

「非物質文化遺產」
——新的概念、新的期望

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“Intangible Cultural Heritage”:
New Concept, New Expectations

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聯合國教育、科學及文化組織的《保護非物質文化遺產公約》¹在2006年實施，各地政府對「非物質文化遺產」進行調查研究、立項保育。雖然「非物質文化遺產」是一個新的概念，但其所指的，是一些有悠久歷史的文化傳統。在這數年間，東亞國家及地方社會在保育「非物質文化遺產」上都累積了一些經驗，我們在2009年12月4至6日在香港文化博物館舉行了「非物質文化遺產與東亞地方社會」的研討會，會上大家分享了各自的經驗、各地方社會的回響。本文集是這個研討會的成果，也可以說是大家對「非物質文化遺產」的期望。

一、地方風俗傳統

在漫長的歷史過程中，地方社會發展出不同的民間傳統，人們跟從先輩的安排，按時舉行節慶及人生禮儀，按環境執行傳統風俗習慣。這些世代相傳的傳統與地方社會的運作及群體所處的生態環境息息相關，但地方的參與者並不一定明白這些傳統的意義。這就像一個人並不需要明白自己語言的發音及文法體系，便可以與其他人溝通，因為語言的掌握是一個從小開始的自然學習過程。對一般人來說，傳統與風俗習慣是他們日常生活的部份，傳統的存在並沒有甚麼特別之處，也不一定有意保存傳統的觀念。

地方傳統之所以存在，是因為傳承人願意執行，但傳統並不是一成不變的，當所處的社會政治經濟在改變的時候，地方傳統的內容也會改變，這許多因素都會影響傳承人決定執行地方傳統的方式。同一個傳統，在不同的時代，不同的地方環境，內容會有所變動，或被賦予不同的意義。²尤其是那些

1 聯合國教育、科學及文化組織，《保護非物質文化遺產公約》（巴黎：聯合國教育、科學及文化組織，2003）。

2 參看Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-14。

由普羅大眾所維持的地方活動，民間的理解方式，並不一定依循國家的正統論述。配合著地方社會的轉變，地方詮釋也會相應的改變，但總的來說，地方會有一套自己的論述，地方社會成員在自己的社會文化環境中長大，很自然的認識這個先輩傳下來的「主位觀點」(emic perspective)，這個「觀點」支持他們對地方傳統的堅持。

學者研究地方社會傳統，目的是要瞭解地方社會的結構與運作方式。在地方傳統的脈絡中，每一個參與者都有其角色及對其所處社會文化的詮釋，學者從研究中發展出他們的一套解釋地方社會文化的看法，但這個「客位觀點」(etic perspective)並不一定與地方社會的主位觀點配合，因為學者要解釋的，不單是地方人士的看法，而且是地方傳統所展現的社會文化理論。⁴有些時候，主位與客位觀點的著眼點可以有很大的差距。⁵學者在研究過程中所搜集到的「田野材料」是用來建構理論的材料，但對地方人士來說，這些田野材料是他們的活動記錄，是建構認同的基礎。

由於我是在南中國做研究的，所以以南中國的例子來討論。以香港新界鄉郊的「點燈儀式」為例，新生男丁的家庭要在正月十五參加宗族的點燈儀式，在宗族祠堂裡掛起代表男丁的燈籠，然後拜祭祖先。對鄉民來說，這些是世代相傳的風俗習慣，男丁的出生是一件重要的事情，要按先輩傳下來的方法安排儀式，通知祖先。從研究者的「客位觀點」來說，這個儀式確認了新出生的男丁在宗族組織中的地位，建立了新的社會關係，新的男丁享有宗族成員的權利與義務，可以得到族產所帶來的收益，但也要負起保衛宗族的義務。儀式中的「參與確認」是一個非常重要的元素，儀式強制男嬰家人

的參與角色。點燈儀式強調男性在地方社會的重要性；女嬰不用參加點燈儀式，這個儀式宣佈了女性在宗族社會中的次要地位。

在「主位觀點」中，儀式中的某些元素會變得重要，例如「點燈儀式」程序的安排、各個家庭在儀式中的分工角色、哪一個家庭可以作為該次儀式的領導、祭品的內容、及儀式後花燈的處理方法等。研究者的客位觀點則會強調參與家庭與其他宗族成員的關係，既有宗族成員如何見證接受新成員加入，又從儀式過程中探討宗族確認新成員的機制。⁶

在整個宗族傳統的實踐中，儀式傳統雖然與尊祖敬宗的儒家思想沒有抵觸，但明顯地，士大夫的儒家思想不是這些地方傳統的核心。可能一些讀書人及官員會認為這些充滿地方特色的地方傳統偏離了「正統」⁷，甚至有離經叛道之嫌。

在南中國，很多傳統行業製造提供日常生活的必需品，生產、農耕、養殖或捕捉食物，這些行業的從業員學習掌握一套技藝、一套生產知識、又或是一套利用自然生態環境的知識及方法。這些是維持從業員個人及行業利益的技術與秘方，他們並不是那麼容易把技術與秘方傳授他人。在傳統中國社會，技藝的傳承是透過「學徒制度」進行，學習者從基礎的工作開始，還包括服侍師父的日常生活。⁸一個學徒可以在數年內完成「學師」的過程，但要得到師父傳授秘技，可能需要一個很長的時間。⁹因為師父會從不同的角度中考慮選擇合適的傳承人。師徒關係，並不是一個平等的學習

6 華琛指出香港新界儀式性的「盆菜」宴與地方社會組織的關係，有著確認宗族的新成員及強調成員平等關係的功能，見〈香港的社區宴會儀式和文化承傳中的政治〉，本文集，頁45-55。

7 在本文集所收錄的個案中，這是一個非常普遍的現象，很多傳統風俗被視為落後或迷信，Le Thi Minh Ly 指出這個忽視地方傳統的觀點給越南帶來了教訓，使他們損失了許多社會風俗、地方知識及技藝，見〈非物質文化遺產的保護——在越南的認識過程和幾個實踐經驗教訓〉，本文集，頁85-92。

8 參看Eugene Cooper, *The Wood-Carvers of Hong Kong: Craft Production in The World Capitalist Periphery* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1988), 23-33。

