed, divided into six categories: music, dance, drama, plays and rituals, crafts, and a residual category for food preparation and martial arts. There were 186 living 'holders'. Three crafts were the most recent additions, but there had also been seven deletions hence the Assets were numbered from 1 to 110. Stipends were set at 800,000 *won* for 'holders', 350,000 *won* for 'future holders', 300,000 *won* for 'assistants' and 100,000 *won* for 'primary students'; preservation associations could claim 400,000 *won* monthly. By September 2001, five further Assets had been designated: *Sajik taeje* (No.111), *Chuch'oechang* (112), *Chilchang* (113), *Yomjang* (114), and *Yomsaekchang* (115). At this time, there were 199 living 'holders' (each receiving monthly stipends of 900,000 *won*), 54 'future holders' (350,000 *won*) and 234 'assistants' (300,000 *won*). The Office for Cultural Asset Management provided funds for 56 performance events involving nominated Assets in

1993, in 1999 75 events, and in 2000, 98. It might be expected that a considerable budget is required to support the system. Figures from the post-economic crisis period, however, paint a rather different picture. The spend on culture remains less than 0.5% of GNP; within the Ministry's budget, the spend on Intangible Cultural Assets takes less than 1%:

	1999	2000	2001
Ministry of Culture	856,300,000,000	914,891,000,000	970,581,000,000
& Tourism budget			
Cultural Properties	161,990,000,000	255,816,000,000	272,533,970,000
Administration budget			
Intangible Cultural	5,967,000,000	8,215,000,000	9,379,000,000
Properties budget			

Unit: *won*. Source: Lee Jangyul 2001: 256

Today, most if not all 'holders' are one generation or more distant from the artists who practised an art or craft in pre-modern times. As the following examples indicate, the links with the past are becoming more and more remote; in many cases, 'holders' have learnt only preserved forms:

1. *Namdo tul norae*, rice agriculture songs from Chindo, were last used within agriculture in the 1950s, before land reform and the mechanisation of production. By the time of their appointment as Asset No.51 in 1973, one of the key informants for the report, Pak P'aengyon, had died; two subsequent 'holders', Sol Ch'aech'on (1906–86) and Cho Kongnye (1930–97), have now also died. Cho's daughter, Pak Tongmae (b.1960), is perhaps the best singer of the songs, but is still listed only as 'assistant'.
2. *Hahoe t'al ch'um*, the mask dance drama from Hahoe Village, renowned today because of its unpainted wooden masks and its archetypal nature in relation to other Korean mask dramas, was appointed as Asset 69 in 1980. It was last performed in a ritual context in the late 1920s (1928 is mentioned in some texts). The report produced for the Office for Cultural Assets was heavily indebted to one old man, Yi Ch'anghui (1913–1996), who had taken part in that last event and who was subsequently nominated as the first 'holder'; a local citizens' group?primarily of aristocratic background whereas the mask drama had been performed by lower classes?reconstructed the mask drama in the late 1970s.
3. *Kat il*, making hats with bamboo rims and horsehair crowns, became Asset No.4 in December 1964. Ye Yonghae talked about one Mo Manhwan (b.1885?), "the only survivor who can split bamboo [for the brim] into 'yarn' finer than that of human hair. Mr Mo is wasting his super-human skill" (1963: 35–6). Ye used a micrometer to measure frame yarn at .00032" and body yarn at .00012" (human hair is .00025"). Yu Sangyun (b.1885?) was to Ye the last person "able to turn out the

best grade horsehair hat” (1963: 36–7). Death again intervened, and the first ‘holder’ was Ko Imgu (1878–1979); the second, O Songjuk (1907–1980), barely outlived Ko. The current holder, Kim In (b.1920), was appointed in 1985 for her skill in making the crown but Yu’s student, Chang Sunja (b.1946), is listed as ‘assistant’. Hats were once normal wear for aristocratic Korean men, who would tie their top-knots under the black, lacquered, crown. But an 1894 decree issued as part of the reforms that most consider were inspired by Japan ordered Koreans to cut off their top-knots. Today, the hats have little practical use, and the craft is largely confined to the island of Cheju.

