Title - How safe is safeguarding? Issues of Intangible Cultural Heritage in a changing world
Presenter - Shubha Chaudhuri (American Institute of Indian Studies, Delhi)

The last few decades have witnessed a heightened awareness of the need for preserving cultural expressions, which were seen to be changing at an unprecedented rate in the face of rapid technical advances and urbanization in India. This was understood as a situation specific to the fact that the transmission of such traditions is oral and often hereditary, and thus more fragile in the face of the breakdown of traditional patronage systems and changing social systems. The preservation and promotion of cultural expression was also a part of postcolonial independent India, which set out to promote traditional culture and to create a new image of “unity in diversity”. The preservation of these traditions through supporting performance, as well as documenting and archiving them for future generations created institutional initiatives on both the national and regional levels. Such initiatives have had to face a range of problems in dealing with multiple cultures and languages, varying concepts of ownership, individual and community, traditions in flux, changing technology and above all a lack of resources.

The 1993 UNESCO declaration for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and subsequently the inventorying of ICH has brought these issues to the forefront, and has created a new wave of initiatives under this umbrella. As new markets for cultural tourism and the need for cultural products, which are labeled as heritage and authentic, are created the issues of intellectual property rights and
ownerships are central to the quest for safeguarding ICH. My paper will focus on a number of related issues with a view to raising concerns as a first step to providing solutions.

I will also share my experiences involved in designing a template for UNESCO for the inventorying or “cultural mapping” of ICH in India. As is evident, my paper is based on the experience of an ethnomusicological archive in India, which I believe will have much in common with other parts of Asia.

Title - Tending the boundaries of Intangible Cultural Heritage: The case of the Jing minority’s Hat festival on the Sino-Vietnamese border in Guangxi, China
Presenter - Cheung Siu-woo (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)

Cultural heritage often involves communities straddling or traversing boundaries in terms of institutional identities in national and transnational contexts. UNESCO’s scheme of Intangible Cultural Heritage, with its implementation in China’s national setting, has engendered a grid system of classification and recognition corresponding to specific national and institutional boundaries. The Jing minority of Vietnamese decent on the Sino-Vietnamese border of Guangxi Province have received the recognition of two national-level intangible cultural heritage titles in recent years: the Hat Festival, which centers around the worship of communal patron deities, and the single-string zither music that serves as an accompaniment for ritual singing in the festival. They have long been considered unique cultural traditions of the Jing nationality within China’s national boundary, and are being guarded against transnational cultural linkages across the national border and influences from other ethnic groups in the region. This paper seeks to examine how the projects of Intangible Cultural Heritage reinforce and intensify the national and ethnic boundaries of Jing identity, and how boundary traversing cultural-interaction and ethnic influences take place in this context.

Title - Authenticity and authority: Conflicting agendas in the preservation of Korea’s Intangible Cultural Heritage
Presenter – Keith Howard (University of Sydney)
The Korean state preservation system, which began in the 1960s, has appointed some 109 Important Intangible Cultural Properties (Chungyo muhyông munhwajae) – music, dance, rituals, crafts, martial arts, food preparation, and more. Initially designed to promote national identity, the system has assumed international prominence in recent years, and three Korean Properties have been appointed as UNESCO ‘Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Mankind.’

This paper explores the troubled mechanics of the Korean system. The system makes much of historical authenticity, embracing a concept of an original form, or, more accurately, the most original form discovered and documented at the time a Property is appointed. This is the wonhyông, identified and kept without change. While such an historicizing agenda is characteristic of much Korean scholarship and reflects a Confucian philosophical approach that respects the old, the notion of maintaining a given form without change can be challenged by subsequent research, by changing personnel, and by the needs of creation and performance in a contemporary world. The system attempts to counter this by vesting authority in a committee of scholars who conduct primary research, and by appointing, funding, and then requiring ‘holders’ (poyuja) of Properties, and groups of performers and students, to preserve, perform or make, and teach their art. Needless to say, the appointment process is potentially fraught, and the dual agendas of preservation and presentation do not make good bed-fellows.