9 在傳統中國社會，手工藝的傳授主要是透過師徒制度或父子方式傳承，參看王燕，〈試論四種類型的非物質文化遺產普查與保護方式〉，本文集，頁173-181，183-186；千谷及李永分別提出資助非物質文化遺產項目傳承人收徒傳藝，是一個可行的保育方法，見千谷，〈探索長效機制、促進保護工作的可持續發展〉，本文集，頁141-147；李永，〈立足長效管理，重在活態傳承——江蘇非物質文化遺產保護工作之調研〉，本文集，頁151-160。

3 一個傳統的儀式內容的某些元素會比較穩定，不易改變，有些元素則充滿著地方差異，這些可以反映地方傳統與國家強調正統之互動關係，見James L. Watson, "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, eds. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 3-19。

4 在保育非物質文化遺產的過程中，學術話語在很多時候佔有優勢，見楊正文，〈文化產業發展語境下的非物質文化遺產表述——以「瓦爾俄足」及「苗年」展演為例〉，本文集，頁335-348。以日本的「綾子舞」的保育為例，學者也擔當著重要的角色，見宮田繁幸，〈日本民間表演藝術的保護——「綾子舞」的個案研究〉，本文集，頁191-198。

5 Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 568-604。

關係，師父將技術與秘方傳授給徒弟，徒弟也有責任在事業有成之時，照顧師父。這種不開放、不平等的關係是維持技術與秘方的主要方法。當傳統的行業消失的時候，消失的不單單是一些製品，還包括一套傳授技藝的社會制度。

二、社會經濟環境的轉變

傳統事物，受到不同時代的發明或經濟政治活動所影響。1950年代的中國，中共政權把很多地方傳統界定為「封建迷信」而將之禁制，這些活動在中國曾經絕跡三十多年。1970年代，在工廠大規模生產的塑料產品替代了很多傳統的小手工藝產品。1990年代冷戰結束，再加上經濟全球化，跨國資本自由地在世界流動，地域分工成為經濟全球化的一個結果，發展中國家成為世界工廠，將產品成本大大降低，原來傳統行業的產品失去了競爭能力，很多都消失在這個全球化的激流中。

隨著全球化的發展，西方消費文化漸趨主導，年青人不再欣賞自己的傳統文化，傾向於西方進口的消費品與文化產品。雖然本土產品會作出調節，但現實是它們仍然受到了沉重的打擊。傳統產品失去市場，技術也得不到承傳，因為沒有人願意學習那些無法謀生的技藝。

在東亞地方社會，都市化有不同的進程。都市有方便的交通工具，早期的工業發展，以至現代的金融、零售及服務業，為都市人口提供了大量的工作機會，使都市成為人口集中的地方。今天都市化的一個特點是土地變得昂貴，是中產階級生活的地方，人們住在高樓大廈裡，日間上班工作，人與人之間關係疏離，缺乏社區認同。在互聯網及個人電子產品的流行的今日，人們可以在虛擬的世界裡溝通，這改變了傳統的人與人之間的互動方式，需要人手參與支持的傳統社區活動，面對著人手短缺的難題。

在全球化與都市化的個過程中，新興行業在都市冒起，就業機會與社會資源都漸漸集中在都市裡，鄉郊傳統行業卻不斷萎縮，都市成為社會向上流動的場地，初級生產者與都市金融產業從業員之間的收入與地位的差距愈來愈大。鄉郊年青的一代往城市遷移，到市區尋找工作，剩下老年人在家鄉。政府因鄉郊人口下降而減少設施投入，更促使了地方人口向都市遷移，形成一個惡性循環，城鄉差距，愈擴愈大。

在都市生活的中產階級放棄了很多傳統風俗，相對來說，鄉郊社區，卻還保存了很多傳統的風俗習慣，這形成了地方傳統的分布不均。但在這個現象的背後，是地方社會經濟萎縮、人手短缺，財富及資源過度集

中，形成都市與鄉郊的極大差距；政府的資源也成為邊緣社群追逐的目標。¹⁰

三、邊緣的在地者

在全球化帶引下的急遽社會經濟變化，使很多傳統行業消失，從業人員也失去了他們的職業，由於大都沒有轉業的能力，他們就只有留在社區，過著退休或半退休的生活，構成了支持傳統風俗的在地群體。要籌辦一個每年一度的社區性的傳統節慶活動，需要大量財力和人力。¹¹這些邊緣群體用不同的方法去維持活動，簡化內容以節省資源是一個主要的方法。也有一些成功的例子，就是在困難的環境中籌辦活動，喚起社區成員的支持，再創造認同，使傳統延續。¹²

在鄉郊或偏遠地區¹³，由於經濟發展比較慢，交通也不方便，地方生態環境所受到的破壞就比較少，所以保存了比較多的風俗傳統，這些尚存的傳統，讓他們在這個保育非物質文化遺產的運動中受到公眾注視。這些邊緣的在地者以非物質文化遺產的保育工作作為發聲的工具，透過非物質文化遺產的立項申報，把地區的要求與期望提出來。在傳統活動中重新塑造社群認同，強化族群界線，這個現象在本文集的多個案都顯示出來。¹⁴

10 以日本綾子舞的保育為例，國家、縣、市等一起進行保育，見宮田繁幸，〈日本民間表演藝術的保護〉；蔡永輝提出由政府主導的「文化保護區」的措施，以一個整體的方式來保護物質與非物質文化資源，本文集，頁163-167，169-170。

11 見廖迪生，〈香港天后崇拜〉（香港：三聯書店（香港）有限公司，2000），頁67-98。

12 廖迪生一文提出兩個香港的個案，一個以減省裝飾，緊縮支出的方法來維持活動，另一個則成功喚起社區成員的支持，延續傳統，見〈「傳統」與「遺產」：香港「非物質文化遺產」意義的創造〉，本文集，頁259-275，277-282；朴尚美指出，地方社會也可以從全球化中得益，除了旅遊經濟以外，還可以團結地方社會，見〈韓國的非物質文化遺產和文化旅遊〉，本文集，頁75-82。

13 李松指出，近30年來，中國城市和鄉村的差距不斷地被擴大，少數民族地區處於擴大的差距的一個極端，見〈多民族地區村落文化建設與社會發展研究〉，本文集，頁61-67，69-71。