4. *Maedup*, Asset 22, the art of knot making (*kkunul maeda*) from braided cords (*kkunmok* or *taehoe*), is preserved by two ‘holders’, one of whom is Kim Huijin (b.1934). In the early 1960s, Kim’s brother, Kim Songjin, was a colleague of Ye Yonghae at the Korea Daily News. Ye introduced her to the craft and to Chong Yonsu, an old craftsman who still made *maedup* for funeral biers. Kim studied with him, then with others who had worked at the royal palace, receiving her nomination as ‘holder’ in 1976. Kim is largely responsible for the historical account of *maedup* that is promoted in Korea, and remains active as both a teacher and a craftsman, exhibiting her work at national and international exhibitions.
5. *Munbaesul* is a distilled, 40% proof liquor made primarily from maize. The craft of making the liquor (*munbaesul tamgugi*) was appointed in November 1986 as Asset No.86, with Yi Kyongch’an (1915–93) as ‘holder’. His son, Yi Kich’un (b.1942) is now ‘holder’ and his grandson Yi Sungyong (b.1975) the primary student. *Munbaesul* was once distilled in Pyongyang, and the elder Yi claimed to be the fourth generation of his family, the only remaining person who knew the technique; after moving south during the Korean War, he settled in Yonhui-dong, Seoul. In the 1950s, the government of Syngman Rhee prohibited home stills; only following the Asset appointment was the liquor allowed to be sold, first just through five Seoul hotels, and then, from 1991, throughout Korea. Today, *munbaesul* is produced in a small family factory near Kimp’o.

The Korean system makes much of historical authenticity, embracing a concept of an original form, *wonhyong*, which should be identified and kept without change. Such an agenda is characteristic of many Korean scholarship, and could be said to reflect a Confucian philosophical approach that respects the old. Scholars are prominent on the Cultural Properties Committee (*Munhwajae wiwonhoe*), appointed for two-year terms to designate or, in some cases, to cancel the designations of Assets and advise on management. Documentation is undertaken for the Research Institute of Cultural Properties (*Munhwajae yŏn’guso*) by experts. Experts are sometimes employed within the Office, but are oftentimes seconded from outside. The historical thrust of written reports tends to downplay any notion of promotion and development within arts and crafts. Sampling the Cumulative Research Reports quickly reveals how important scholars have been. Yi Tuhyon, until recently a folklorist at Seoul National University, was responsible for reviving many mask dramas, and is one of the authors of volumes 1, 2, 5, 12, 22, 32, 67 and 90 in the series. Shim Usong, Im Tonggwon, and Chong Pyongho, formerly professors at Chungang University, have worked extensively on folk music, particularly itinerant travelling troupes (*namsadang* and associated terms), percussion bands (*nongak/p’ungmul*) and folksongs (*minyŏ*), and between them compiled volumes 7, 8, 19, 35, 40, 47, 100, 106, 121, 129, 131, 133, 138, 146, 152, 153, 154, 155 and 161. The late Kim Kisu (1917–86) and Song Kyongnin (b.1911), former directors of the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, compiled the reports on many court music genres

(volumes 10, 26, 29, 30, 60, 67, 68, 69, 72, 86, 116, 135, 144 and 156) while Kim Ch'onhung (b.1909), a dancer and musician at the National Center and the 'holder' of two Assets, contributed to volumes 12, 18, 29, 33, 41, 44, 60, 64, 70, 71, 84, 86, 118, 122 and 124. The scholarly approach is encapsulated by the musicologist Chang Sahun in the following statement:

[The Asset system] must aim to keep originality. If one thing is appointed which is not the original form it may have lost its value. All people who are supported as Human Cultural Assets should remember to keep the original form, and know the roots and characteristic skills unique to their genre (Chang 1982: 347).

