

International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage
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COUNTRY REPORT: CHINA

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I. The governmental system on the protection of intangible cultural heritage

(I) The central governmental system on the protection of intangible cultural heritage

1. Organization and function

(1) The State Council

The State Council is responsible for making relevant policies, issuing relevant documents, approving and publicizing national level intangible cultural heritage protection directory, and providing policy guidance for the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

The State Council established the Leading Group of National Cultural Heritage Protection in 2006. That group is in charge of research into key policy measures on cultural heritage protection, coordinating and resolving important problems in cultural heritage protection, supporting and inspecting the cultural heritage protection work of all regions and departments.

(2) Ministry level joint conference

Ministry Level Joint Conference consists of Ministry of Culture, National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Education, National Nationality Affairs Committee, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Construction, Tourism Bureau, State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C. and State Administration for Cultural Heritage. Ministry of Culture is the organizing unit. The main function of the joint conference is to make the guideline and policy for Chinese intangible cultural protection; to examine and approve the protection program of Chinese intangible cultural heritage; to coordinate and resolve the key affairs involved in the protection of Chinese intangible cultural heritage; to look through the list of “National Level Intangible Cultural Heritage Directory”, reporting to the State Council for approving and publication; to undertake other work related with intangible cultural heritage protection that arranged by the State Council. The office of Ministry Level Joint Conference is in the Ministry of Culture, which is responsible for daily work.

(3) Ministry of Culture

As the organizing unit of protection work, the responsibility of Ministry of Culture is as follows: during the unified coordination with other related ministries and commissions, to make general strategy, layout and plan of China’s intangible cultural heritage protection in accordance with actual situation of China; boosting legislative progress of intangible cultural heritage; instructing, supervising, coordinating related departments and units to carry out and implement national

work guidance, principle and strategic arrangement on intangible cultural heritage protection, gradually turn general target of protection into reality; carrying out organization and coordination work for the implementation of key projects.

(4) Expert Committee on National Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection

This organization was established on July 13, 2006, with main tasks including making of protection program, making and implementation of census, examination, comment, protection and administration of national level directory, approve of transmitter and so on.

(5) China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center

This center is the professional organization of national level intangible cultural heritage protection, which undertaking the specific work related with nation-wide intangible cultural heritage protection, performing policy consultancy on intangible cultural heritage protection work; organizing nation-wide census; instructing the implementation of protection plan; carrying out theoretical research on intangible cultural heritage protection; conducting academic, exhibition (performance) and public events, exchanging, recommending, publicizing achievements and experiences of protection work; organizing and carrying out publication of research achievements and personnel training.

2. Policy

The General Office of the State Council issued *The Advice On Strengthening China's Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection* (hereinafter abbreviated as *The Advice*) in March 2005. *The advice* embodies fundamental policy of Chinese government on intangible cultural heritage protection.

The Advice first established the target of intangible cultural heritage protection, namely: via the whole society's efforts, gradually establishes the complete intangible cultural heritage protection system that with Chinese characteristics, which enables the rare, imminent extinct intangible cultural heritage that with historic, cultural and scientific value can be effectively protected, and can be passed down and carried forward.

The Advice nails down the protective body of all levels and their responsibilities of Chinese intangible cultural heritage protection work. *The Advice* points out: "the leading role of government should be brought into play, establishing a coordinative and effective leading system of protection work. Led by Ministry of Culture, setting up Ministry Level Joint Conference system of Chinese intangible cultural heritage protection work, to unitedly coordinate the intangible cultural heritage protection work. Cultural administrative departments and relative departments should be cooperated actively, while extensively absorbing research forces such as related academic organizations, universities and colleges, enterprises and institutions, social groups to carry out the intangible cultural heritage work jointly."

The Advice also puts forward instructive guidelines and working principles of protection work. *The Advice* points out: the instructive working guideline of intangible cultural heritage is "focusing on protection, salvage first, reasonable utilization, passing down and development". The working principle is "government leading, social participation, defining responsibility and forming resultant force; long term programming, step by step implementation, combination of point and plane, paying attention to breakthrough".

3. Law and code

At present, Protection Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage of People's Republic of China (draft) drafted by the leading of Ministry of Culture has been listed into the legislative plan of National People's Congress in 2007, the State Council is doing its best to push this law forward.

In October 2006, the Ministry of Culture of People's Republic of China issued *Temporary Method on Protection and Administration of National Level Intangible Cultural Heritage* in the form of minister's order; it brought forward the exact requirement to protection unit, representative transmitter and strengthening administration that is involved with directory projects in national level intangible cultural heritage.