14 張兆和指出京族跨境宗教節日活動個案成為非物質文化遺產項目之後，強化了族群的身份認同、擴闊了民間宗教活動的空間，以及創造條件讓他們宣揚京族的中國越南跨境連繫，見〈非物質文化遺產象徵邊界的移動：中國廣西中越邊境京族哈節的個案研究〉，本文集，頁301-331。

四、傳統活動的觀賞性

人們在日常生活中還遵循的傳統與風俗習慣，都有其存在的意義，如上文所說，傳統與風俗習慣有著界定或確認參與者身份與角色的功能。一些社區性的傳統，如宗教節慶等，既是民間宗教活動，也是地方政治經濟的一部份。籌辦活動要動用地方資源，可以說是一個大規模的經濟活動，這些社區性活動為地方領導提供了一個政治表演的機會，也同時是反映地方社會政治結構及確認地方領導的一個活動，當傳統與風俗習慣還有實際的功能或意義的時候，它是會繼續存在的。

雖然傳統與風俗習慣維繫著不同的社會關係，但吸引個人參與是一個最基本的環節。個人的支持與貢獻，對活動的延續非常重要，公開表揚是維繫參與者的一個主要方法。另一方面，若果這些活動缺乏觀賞性、枯燥乏味的話，參加者的興趣會大減。所以很多社區節慶及人生禮儀，活動內容也有娛樂性、表演性的一面，用以吸引觀眾及參與者。會場的裝飾及在活動中使用的物品，都有其展示性的一面，一方面展示主辦單位的財富，一方面吸引觀眾。這些「美觀」的元素，常常被建議用於娛樂、藝術展演或旅遊經濟上。而這個挪用的建議，常常被用來遮蓋傳統與風俗習慣的「落後」與「迷信」論述。這個現象在本文集的不同個案中不斷重複出現。

在社會經濟轉變的過程中，城郊經濟差距擴大，偏遠地方也追求經濟發展，其中一個流行的方法，是將自己的風俗習慣與旅遊經濟聯繫起來，將風俗習慣變成可以販賣的東西，期望旅遊業可以為地方帶來經濟收入，在本文集中的大部份個案中，都牽涉到旅遊經濟，旅遊已經成為一個大家都接受的解決地方經濟問題的方法。

五、新的概念與措施

「非物質文化遺產」是一個新的概念，聯合國教育、科學及文化組織在2003年提出《保護非物質文化遺產公約》，《公約》在2006年實施，對很多人來說，包括學者及政府官員，是一個非常陌生的概念，他們對這個概念的認識，是由於政府要按照《公約》的內容，對非物質文化遺產進行保護措施。

《公約》將「非物質文化遺產」分為五大類：（1）口頭傳統和表現形式，包括作為非物質文化遺產媒介的語言；（2）表演藝術；（3）社會實踐、儀式、節慶活動；（4）有關自然界和宇宙的知識和實踐；（5）傳統手工藝。這五大類可以說是包涵了人類生活上的所有東西。人們的問題是「哪些才算是非物質文化遺產呢？」《公約》的答案是：

「非物質文化遺產」，指被各社區、群體，有時是個人，視為其文化遺產組成部份的各種社會實踐、觀念表述、表現形式、知識、技能以及相關的工具、實物、手工藝品和文化場所。這種非物質文化遺產世代相傳，在各社區和群體適應周圍環境以及與自然和歷史的互動中，被不斷地再創造，為這些社區和群體提供認同感和持續感，從而增強對文化多樣性和人類創造力的尊重。在本公約中，只考慮符合現有的國際人權文件，各社區、群體和個人之間相互尊重的需要和順應可持續發展的非物質文化遺產。¹⁵

對一般人來說，這個答案很難掌握，因為這段解釋，牽涉到一些比較艱深的學術概念，也沒有一個確切的答案。普通市民對「非物質文化遺產」的理解，並不是來自《公約》的內容，而是透過政府的措施。當政府提出保護項目，制訂非物質文化遺產名單的時候，市民才漸漸理解甚麼是「非物質文化遺產」。

政府執行《保護非物質文化遺產公約》，推行保育措施，這些基本上是一個國家工程，簽署《公約》的國家按《公約》的要求制訂保育清單，進而保育某些項目，這是一個由上而下的過程，經由官僚體制操作，確認保育清單。於是，大家都認為保育資源來自政府。國家的措施開始改變了地方的社會文化環境，因為保育措施成為了地方社會的資源。新資源的出現，賦予地方傳統新的意義，引出一系列新的社會關係。可以說聯合國教育、科學及文化組織的《保護非物質文化遺產公約》為保存地方的傳統與風俗習慣提供了一個轉機，但也引起地方社會的新期望。

六、「懷舊」的經濟與政治

以香港社會為例，「集體回憶」是近年來的一個流行的名詞，人們編過去如何努力把香港建設起來。¹⁶這股「懷舊」風與很多社會文化元素有關係，在全球化的影響下，流行文化趨於一致，每個大都市都變得非常相似，沒有自己的性格，當大家厭倦全球一體的時候，就要尋找和塑造自己的獨特性，自己的發明、自己的歷史或是自己的風俗習慣便成為塑造的材

¹⁵ 聯合國教育、科學及文化組織，《保護非物質文化遺產公約》。

¹⁶ 參看廖迪生，《「傳統」與「遺產」》，頁269-270。

七、物質與非物質的關係

簡單來說，物質是我們看得見的東西，而非物質是看不見的，一個簡單的二分方式，就可以把非物質這個類別獨立了出來。²¹但這個二分的方法，並不有利於非物質文化遺產的保育，由於非物質是存在於人類腦海裡的理念和知識，這些看不見的東西是需要透過實質的創造或事件的安排而呈現，傳承是透過創造與安排中的學習和實踐來進行。但在這創造與學習的場景中，還存在著人與人的關係，不同的參與者有不同的角色，這些是盛載著物質與非物質二分體系的社會文化脈絡²²，也是非物質文化遺產的核心元素。

保存實質²³以及保存實質與事件的社會關係是保存非物質文化遺產的重要步驟，但當實質變成博物館藏品之後，其所盛載的社會關係便消失了，這是博物館藏品與非物質文化遺產項目的主要分別；也就是為何美國博物館要把藏品送還它們的主人的原因。²⁴非物質文化遺產所隱含的物質與非物質的二分法，容易忽略了產生知識及維持知識的社會組織。若果這些社會組織由政府行政安排或旅遊公司的服務所替代的話，保存了的非物質文化遺產就只會成為展品或商品了。