This approach, however, stands in contrast to the embrace and manipulation of folk culture within, say, Korea's *minjung munhwa* popular culture movement, initiated by student campaigns for democracy in the 1970s and involving a nostalgic return to the rural idyll and its supposedly timeless traditions. If I fast forward, beyond the campus folksong and *p'ansori* clubs that marked 1980s Korean universities, and beyond the campus percussion bands that continue to interminably practise simple rhythmic patterns under the *p'ungmul* banner, I note evolutions rather than a rigid maintenance of the old. The popularity of SamulNori/*samullori*, the *p'ansori* expert Ahn Sook-sun joining jazz saxophonists, the vocal+instrumental *Seulgidoong* and its offshoots: all these attest to a vibrant cultural complex that reinterprets tradition for a contemporary world.

Commentators from outside Korea would bid us beware of the appeal to authenticity. Looking at how folk culture was politicised and promoted in Europe and America, Shalom Staub, for example, claims that historical accuracy is a "slippery path" on which "genuineness" becomes less important than the rhetoric of presentation; Bruno Nettl claims that performance arts can never be frozen in time, and John Blacking notes that traditional arts must be socially reconstructed to remain useful as the world changes (Staub 1988: 166–79; Nettl: 1985: 124–27; Blacking 1987: 112). Can historical authenticity, the *wonhyong* form, ever be more than chimerical in folk traditions for which no adequate documentation survives? In England, I note that collectors required folksongs to have "correct" modal, rhythmic, and melodic patterns, and to be performed in "appropriate" ways (Karpeles 1973: chapter 1; Harker 1985: 193–96; Porter 1991: 113–30). Restructuring, "restoration" according to its defenders and practitioners, was required. So, too, in Korea. The Cumulative Research Reports and subsequent Office of Cultural Asset Management evaluations have encouraged restructuring in order to establish or (re)create archetypal forms of crafts and folk performance arts. This is not to deny links with the past, hence the Hobsbawmian notion of "invented traditions" may be unhelpful. But, to paraphrase Ormond H. Loomis, conservation such as that required and practiced in Korea is an act of cultural intervention, requiring both preservation (planning, documentation, maintenance) and encouragement (publication, events and education) (Loomis 1983: iv). Tension between the two elements is commonplace, and has been documented in many cultures.

In December 1998, a public hearing signalled the beginning of a review of the Korean system. Research on public opinion was carried out in March 1999, and the results of this were tabled in April. An extended committee review then commenced, and on 10 December 1999 the Office of Cultural Properties called a press conference to introduce its reform package. Eight specific revisions were announced: expansion, ensuring the preservation of traditions threatened with survival; allowing more than one 'holder' to be

acknowledged in each Asset; creating an honorary designation for 'holders' too old or infirm to practice their art or craft; increasing support for groups rather than individuals; targeting support to artists in financial need; amalgamating Assets; reinforcing regional appointments; promoting management reform. Note that all of these focus on conserving the art and craft genres. Also, it was announced that the Office would be revamped as the Cultural Properties Administration (*Munhwajae ch'ang*).

UNESCO, and 'Living Human Treasures'

Many reasons could be proposed for UNESCO's encouragement of efforts to conserve the intangible heritage. Democrats might intone that the numbing effect caused by the mass media, in which cultural productions *of* the people?where people are active participants?is replaced by cultural products *for* the people?where people are passive recipients?must be countered (for example, Lauri Honko, cited in Feintuch 1988: 3). Environmentalists might take a different approach, or might follow Alan Lomax (1985: 40–46) in stating that the world is an agreeable and stimulating habitat precisely because of its cultural diversity. Again, anthropologists and ethnomusicologists often decry rampant westernisation, with the resultant standardization that it supposedly brings to East and West, North and South. This last is echoed in UNESCO documentation:

Local intangible cultural heritage is rapidly being replaced by a standardized international culture, fostered not only by socio-economic 'modernization' but also by the tremendous progress of information and transport techniques (from the *Guidelines* issued in 1993).