The paper explores at length the contemporary conflicting agendas surrounding the Confucian shrine (Munmyo). The ritual is maintained by a Confucian organisation in association with Sônggyun’gwan University (in whose campus the shrine sits). In the 1960s, ritual music and dance was (as it had been before) restored and preserved by members of the former court music institute, and until recently music and dance have been maintained and performed by members of the institute’s current state-controlled incarnation, the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts. The Cultural Properties Office (Munhwajae ch’ông), sets the date and funds the ritual, or, at least it did until 2008. The Confucian organisation no longer accepts the government’s authority over the ritual, and now that the university runs a dance degree programme, it has begun to challenge the right of dancers from outside taking part, and to change the dance content in line with new research. Based on this example, the paper will ask what constitutes the ‘authentic’ and who has the authority to oversee the preservation of an ancient ritual.
Title - *Lak ga Kam* and Kam Intangible Cultural Heritage (China)
Presenter - Catherine Ingram (University of Melbourne)

*Lak ga*, literally translating as “bones of songs”, is the expression that Kam (in Chinese, Dong) people resident in south-western China use to refer to the lyrics of Kam songs. To Kam song experts and older singers, these “bones of songs” constitute the most important and meaningful aspect of Kam songs, and provide an important basis for judgements regarding a song’s quality. Kam songs are mainly sung in the Kam language, a predominantly oral Tai-Kadai language, and for centuries they have served as one of the primary means by which Kam culture, social structure, history, philosophy and aesthetics have been transmitted from generation to generation.

This paper begins with a focus upon Kam people’s perceptions of Kam song lyrics – their structure, complex rhyming system, ongoing creation, and musical and social significance – to illustrate how Kam people view a central aspect of their own cultural heritage. It then examines the role that this fundamental aspect of Kam musical culture has, to date, played in the context of the growing discourse on Kam Intangible Cultural Heritage, which itself focuses upon song.

Title - Transnational politics and poetics in the revival of Chinese death rituals
Presenter - Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng (University of Hong Kong)

Religions and religious rituals are being increasingly proclaimed as Intangible Cultural Heritages by UNESCO. Chinese death rituals can thus been conceptualised as significant intangible cultural heritages within the Chinese societies, both within Mainland China and the Chinese Diaspora.

Since the Open Door Policy in 1978, there has been a revival of death rituals within the villages of South China. This revival has led to the emergence of the death rituals that have not seen practiced in Mainland China since pre-Cultural Revolution days. This paper argues that the preservation and the practice of death rituals in modern China and the Chinese Diaspora are significant intangible cultural heritages because of their role in informing a group of its identity and in helping with identity construction within these societies. Here, these rituals have re-cemented lost kinship ties among the Chinese villagers within the village setting, between the Chinese villagers and their urban kin in China, and between these two groups and their kin residing in the Diaspora. By coming together and recreating an environment where different groups of individuals participate in the death rituals and pay respects to common ancestors, we are witnessing a rediscovery and reconfiguration of kinship.
ties and social relationships on the one hand, and, at the same time, a surfacing of
tensions and conflicts on the other. In this sense, death rituals, as a complex system of
intangible cultural heritages, enables us to understand the dynamics of modern kinship
ties and social relationships in contemporary Chinese societies.

---

Title - From habitus to heritage: The Hudhud and the Tudubulul epics (Philippines)
Presenter - Manolete Mora (University of Hong Kong)

Various operations and interventions go into producing World Heritage, such as,
documenting, collecting, listing, curating, evaluating, and so on. These may be
considered as metacultural, since they are cultural productions about culture. Indeed,
Heritage itself is a form of metaculture and World Heritage is a form of metaculture
that resides in a global public space (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). The process that
leads to a change of status from cultural practice or habitus, at the pre-Heritage stage,
to cultural asset, at the Intangible Heritage stage, is more often than not a complicated
one. It is characterised by various, often troubled, interventions that occur well before
a given cultural practice is recognized and listed as World Intangible Heritage. This is
particularly the case for cultural practices associated with stressed indigenous
communities who struggle to deal with rapid modernization and an encroaching
modernity.