八、為誰保育非物質文化遺產？

在全球化經濟的影響下，世界上的地區分工，做成各地方社會的不均衡發展。這一個轉變，既改變了地方社會的人口與經濟結構，也改變了傳統事物的意義，在這個重組的遊戲中，很多世代相傳的傳統，都變得沒有意義，或缺乏支持的群體。在別無選擇的情況下，邊緣群體只有放棄他們悠久的傳統。

- 21 參看金瓊映，〈在中國「物質」化的非物質文化遺產〉，本文集，頁421-432；廖迪生，〈「傳統」與「遺產」〉，頁261。
- 22 參看Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63。
- 23 黃海妍指出實質是工藝流程、技法等非物質的、無形的元素的載體，博物館在這方面擔當重要的角色，見〈物質文化遺產與非物質文化遺產保護相結合的再思考——以廣東民間工藝博物館對廣彩瓷燒制技藝的保護與研究為例〉，本文集，頁229-233，235-236。
- 24 華若璧指出當美國博物館把與儀式相關的藏品送回美洲土著手中時，博物館研究人員與土著都非常關注藏品與儀式的關係，見〈法律、文化產業與送還：美國的美洲土著博物館〉，本文集，頁35-42。

料。¹⁷都市的中產階級在辦公室從事重複的工作，在週末及假期時，需要輕鬆的娛樂來調劑，「懷舊」的旅遊把他們帶到流傳著傳統風俗習慣的鄉郊，促成了非物質文化遺產的商品與旅遊經濟。¹⁸

「懷舊」的塑造與所在的社會有密切的關係，參與者或會爭論「懷舊」內容的真實性，但「懷舊」詮釋有著當代的社會政治意義，影響著社會成員對自己所處社會的看法。對政府的地方管治來說，懷舊詮釋的操控可以達到管治的果效；市民過去的辛勞，創造今天的成功，所以要珍惜現狀，保持社會穩定。另一方面，知識份子也以「懷舊」來進行教化，他們修改地方論述，將之「淨化」變成一個「好的」、「正面的」、「有意義的」論述，把他們認為「迷信」、「色情」、「落後」的東西剔除。¹⁹

非物質文化遺產系統的建立，讓大家把緬懷過去的事物確立起來。但這個確立的過程，是一個被確認的過程，由政府的行政安排來認定，這樣，官僚行政便成為界定非物質文化遺產的重要手段。另一方面，當非物質文化遺產項目設立之後，項目的分類便無可避免，如上文所說，每一個項目或活動的功能及意義都可以是多方面的，類別的劃分往往只會強調某一個層面，項目的保育推動時，也只會朝著某一個方向。經過申報立項，撰寫報告，一個非物質文化遺產項目的內容被固定下來了，這是一個標準化的過程。²⁰

- 17 胡家瑜指出「懷舊」是當代都市精英對「傳統」、「真實」與「認同」的追求，「社會集體記憶」是建構我群意識，展現自我特色和提升文化動力的重要媒介，見〈非物質文化遺產與台灣原住民儀式——對於遺產政治和文化承傳的一些反思〉，本文集，頁201-225；另參看David Lowenthal, "Reliving the Past: Dreams and Nightmares," in *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3-34。
- 18 Graham M. S. Dann, "There's No Business Like Old Business": Tourism, the Nostalgia Industry of the Future," in *Global Tourism*, ed. William F. Theobald (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998), 29-43。
- 19 在處理申報非物質文化遺產項目的時候，一些被認為是「迷信」或「色情」的元素往往會被剔除，見趙玉中，〈非物質文化遺產、國家與地方社會——以大理白族「繞三靈」為例〉，本文集，頁375-385，387-389；潘淑華及黃永泰的「乞巧文化節」個案，展述了一個去除「迷信」元素的過程，見〈文化遺產的保存與傳統的再造：廣州珠村「乞巧文化節」〉，本文集，頁239-255；馬健雄在拉祜族儀式神話研究中發現，隨著社會政治環境的改變，神話文本經歷不同階段的「文本淨化」過程，將神話從現實生活脈絡中抽離，將之塑造成為少數民族在文學上的標誌物，見〈從儀式神話到國家非物質文化遺產：作為拉祜族文化標誌的〈牡帕密帕〉〉，本文集，頁393-413，415-418。
- 20 廖迪生以香港的例子探討非物質文化遺產項目的內容在行政過程中被標準化的方式，見〈「傳統」與「遺產」〉，頁270-272。

有趣的是，地方的傳統、風俗習慣卻可以回應單一枯燥的全球化。在這一剛剛開始的保育非物質文化遺產的行動中，地方傳統漸漸得到重視。但現實的情況是很多群體已不再重視他們的地方傳統，傳統風俗習慣已經漸漸的脫離了生活，成為促進族群認同的標誌或為地方經濟作貢獻的媒體，又或成為政府的管治對象、財團的生財工具。

邊緣的社區在經濟衰退、人口外移的壓力下，都容易認為將「傳統」展示販賣，是一個解決的方法；認為中產遊客的光臨，會「欣賞」他們的傳統，並帶來經濟效益。但除了經濟效益之外，一個非物質文化遺產項目的價值和意義是多方面的，在地方社會及資源萎縮的情況下，政府控制保育資源的取向，將會對地方社會及非物質文化遺產的保育方式帶來深遠的影響。

在進行非物質文化遺產保育的時候，我們應該要問一些基本的問題：是誰擁有這些世代相傳的非物質文化遺產呢？這些地方知識是屬於誰人的、是屬於哪一個社區群體的呢？是為了發展旅遊經濟，還是為了社群的延續？正如本文集的很多作者所指出，我們需要一個有良心的保育²⁵，維持地方的尊嚴，在社區培養非物質文化遺產的傳統價值，讓它們發揮凝聚社區的功用²⁶，使非物質文化遺產在人的土壤中發揮光芒，將前人的「遺產」變成地方的「傳統」。

“Intangible Cultural Heritage”: New Concept, New Expectations

LJU Tik-sang

The “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”¹, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was implemented in 2006. Since then, numerous governments have conducted survey and research projects on “Intangible Cultural Heritage” (hereafter referred to as “ICH”) with the aim of inscribing items of ICH and ensuring their safeguarding. Despite the fact that ICH is a new concept, what it signifies is actually cultural traditions of great historical depth. In recent years, both countries and local communities in the East Asian region have accumulated considerable experience in safeguarding ICH. At the International Conference on “Intangible Cultural Heritage and Local Communities in East Asia”, which was held at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum on 4th and 5th December, 2009, the participants shared their experiences and the reactions of their local communities. This edited volume is a result of the conference and reflects the expectations of ICH among the conference participants.