To this must be added political agendas. With a broad sweep of his brush, Bert Feintuch states this well: contemporary societies "spark" their people to remember the wealth of local life, to "think about matters close at hand and close at heart" (1988: 1). Again, the Czech novelist Milan Kundera wistfully suggests that "the struggle of power is the struggle of memory over forgetting". Museums, and the conservation of tangible heritage?temples, shrines, and other buildings?take on considerable importance. Censorship, though, is the other side of the coin to promotion, providing mechanisms of control in identity and consumption. For this reason, the performance arts are closely allied to political control; music, says Jacques Attali, and by extension art, exists in a mutually dependant symbiotic relation with political power and political opposition (Attali 1977). In relation to the Korean Intangible Cultural Asset system, I was reminded of this by the following, submitted by an anonymous Korean in response to a question I asked in a questionnaire published in the magazine Auditorium (*Kaeksok*) in August 1990:

The government, through its subsidies of persons and events, has in essence "bought" the culture and therefore controls the performers, the performances, and the content of the performances.

The Mexico 1982 UNESCO World Conference adopted the following statement:

Any kind of culture possesses dignity and value that is to be respected and preserved. Every people has the right and the duty to develop its own culture. All cultures form a part of the common cultural heritage of mankind in their rich variety, heterogeneity, and interdependent influences.

In the 1989 UNESCO recommendations, the thrust was refined so as to protect folklore, defined in a somewhat anachronistic way as tradition-based and in former times transmitted by oral means. Member states were encouraged to develop inventories of institutions concerned with folklore, to archive documentation, and to stimulate standard typologies that would allow global promotion. In essence, this matched ongoing efforts to conserve the tangible heritage, not least since it required the creation of museums or archives and the training of collectors, archivists, documenters and other specialists. Funding was available to support this work. The 1993 UNESCO declaration shifted the emphasis: member states were invited to establish systems for 'Living Human Treasures' at the national level, while UNESCO's secretariat was encouraged to compile lists and materials on these to disseminate internationally. The shift is signalled in an introduction to the published guidelines. Better than archiving and collecting, it says,

Even more effective would be to ensure that the bearers of the heritage continue to acquire further knowledge and skills and transmit them to the next generations. With that aim in mind, the holders of the heritage must be identified and given official recognition.

Recognition of individuals should allow them to continue practicing their art or craft, to train others in the art or craft, and?but contentiously?to "develop and expand the frontiers" of a given art or craft. The shift followed analysis of existing systems.

The first system to be set up, in Japan, began with 1950 legislation for the tangible heritage, expanded to include the intangible in 1954. Annual designations of genres have been made since 1955, with 'holders' elected from those who have dedicated their lives to one of seven categories of performing arts (*noh*, *bunraku*, *kabuki*, *hogaku* (traditional music), *homa*i (traditional dance), *engei* (traditional entertainment), etc) or to nine applied arts. Fifty-two 'holders' were in place in 1994, each receiving 2 million yen annually. Some skills were held jointly by groups; 23 had been appointed by 1994. Until 1975, no folk arts or crafts were appointed, and indeed the list given here is confined to 'high' culture. But, in 1975, a category of Intangible Folk Cultural Properties was established, to which 158 appointments had been made by 1994. This maintains the distinction between 'high' arts and folklore, as the criteria for appointment make clear: Intangible Cultural Properties must be of exceptionally high value, able to leave a significant mark in history, and relate to regions or schools in a historical continuum. Nominations within Folk Cultural Properties, however, are individuals who have mastered perfectly a particular art or craft.

A Thai system, launched as a National Artists Project in 1985, makes a similar division. National Artists are appointed by the king, Rama IX, within one of four divisions: visual arts, performing arts, literature and architectural arts. Artists are appointed on individual merit rather than for specific genres, although the four-fold division, and the participation in elections by a committee of scholars, experts and other National Artists, ensures a broad coverage. A total of 147 National Artists had been appointed by the beginning of 2002, of which 102 were still living. In earlier years, there was no cap on the annual number of appointments: 11 were appointed in 1999, but only four in 2001. Artists are