Ministry of Culture also drafted *Cognizance and Administration Method of Representative Transmitter of National Level Intangible Cultural Heritage Project*, which regulated the cognizance standard, rights, obligations and subsidize of representative transmitter. Currently, this method is collecting advice extensively, and it will be issued after further modification and perfection.

4. System

Systems have been made on intangible cultural heritage protection by the Chinese government since 2005:

(1) Four-level directory system. Establishing national level, provincial, municipal and county level intangible cultural heritage representative work four-level directory systems. National level intangible cultural heritage representative work directory should be approved and issued by the State Council. For provincial, municipal and county level intangible cultural heritage representative work directory should be approved and issued by the government of same level, and reports to the intermediate higher level government for reference.

(2) Passing down system of intangible cultural heritage. For representative works of intangible cultural heritage that were listed in the directory of all levels, via ways of naming, granting a title, commending, awarding and subsidizing to encourage the transmitter (group) of representative work to teach and learn. Via social education and school education, there will be inheritor for the representative works of intangible cultural heritage.

5 . Measures

(1) Starting up "China National and Folk Culture Protection Project"

In 2003, the Ministry of Culture of People's Republic of China jointly with Ministry of Finance, National Nationality Affairs Committee and China Federation of literary and Art Circles to startup the "China National and Folk Culture Protection Project" (hereinafter abbreviated as "Protection Project"). The general goal of this project is: via construction of "Protection Project", enables rare, imminent extinct national and folk culture that with historic, cultural and scientific value can be effectively protected till the year of 2020, primarily realizes scientific, normalization and legalization of national and folk culture protection.

(2) Organizing and carrying out the census of intangible cultural heritage

Ministry of Culture arranged nation-wide intangible cultural heritage census in June 2005, it

planned to carry out nation-wide intangible cultural heritage resources census from 2005 to 2008.

(3) Organizing application and appraisal of representative works of national level intangible cultural heritage

The State Council determines to approve and publicize a batch of representative directories of national level intangible cultural heritage every two years. The State Council issued the first batch of 518 items of national level intangible cultural heritage directory on May 20, 2006, which involves 758 application districts or units.

Currently the appraisal work of the second batch of national level intangible cultural heritage directory is in the progress.

(4) Setting up China “Cultural Heritage Day”, organizing and carrying out relative events.

In December 2005, the State Council issued *Notice on Strengthening Cultural Heritage Protection*; it was determined to setup China “Cultural Heritage Day”.

During “Cultural Heritage Day” in 2006, Ministry of Culture held “Forum of China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection” and “Special Evening Party of China Cultural Heritage Day” in Beijing.

During “Cultural Heritage Day” in 2007, Ministry of Culture held series of events such as special exhibition of China Intangible Cultural Heritage and rare drama performance of China intangible cultural heritage in Beijing.

(5) Establishing “Zoological Protection Area of Intangible Cultural Heritage”

The National Cultural Development Programming Outline during “The Eleventh Five-Year” Period proposed a number of national level intangible cultural heritage zoological protection areas should be established, for areas that with colorful and centralized intangible cultural heritage, integral protection should be practiced. At present, Ministry of Culture has approved Zhejiang Minnan cultural zoological protection experimenting area.

(6) Carrying out theoretical research and personnel training via holding of forum, seminar and training class.

Ministry of Culture determines to hold “China Intangible Cultural Heritage · Suzhou Forum” once every two years. Two forum sessions were sponsored in July 2005 and June 2007 respectively.

Three protection-work training classes were organized by Ministry of Culture in China Art Research Institute in the year of 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively; hundreds of people all over the nation joined the training.

(II) Local government system on intangible cultural heritage protection

Organization and function

(1) The Leading Group of National Cultural Heritage Protection or Department (Bureau) Level

Joint Conference

Most provinces, regions and cities have established the Leading Group of National Cultural Heritage Protection or Department (Bureau) Level Joint Conference. The Leading Group of National Cultural Heritage Protection or Department (Bureau) Level Joint Conference is in charge of the making of the policy and measures of intangible cultural heritage protection in its own administrative area, coordinating and solving important problems in cultural heritage protection work, urging and inspecting the cultural heritage protection work within its own administrative area.

(2) Cultural Organization (Cultural Department, Cultural Bureau)

Cultural organization in each area is the leading and implementing organization of intangible cultural heritage protection work, with responsibility to organize, coordinate and supervise the intangible cultural heritage protection work within its own administrative area.