Local Traditions and Customs

Through a long historical process, a variety of traditions and customs have developed in local communities. Observing their ancestors’ arrangements, people regularly organize festivals and life-cycle rituals to maintain their social practices according to the existing environment. There is a close relationship among the centuries-long traditions, the operation of the society and the ecological environment. Nonetheless, local participants do not necessarily understand the meaning behind those traditions and customs. This phenomenon is comparable to

25 李松指出保育非物質文化遺產要有「以人為本」、「社會公平」的概念，見〈多民族地區村落文化建設與社會發展研究〉。

26 在保育非物質文化遺產的同時，臺灣同時推行「藝術下鄉」、「社區總體營造」、「地方文化館」等計劃，創造環境，讓社區主動保育自己的傳統，見吳密察，〈臺灣文化行政中的非物質文化遺產〉，本文集，頁95-108。

1 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003).

the fact that one need not understand the phonetic and grammatical systems of one's language to communicate with others, as language acquisition is a natural process since childhood. To ordinary people, their traditions and customs are part of their lives and traditions survive despite that they are not considered special. For this reason, local participants lack the focused awareness needed to safeguard their traditions.

The voluntary participation of the local people is what contributes to the continuation of the local traditions. However, the content of a tradition is not static and can be influenced by various factors. For example, the content can change in line with changes in the social, political or economic environments. The content and the bestowed meaning of a tradition may also vary at different time periods or within local environments.² Such variations in bestowed meaning are especially significant among activities organized by the ordinary people, whose understanding of the activities may not conform to the official interpretation.³ To sum up, a community maintains its own distinctive local discourse. Local people will gradually modify their interpretation of a tradition, keeping pace with the changes in the local communities. Growing up in their socio-cultural environments, members of local communities naturally acquire the Emic perspective from their ancestors, a perspective which enables them to preserve their local traditions.

Scholarly research into local communities, research examining local traditions, hopefully results in an understanding of community structure and operation. In the local tradition, each participant plays a role and develops an Emic interpretation of his / her own culture and society. At the same time, researchers develop their own, Etic, perspectives about the culture and society of the local community. However, these Etic perspectives may not necessarily match the Emic perspective, since the researchers seek to explain not merely the views of the local people but also the

2 See Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-14.

3 Some elements in a traditional ritual may be relatively stable with little deviations, while some may be vary with local characteristics. These reflect the interactions between the local traditions and the orthodoxy sponsored by the state. See James L. Watson, "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, eds. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 3-19.

social and cultural theories⁴ embedded in the local traditions.⁵ Sometimes, there can be a great discrepancy between Emic and Etic perspectives. "Field materials" collected during research assist scholars in the construction of social science theory, but seen from the perspective of the local people, these same field materials are records of their activities and the bases for constructing their identity.

As my research is conducted in South China, I would begin the discussion using an example from the New Territories of Hong Kong, the "Lantern-Lighting" ritual. On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, the families of the new-born sons attend the Lantern-Lighting ritual of their lineage. Inside the ancestral hall of their lineage, they hang lanterns, which represent these new-borns, and worship their ancestors. To the villagers, this is a custom that has been passed down through generations. The birth of a boy is an important matter; the family must follow their ancestors' patterns to perform the rituals and inform their ancestors of the birth of the boys. From the researchers' Etic perspective, the ritual confirms the new-born boys' positions in the lineage and constructs new social relationships among lineage members. Enjoying the privileges and obligations of a lineage member, the new-born sons are entitled to the benefits brought by the lineage estates but must also shoulder the responsibility of protecting the lineage. "Gaining recognition through participation" is an essential element in the ritual, and the family of the new-born son is compelled to participate. The Lantern-Lighting ritual emphasizes the importance of males in local communities. New-born girls need not attend the ritual, a fact which emphasizes the secondary position of females in the lineage society.

From the Emic perspective, certain elements in the ritual become significant; for example, the procedural arrangements of the Lantern-Lighting ritual, the

4 In the process of safeguarding ICH, the academic narratives often play a significant role. See Zhengwen Yang, "Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Context of Cultural Industry Development: Examples of 'Wa Er Zu' and 'Maio Nian' Demonstrations," in this volume, 335-348. The Japanese example of "Ayako-Mai" suggests that scholars also played an important role. See Shigeoyuki Miyata, "A Case Study of the Safeguarding of Folk Performing Arts in Japan: 'Ayako-Mai,'" in this volume, 191-198.

5 Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 568-604.

division of labor among individual families in the ritual, the deciding of which family should lead the ritual, the content of the sacrifice and finally, what to do with the lantern after the ritual is ended. The scholars' Etic perspective focuses on the relationship between the participating families and the other lineage members and investigates the mechanism that sets out how existing lineage members should witness and recognize the affiliation of new members.⁶

Although the rituals and practices of the lineage traditions do not conflict with the Confucian doctrine of respecting the ancestors, the concerns of the Confucian intelligentsia are clearly not the focal point of local traditions. For this reason, some scholars and government officials may consider these local traditions to have declined or even suspect that they are unorthodox.⁷

In South China, there were many traditional industries manufacturing daily necessities, as well as those directed to the farming, breeding, or hunting for food. These workers mastered a set of skills, refined production knowledge or techniques for exploiting the ecological environment. Such skills and knowledge were the industry's trade secrets for protecting the benefits of their occupation. For this reason, many masters were reluctant to teach others such skills and knowledge. In traditional China, the transmission of skills was accomplished through "apprenticeship". A trainee began learning the basis of the trade, which included taking care of the daily life of the master.⁸ The apprentice might finish the training in a few years; however, learning the master's secret

6 James L. Watson discusses that the relationship between the ritual banquet, *pun ch'oi* (common pot), and local social organization. He notes that the banquet has the function of confirming a new born son's membership in his lineage, and expressing social equality among lineage members. See his "Community Banqueting Rituals and the Politics of Heritage in Hong Kong," in this volume, 45-55.