meant to be active, but many are frail because of age, and no mechanism exists to require them to perform or teach. Further, until the end of 2001, the monthly stipend of 8,000 Baht was far too little to live on; following a recommendation by university academics, and as an experiment, the stipend has been tripled for 2002. Folk culture has no place here. National Artists are experts at classical music, classical dance, and so on. For example, five living National Artists have been appointed for classical Thai music. Four who I have worked with are Sudjit Duriyapraneet (primarily a singer), Diern Patayakhun (tuned percussion), Bencharong Thanakoset (fiddle), and Brasit Thawon (tuned percussion and fiddles) Separate categories of Outstanding Artists and Local Artists govern folk culture, although the last is being run down and only one appointee remains alive, an expert in *likeh* comic opera. Indeed, M.R. Chakrarot Chitrabongs, Secretary General of the National Culture Commission, told me on 3 April 2002:

There is a hierarchy in operation. National Artists must be nationally recognised, but Outstanding Artists can be locally respected and totally dedicated to arts that do not have national recognition. I don't recognise folk traditions as being acceptable at the national level. 'National' doesn't just mean court, where the product tends to be highly fixed and ritualised in tradition, say in the court masked dance of *lakorn*.

A system established recently in France nominates people not genres. The Minister of Culture appointed some 20 people "Maitres d'art" in 1994 under the jurisdiction of a crafts council. These were joined by 12 further nominations in 1995, all concerned with handicrafts. Nominations come from peers, and financial support encourages the training of students. A further system that I must mention is that of the Philippines, where the National Living Treasures Award (*Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan*) began in 1988 as an initiative of the private Rotary Club of Makati-Ayala. Since the enactment of Republic Act 7355 in 1992, the award has been administered by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, a government body. In fact, National Artists were recognised from 1972 onwards under the *Gawad Pembansang alagad ng Sining* system; 41 individual awards had been made by December 2000, of which 12 appointees were still alive. The 1972 legislation focussed on highly valued urban and westernised forms; the 1988 system shifted to folk culture. This recognised the need to embrace the more than 100 indigenous groups in the Philippines, from the Ata to the Yakan, and to support the revival of local traditions in a way that would encourage them to be part of the dynamics of contemporary cultural life. The 1988 system complemented local and national festivals, the teaching of local cultures in schools, and the sponsored composition of songs, dramas and writing that was modelled on or inspired by traditions, all designed to knit this diverse nation together. A committee of academics, government employees and other experts was charged with carrying out initial research and making nominations. Eight National Living Treasures have been elected to date, three in 1993 for poetry and music, two in 1998 for weaving, and three in 2000 for epic chants, dance, and instrumental music.

UNESCO's 'Living Human Treasures' system holds a number of attractions for member states. Some financial incentives exist, although to date these have concentrated on two aspects. First, finance assists with the costs of identifying, documenting, and nominating potential arts and crafts that might be appointed. Second, funding underwrites the training of specialised staff. In May 2002, the first aspect was taken up at a symposium in Ulan Ude, Buryatia, called to identify folk arts that could be nominated for

inclusion by UNESCO. History is with the Buryats, whether through the Gaiser myth (for which, see Hamayon 1997), or because of links with the Scythians, or with Chinggis Khan, or with Lake Baikal itself?now a World Heritage Site. What, though, constitutes Buryatian performance arts? Local culture was manipulated under Soviet influence during the 20th century, if not before, with the influence of Russian settlers, traders, and priests. The Soviets established a Buryat theatre and a Buryat opera troupe. Music ensembles, led by Russians, compete with Russian orchestras. The symposium invited Mongol scholars, to further develop notions of a shared heritage, and Buryat music ensembles have modified a Mongolian instrument to create the *chanza* (now the virtual equivalent of the Russian *domra*) and have imported Mongolian horse-head fiddles (*moorin huur/khur*) and the *yatga/yatag* zither that was reintroduced to Mongolia in the early 20th century based on Korean *kayagum* models. Local shamanism, long outlawed by the Soviets, and the *joghur* dance-song tradition have been reconstructed during the last decade. In 2001, UNESCO declared the cultural space and oral culture of the *semeiskie*, the 'old believers' who fled Catherine the Great and settled in the then wild territories of Siberia, including Buryatia, as one of the first 'Masterpieces of Humanity'.