(3) Expert Committee on National Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection

Most provinces, regions and cities in China have established the Expert Committee on National Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection. The committee's main responsibilities are to examine, comment and proof of candidate projects of intangible cultural heritage project, representative work of intangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage zoological protection area within their own administrative areas, proposing the recommended name list of intangible cultural heritage protection directory of all levels; approving representative transmitter of intangible cultural heritage; carrying out academic research and exchange of intangible cultural heritage, providing intellectual support such as professional consultancy, business guidance, personnel training to the census and protection work of intangible cultural heritage.

(4) Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center

Most provinces, regions and cities in China have established the Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center. Their main responsibilities are to carry out the layout, plan and working normalization of intangible cultural heritage protection within their own administrative areas. Organizing, implementing and guiding the census, approving, application, protection and exchange of intangible cultural heritage within its own administrative area.

2. Policy and Code

In 1990s, provinces such as Yunnan, Guizhou, Fujian and Guangxi issued protective code of national and folk legendary culture, Ningxia, Jiangsu also made the local codes to protect the folk arts.

3. Measures

(1) Organizing and carrying out census of intangible cultural heritage.

After the Ministry of Culture arranged the nation wide intangible cultural heritage protection census in June 2005, every district made census plan, training census personnel in succession, organizing investigation on the resources condition of intangible cultural heritage in local area.

(2) Establishing directory of intangible cultural heritage, carrying out protection work.

Each province (district, city) established the directory of intangible cultural heritage of its level; many ways have been adopted to carry out protection. At present, most provinces (districts, cities) such as Beijing, Hebei, Shanxi have made the provincial level directory of intangible cultural heritage. Some regions (cities) and counties have made its level of intangible cultural heritage directory. Among which, provinces such as Yunnan, Zhejiang and Hebei took the lead in establishing province, city and county three levels of directory system. The nation, province, city and county four levels of intangible cultural heritage directory system protection were primarily established.

(3) Organizing forum, seminar, training class, carrying out theoretical research and personnel training.

II. League protection system of intangible cultural heritage

(I) National league organizations and their functions

1. China Folk Artist Association

The forerunner of China Folk Artist Association was the China Folk Literature Research Association, founded in March 1950 - a volunteer literature group that was founded by national folk artists. The function of it is to explore, edit, protect and research of national and folk culture.

2. Chinese Folk Culture Promotion Association (abbreviated as “culture promotion association”)

Chinese Folk Culture Promotion Association is the national joint social party, founded in 1992. Currently, member of culture promotion association, group member industry spreading all over 31 provinces, city and municipality in China as well as 16 countries and regions. Furthermore, culture promotion association also setup local organizations in Guangdong, Sichuan, Chongqing, Hubei, Jiangxi, Tianjin, the United States of America, Australia and Macau and so on. The main task of culture promotion association is to carry forward Chinese culture, accelerating international exchange. Under China Folk Culture Promotion Association there is a paper cutting working committee, which to carry out activities of protecting and carrying forward the intangible cultural heritage of paper cutting.

3. China Folk Custom Institute

China Folk Custom Institute was setup in May 1983. It is a professional academic, mass and non-profit group of national folk custom workers. There are about 1500 people. The responsibility of the institute is to unite national folk custom workers, investigating, collecting, editing and researching the folk custom of our nationalities, actively participating in many works such as academic consultancy, system construction and individual case research that related with intangible cultural heritage.

4. Other national league organizations, such as China Folk Artists Association, China Acrobatics Association, China Drama Association and so on. These organizations mainly carrying out protection and passing down work related with intangible cultural heritage of folk arts and acrobatics.

(II) Local leagues and their functions

Folk leagues of intangible cultural heritage protection have been set up all over China, such as Quanzhou Nanyin Research League, research league of storytelling and ballad singing in Suzhou dialect, Kunshan Kunqu Research League, Shanbei Folk Song Research League. These leagues mainly carry out their activities focusing on some intangible cultural heritage projects in their administrative area.

(III) Important league organization under establishment

Currently, China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center is preparing the establishment of the Workers' Association of China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection, and drafted the draft constitution of association, now the draft constitution is collecting advice. This association will be the important league organization of China's intangible cultural heritage protection.

(IV) Cooperation between league organization and government and nongovernmental organization

China government pays much attention to the role that is being played by league organization on intangible cultural heritage protection, therefore it provides strong support to league's work that being carried out on intangible cultural heritage protection, its working guidance principle is "government leading, social participation, defining responsibility and forming resultant force". China's relative leagues also established good cooperation relations with local government and related nongovernmental organization (such as scientific research institute).