7 This is a common phenomenon in cases reported in this edited volume, many traditional customs are considered "backward" or "superstitious." Le Thi Minh Ly notes that this perspective has brought Vietnam several lessons – many social customs, local knowledge, skills and techniques have been lost. See her "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Awareness Process and Several Practical Lessons from Vietnam," in this volume, 85-92.

8 See Eugene Cooper, *The Wood-Carvers of Hong Kong: Craft Production in The World Capitalist Periphery* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1988), 23-33.

techniques would require a longer time since the master had to consider various factors before choosing the ideal candidate for the successor of the trade.⁹ The relationship between the master and the apprentice was an unequal one – once the master had passed on the trade secrets to the apprentice, the latter had responsibility for taking care of his master when he achieved success in the trade. This closed and unequal relationship was imperative to safeguard the skills and the secret techniques of a trade. Therefore, when a traditional profession died out, not only its manufactured products would disappear, but also the social system of transmitting the related skills and knowledge.

Changes in Social and Economic Environments

Traditional elements are vulnerable to the impacts of new inventions and to the influence of the economic and political events of different eras. In the 1950's, the Communist regime in China labeled many local traditions as "feudalistic superstition" and had them banned; these traditions and their traditional material supports then disappeared for more than three decades. By the 1970's, plastic goods and mass production in factories had replaced the production of a variety of traditional handicrafts. Under globalization and with the end of Cold War in the 1990's, transnational capital has flowed more freely. Regional specialization has become an actualization of the global economy. Developing countries have become factories for the world at large and manufacturing costs have been tremendously lowered. Traditional products have lost their competitive edge and many have disappeared in the raging torrent of globalization.

In addition to globalization, Western forms of consumption culture have gradually become dominant and young people no longer value their traditional

9 In traditional Chinese society, the transmission of handicrafts' skills was either through apprenticeship or father-son relations. See Yan Wang, "A Preliminary Study of the Survey and Methods of Conservation of Four Categories of Intangible Cultural Heritage," in this volume, 173-180, 183-186; Rong Qian and Yong Li suggest respectively that sponsor the masters of ICH to recruit apprentices will be a feasible means for conservation. See Rong Qian, "In Search of a System with Long-lasting Effectiveness in Facilitating the Sustainability of Conservation," in this volume, 141-147; Yong Li, "Continuous Effective Management and Vigorous Conservation: A Study of the Conservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Jianguo," in this volume, 151-160.

culture, turning to goods and cultural products imported from Western countries. Although numerous indigenous commodities have been modified to adapt to this transformation, they still face severe challenges. Traditional commodities have lost their markets and traditional skills no longer attract young learners, as no one will choose to learn skills that will not provide a living.

Local societies in East Asia have passed through different stages of urbanization. Cities' convenient transportation systems, industrial development in the early phases and modern forms of finance, retail and service industries have provided abundant job opportunities, thus making cities population centers. One characteristic of today's urbanization is that land has become expensive, and urban dwellers are predominantly middle class. People live in high-rise buildings and go to work during the daytime; there is little community identity as neighbors interact infrequently. Compounding this is the effect of the internet and the wide use of individualized electronic products which allow people to communicate in the virtual world, a practice which has altered people's traditional patterns of interaction. Faced with all these challenges, traditional communal activities, which required a large number of participants, are being shorthanded.

Globalization and urbanization, when combined with the emergence of new industries, have resulted in the concentration of job opportunities and social resources in urban centers. In contrast, traditional industries in rural areas have been steadily shrinking. Cities have become the venues for upward social mobility, and ever greater differences in income and social status exist between primary producers and the employees in the finance industry. In the rural areas, the younger generation moves to cities to look for jobs, leaving the older generation behind. In response to this decline in population, the government reduces its support of public facilities in rural areas, a policy resulting in more out-migration. A vicious cycle has been created that has been expanding the gap between the rural and urban.

The middle class urbanities have given up many traditional customs, which have been maintained, with difficulty, by rural communities. This results in an uneven distribution of local traditions. However, behind this phenomenon is the decline of the local economy, a shortage of helping hands, and an imbalanced concentration of wealth and resources. All these factors contribute to the expanding

gap between urban and rural, so that governmental resources have become the targets that the marginal groups pursue.¹⁰

Marginalized Local People

The drastic social and economic changes under the impact of globalization have contributed to the vanishing of many traditional industries. Workers in the traditional industries have lost their jobs, and as most of them lack the training to switch to other occupations, they cannot work and go into retirement or semi-retirement. These are the people, making up the local groups, who support and maintain the traditional customs. Holding an annual communal traditional festival requires much money and labor power.¹¹ These marginalized local groups have tried various ways to maintain the ceremonies; for example, simplifying the content of an activity is a main means of conserving resources. In some cases, although the local groups faced difficulties when organizing the activities, their calls for support received positive responses from the community members, thus recreating the local identity and successfully maintaining the traditions.¹²

10 The Japanese example suggests that the national, county and city governments jointly participate into the conservation of "Ayako-Mai." See Shigeyuki Miyata, "A Case Study of the Safeguarding of Folk Performing Arts in Japan"; Yonghui Cai suggests a holistic method of establishing a government led "Cultural Conservation Zone" to safeguard tangible and intangible resources. See his "An Investigation into the Conservation of Yunnan's Ethnic Cultural and Ecological Protection Zone," in this volume, 163-167, 169-170.

11 See Disheng Liao (Tik-sang Liu), *Tian Hou Cult in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Joint Publishing Company Ltd. 2000), 67-98.

12 Tik-sang Liu discusses two cases of safeguarding ICH in Hong Kong. In one case, the participants tried to reduce the cost by deleting decorative elements in the activity. In the second case, the organizers successfully raised the community members' support for maintaining the tradition. See his "'Tradition' versus 'Property Inherited': The Construction of Meanings for Hong Kong's Intangible Cultural Heritage," in this volume, 259-275, 277-282. Sangmeek Bak states that local societies can be benefited from globalization; in addition to tourist economy, local solidarity can be maintained. See her "Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism in Korea," in this volume, 75-82.