UNESCO's system allows elements of local nationalism to be fused to global recognition; not surprisingly, then, the thrust of the Ulan Ude symposium is repeated elsewhere. There are, I would suggest, two hidden motives underpinning the interests of former East Block or Soviet states: to enhance exchange much as had occurred in Soviet-era folk festivals, and to restore local folk genres that had been restricted, repressed or modernised to conform with Soviet artistic policy. In Uzbekistan, for example, 1996 saw the creation of a charitable organisation?by government decree?Oltin Meros (Golden Heritage), to search, identify, account, document Uzbek customs and arts, to promote these through the media, and to provide "moral and material" support to artists. Romania has established an ambitious academy for 'Living Human Treasures' within the Muzeul civilizatiei populare traditionale in Sibiu that anticipates making 30 appointments annually. This represents a response to UNESCO's 1993 declaration, and has now agreed a framework for its operations, confining itself to folk culture and with objectives to preserve, restore, transmit, and promote folk genres both nationally and internationally. The Czech Republic, in a parallel move, on 10 January 2001 adopted a government resolution (No.40) that began to establish its own system, specifically to conserve handicrafts. Traditions faced with extinction are eligible, with up to five personal awards to be made annually, those appointed being required to pass on skills through teaching, to present products to the public, and to maintain methods of production using traditional materials. Poland, although it has not adopted the 'Living Human Treasures' idea, has since 1994 implemented a programme for what the government calls "perishing professions" that is focussed on material culture but does not nominate individual masters.

Korean Strategies

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO has focused on the second aspect. Following a symposium in October 1996, organized locally but promoted as an international policy meeting, Korea has hosted four of seven international training workshops. The seven workshops, together with the 38 UNESCO member states that have presented papers, were:

Workshop 1: 13–20 October 1998, Seoul

Country papers: Columbia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Mongolia, Morocco, Uzbekistan

Workshop 2: 24–27 February 1999, Venice

Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Ghana, Israel, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Nepal, Peru, Poland, Uruguay

Workshop 3: 13–18 October 1999, Seoul

Country papers: Australia, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Poland, South Africa, Vietnam, Zimbabwe

Workshop 4: 1–6 November 2000, Seoul

Country papers: Azerbaijan, Barbados, Benin, China, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Philippines, Romania, Russia

Workshop 5: 19–23 February 2001, Tokyo

Country papers: Benin, Brazil, Czech Republic, China, Finland, France, Ghana, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Philippines, Russia, Thailand, Vietnam

Workshop 6: 9–12 September 2001, Manila

Country papers: Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malawi, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam

Workshop 7: 18–22 September 2001, Seoul and Gangneung

Country papers: Australia, China, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Russia, Sakha Republic, Uzbekistan

The workshops indicate that Korea has successfully positioned itself as the trailblazer for UNESCO's 'Living Human Treasures' system. The Korean system, although initiated after Japan's, has placed great emphasis on the folk heritage, balancing this with the 'high' culture inherited from the court and literati. This is in keeping with the systems now in place in the Philippines, France, Romania and the Czech Republic, and chimes with many of the papers presented at workshops from former East Block states and former European colonies. Korean Intangible Cultural Assets, then, are a potential model for UNESCO's scheme.

Korea, however, conserves a heritage that is increasingly from a distant past, and the local challenge is to ensure relevance in the new world. To do so, scholars have turned to history, searching for archetypes and promoting restoration where needed. The 1962 legislation, in contrast, emphasized the need to establish Korean identity. The scholarly approach encourages preservation, while the legislation calls for promotion. And a third factor, the appropriation of heritage and its modification by contemporary artists, tends to

be resisted. The balance between these three “pulls” still needs to be worked out. Nonetheless, these were not the concerns of the system review that took place in 1999. Rather, the review recognised social change, post-1987 government devolution, the need to maintain Assets by more than just elderly exponents, and mounting criticism of the potential for inappropriate activities in the appointment system. It remains to be seen how the success of the Korean system can be sustained in the future, and whether it can be held up as a model for international attempts to appoint ‘Living Human Treasures’.

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