In the countryside and in remote regions,¹³ slow economic development and inconvenient transportation means that the local ecological environment receives less damage and more customs and traditions are being maintained. The conservation movement of Intangible Cultural Heritage has attracted public attention to these surviving traditions, and marginalized local people have used the opportunity to speak out. Through the Intangible Cultural Heritage inscription process, these local people have put forward their requests and expectations, attempting to recreate their social identity and strengthen their ethnic boundaries through the traditional activities. This is a common phenomenon in many cases reported in this edited volume.¹⁴

Expressive Domain in Traditional Activities

The traditions and customs people follow in their everyday lives have an existence value. As explained above, traditions and customs have the functions of defining or identifying the participants' roles and statuses. Many communal traditions, such as religious festivals, are not only local religious activities but also significant components of local politics and economy. Local resources are needed for organizing these events, which become large-scale economic activities, providing opportunities for the local leaders to perform their political dramas. At the same time, such communal events mirror local social and political structures and confirm the leaders' local positions. When traditions and customs still perform vital functions and remain meaningful to the local communities, they can continue to survive.

13 Song Li notes that in the last three decades, the gap between cities and rural areas has been expanding. The national minorities' regions fall in the polar extreme of the gap. See his "A Study of Village Cultural and Social Development in a Multiethnic District," in this volume, 61-67, 69-71.

14 Siu-woo Cheung states that after the Jing Minority's transnational religious festival has become an ICH item, the ethnic identity has been strengthened, the sphere for popular religious activities has been expanded, and an environment has been created for advocating Jing's transnational China-Vietnam linkage. See his "The Shift of Symbolic Boundaries around Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Case of the Jing Minority's *Har* Festival on the Sino-Vietnamese Border in Guangxi, China," in this volume, 301-331.

Although traditions and customs support communal social relations, attracting individual participation is of fundamental importance, for the monetary and labor support of individuals is vital to the continuation of the activities. Public acknowledgment is an important means to hold the participants together, but if an activity is boring or lacking attractive expressive elements, participants will lose interest. Therefore, many communal festivals or life-cycle rituals include elements of entertainment or performance that attract both audience and participants. Also included are the objects used in the event and the decorations in place at the venue, both of which have great expressive value, displaying the wealth of the organizer and attracting the attention of the audience. For these reasons, such "aesthetic" elements are usually expected to be included in the entertainment, arts or tourist industries. Moreover, the use of aesthetic elements is often a deliberate tactic, used as a means of concealing any negative connotations such as "backward" or "superstitious" that could be applied to the local traditions and customs. This phenomenon regularly appears in many cases in this edited volume.

During social and economic transformation, the economic gap between urban and rural areas enlarges. Remote regions seek ways to improve their local economy, and a popular method is to connect their traditions with the tourism industry, turning their customs into commodities. With this in mind, they expect the tourist industry to bring in wealth. Almost all the cases in this edited volume have mentioned the tourism factor; tourism has become an acceptable method for resolving local economic problems.

New Concepts and New Measures

"Intangible Cultural Heritage" is a new concept. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted the "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" in 2003 and it was put into implementation in 2006. To many people, including scholars and government officials, Intangible Cultural Heritage is a concept which is very unfamiliar, having appeared only when the government acted in compliance with the 2003 Convention to take measures for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The 2003 Convention proposes five broad domains in which Intangible Cultural Heritage is manifested: (1) Oral traditions and expressions, including

language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (2) Performing arts; (3) Social practices, rituals and festive events; (4) Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (5) Traditional craftsmanship. What is intangible cultural heritage? According to the 2003 Convention,

The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.¹⁵

Ordinary people can hardly understand this explanation because it contains some rather difficult academic concepts, many of which have no absolute answers. People's understanding of ICH did not derive from the content of the Convention; instead, they learned about it through the measures the government had taken. In fact, only after the government proposed certain items for safeguarding and was preparing the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage did the people gradually realize what ICH was.

Implementing the "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" and the safeguarding measures are fundamentally national projects. A country ratifying the Convention must publish a list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in accordance with the requirements of the Convention and must proceed to safeguard certain items of that heritage. As the publication of the list is a top-down process operated within

15 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage."

a bureaucracy, people expect the government to provide the resources to implement the safeguarding activities. In fact, measures taken by the national government to safeguard items of the heritage have gradually brought in resources as well as socio-cultural changes to the local communities. The emergence of new resources gives new meanings to the local traditions and also creates new social relations. The "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage", adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, casts light on safeguarding local traditions and customs, upon which new expectations are initiated.

"Nostalgic" Economy and Politics

"Collective memory" is a popular term recently coined in Hong Kong to reflect citizens' remembrances of the Hong Kong of the past.¹⁶ This wave of nostalgia is related to various socio-cultural situations. Under the influence of globalization, cosmopolitan cities resemble each other and lack individuality; their popular cultures exhibit convergence. When people get tired of these globalization products, they will search for and create their own uniqueness, using their own inventions, history or traditions and customs as the raw materials for the creation.¹⁷ In a city, the middle class is shut in the office doing routine work, but during weekends and holidays, they take part in relaxing recreations to spice up their lives. "Nostalgia tours" take them to those rural areas where people still engage in traditional customs and practices safeguarding. Intangible Cultural Heritage as part of this process helps promote both commodities and the tourist economy.¹⁸

16 See Tik-sang Liu, "'Tradition' versus 'Property Inherited,'" 269-270.

17 Chia-yu Hu states that "nostalgia" is the result of the urban elites' pursuit of "tradition," "authenticity" and "identity; the "social collective memory" is the important media for constructing ethnicity, expressing individual characteristics and promoting cultural power. See her "Indigenous Ritual as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Taiwan: Reflections on Heritage Politics and Cultural Transmission," in this volume, 201-225; See also David Lowenthal, "Reliving the Past: Dreams and Nightmares," in *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3-34.

18 Graham M. S. Dann, "'There's No Business Like Old Business': Tourism, the Nostalgia Industry of the Future," in *Global Tourism*, ed. William F. Theobald (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998), 29-43.

The creation of “nostalgia” is closely related to the social context to which it refers. Participants in the debate may argue the authenticity of the “nostalgia” at issue, but the interpretation of the “nostalgia” embodies contemporary social and political significance and affects individual perspectives on the community. By providing an interpretation of nostalgia, the government achieves control of the local community. For instance, successful use of nostalgia helps the government to convey the messages of treasuring the existing state of affairs and maintaining stability in society. On the other hand, the intelligentsia makes use of the concept of “nostalgia” to carry out their socialization projects. They modify or “purify” the contents of a nostalgia discourse, turning it into something “good”, “positive” and “meaningful” by eliminating those elements which they consider “superstitious,” “erotic” or “backward.”¹⁹

The setting up of the system of Intangible Cultural Heritage helps clarify the boundaries of reminiscence. Nonetheless, the process for identifying such items is also the process for their being granted recognition, which is confirmed through governmental administration. In this way, bureaucratic administration becomes an important means for identifying Intangible Cultural Heritage. On the other hand, once an ICH item has been identified, it will have to be classified. As mentioned above, the functions and meanings of each item can be multifarious, but a classification often emphasizes only one facet. The measures taken to safeguard the item also follow this pattern. After an ICH item has been recognized

19 Elements being considered “superstitious” or “erotic” are usually being deleted during the process of inscribing ICH. See Yuzhong Zhao, “Intangible Cultural Heritage, State and Local Society: A Case of Dali Baizu’s ‘Raosanling,’” in this volume, 375-385, 387-389; The Double Seventh Festival in Guangzhou, examined by Shuk-wah Poon and Wing-ho Wong, reveals a process of eliminating the element of “superstitious.” See their “Heritage Preservation and the Re-creation of Traditions: Double Seventh Festival at Zhu Village in Guangzhou,” in this volume, 239-255; Jianxiong Ma’s research on Lahu’s ritual myth reveals that following the changes of the socio-political environment, the text of the myth had gone through different stages of the “text purification” process. The myth was taken out of the context of the actual daily reality, then was made into a marker of national minorities’ literature. See his “When an Ethnic Marker Becomes the Country’s Intangible Cultural Heritage: Case Study of the Lahu Myth, Creating Heaven and Earth, in Yunnan, Southwest China,” in this volume, 393-413, 415-418.

and a report about it has been drafted, the content of the item is ascertained – and standardized.²⁰

Relations between Tangible and Intangible

In simple terms, tangible items are what can be seen while intangible items are invisible – thus the category of intangible can easily be established by this simple dichotomy.²¹ However, this dichotomy is not helpful for the conservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage, for intangible heritage is basically ideas or knowledge in people’s minds. These invisible concepts are expressed through the creation of an object or the arrangement of an event. The transmission of ideas or knowledge takes place through learning and practicing during the creation and arrangement processes. However, in this creation and learning discourse, there are varying social relations among different participants; different people play different roles. This socio-cultural context, which bears the dichotomy between tangible and intangible,²² is the core element of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The conservation of objects²³ and the conservation of social relations of the objects and events are the crucial steps for safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. When material items become part of museum collections, the embedded social relations are gone – this is the major difference between museum collections

20 Tik-sang Liu explores how the standardization process took place in the bureaucratic administration in cases in Hong Kong. See his “‘Tradition’ versus ‘Property Inherited,’” 270-272.

21 See Keun Young Kim, “Intangible Cultural Heritage and Materiality: The Case of the People’s Republic of China,” in this volume, 421-432; Tik-sang Liu, “‘Tradition’ versus ‘Property Inherited,’” 261.

22 See Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63.

23 Haiyan Huang notes that an object is a vehicle of the artistic procedures, techniques and etc., the intangible and invisible elements. The museums play a significant role of conservation in this domain. See her “Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage Reconsidered: A Case Study of the Protection and Research on Guangcaici by Guangdong Folk Arts Museum,” in this volume, 229-233, 235-236.

in addition to the economic value, there are other values and meanings of an ICH item. The directions that a government adopts for safeguarding ICH, under the circumstance of social and economic atrophy, will have a long-term effect on the local community and the ways of safeguarding ICH.

We should ask some fundamental questions when we proceed to safeguard our Intangible Cultural Heritage: Who owns the Intangible Cultural Heritage which is handed down from generation to generation? Who owns the knowledge of ICH, or more specifically, which group in the community owns the knowledge? For what purposes do we promote conservation: for developing the tourist economy or for safeguarding the continuity of the communities? As many scholars and experts have pointed out in this edited volume, we need conservation with conscience,²⁵ to uphold the dignity of local societies, to cultivate ICH's traditional values in communities and allow these communities to take advantage of ICH to enhance social cohesion.²⁶ We should let ICH settle in their own communities, turning the predecessors' "heritage" into live local "traditions."

25 Song Li notes that the concepts of "people oriented" and "social fairness" should be adopted in safeguarding ICH. See his "A Study of Villages' Cultural and Social Development in a Multiethnic District."

26 In addition to safeguarding ICH, Taiwan carried out the "Arts in the Rural," "Total Communal Construction" and "Local Cultural Halls" projects at the same time. The plan was to create an environment for the community to conserve their own traditions actively. See Mi-cha Wu, "Intangible Cultural Heritage in Taiwan's Cultural Administration," in this volume, 95-108.

and items of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This is why the American museums repatriate collections to the Native Americans.²⁴ The underlying assumption of tangible and intangible dichotomy in Intangible Cultural Heritage would easily leave out the social organizations which produce and maintain the knowledge. If these social organizations are replaced by the government's administrative arrangements or the services provided by tourist agencies, the safeguarded items of Intangible Cultural Heritage will simply become exhibits or commodities.

Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage for Whom?

Under the impact of the globalised economy, the regional division of labor creates an uneven development of local societies. This transformation has altered the local society's population and economic structures, and has changed the meanings of local traditions. In this restructuring game, a great number of traditions, passed down from early generations, have lost their meanings or even the supporting communities. Under such conditions, marginalized groups have no alternatives but to give up their long traditions.

Interestingly, local traditions and customs can respond to the uniformed and boring effects of globalization. In the new movement of safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, local traditions have gradually gained public attention. However, the reality is that many local communities do not value their local traditions in their original contexts. Traditional practices have thus been detached from daily lives and have become the labels for enhancing ethnic identities, commodities contributing to local economy, the objects of government control, or the profit-making tools of the big companies.

Under the pressures of economic decline and out-migration, marginal communities would find demonstrating and "selling" their "traditions" to be easy solutions to their problems. From their perspective, middle class visitors will "enjoy" their traditions and at the same time bring in economic benefits. However,

24 Rubie S. Watson states that when the American museums return the ritual objects to the Native Americans, the relationship between the object and the ritual had been one of the major concerns. See her "Law, Cultural Property and Repatriation: Native Americans and Museums in the United States," in this volume, 35-42.