It is my contention that the motivations and perspectives associated with
interventions to cultural practices that occur at the pre-Heritage stage are essentially
the same as those that occur at the Heritage stage. For these interventions are attempts
to deal with cultural practices that are regarded as ‘outmoded’, in the sense that they
are contemporaneous but not contemporary; they are of the past but they survive in
the present; their form has outlived their function. From this perspective, the only
possibility for the continued existence of the outmoded is in finding a new purpose in
a metacultural sphere - in the sphere of World Heritage. I argue my case through two
instances of intangible heritage from the Philippines, namely, the sung oral literatures
of the Ifugao Hudhud and the T’boli Tudubulul. The former was declared by UNESCO
in March 2001 as one of the nineteen ‘Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible
Heritage of Humanity’; the Tudubulul is a possible candidate for future inclusion in the
‘Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity’.

References:
Cantonese opera was inscribed in UNESCO’s *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* in September 2009. Bamboo Shed Theatre is one of the most significant contexts for the performance of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong and may be explored in terms of community activities, artistic performance, and religious or ritual beliefs.

Bamboo shed theatre is mostly found in fishing villages and remote areas in Hong Kong. Since the performance is usually hosted for festive reasons among the villagers, the Cantonese opera in bamboo shed plays an important role in community bonding. Because the performance serves as an entertainment for both the Gods and the people, it also helps to retain local ritual beliefs and practices such as those associated with Taoism and Buddhism. Opera troupes also benefit from such performances, not only through the income earned but also through the opportunity to present performances on a public stage. The income and the performance experiences are crucial to the survival of local Cantonese opera troupes.

The Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong initiated a seed project to introduce Cantonese Opera, as a form of Intangible Cultural Heritage, into secondary education and to incorporate it into the curriculum design and implementation of the New Senior Secondary Chinese Language and Liberal Studies curricula. Through formal learning activities students are exposed to learning experiences in a novel situation which helps them to develop an awareness of, to recognize, to reflect upon and to identify with Cantonese opera as uniquely theirs and to appreciate it as Intangible Cultural Heritage. Students are expected to reflect critically on the importance of Cantonese Opera and to explore and actualize possible strategies for preserving and promoting it as Intangible Cultural Heritage.

This paper illustrates the use of Cantonese opera in formal education in Hong Kong and the future development of similar programmes in schools, which includes the use the Bamboo Shed Theatre as an educational resource.

References:
Ng, F. P., L.S. Chung and W. I. Lam (2008). *Princess Chang Ping Classroom*. Hong
Title - Turning the intangible into the tangible: An experience with ‘Literature of Voice’ in the Philippines.

Presenter: Nicole Revel (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris)

Since the second half of the 20th century, and all the more at the turn of this century, audio and multimedia technologies have been used to faithfully record music, storytelling, epic chanting, sung debates, as well as, theatrical, kinesic and choreographic performances, and other cultural practices. In today’s world, this new ‘tertiary retention’ (B. Steigler, 2001) endows intangible expressions and creations with a more concrete materiality. Consequently, the assertions of national community identities and the nature of our scholarly work are facing new horizons.

In 1987, I wrote a letter to the French National Commission emphasizing the importance of Intangible Heritage and I started to conceive a way to materialize some of the vast, yet ephemeral, artistic expressions of Mankind. From 1991 to 2001, I coordinated the international seminar on ‘Epics’, one of the five seminars of the ‘Integral Study of the Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue’, a UNESCO program that was part of the Decade for Cultural Development. I have, then, been able to apply my vision to materialize intangible voices in the context of the national communities of the Philippines.

In this paper, I will outline my collaboration with scholars, indigenous singers of tales and other knowledgeable members from the various Philippine communities as well as the application of multimedia technology in building the Philippines Oral Epics Archive at Ateneo de Manila University.

As a linguist-anthropologist I have worked amongst the Palawan in the Southern Philippines, a highland forest people and a society of blowpipe hunters and cultivators of upland rice. This is a bilateral society with a very modest material culture but with a magnificent ‘literature of voice’, in particular, an extensive repertoire of long sung narratives, tultul, which I listened to over many nights, recorded, transcribed, translated, analyzed and which I regard as ‘monuments’ of memory and creativity.

I will focus on several singers of tales, their life experiences and the impact of their compositions on the Palawan collective psyche. I will emphasize the singers’ role within the society and the deep link between the content of their chanted narratives and customary law and shamanism.
I will bring my paper to a close with a vivid testimony of a Palawan singer of tales, Mäsinu Intaräy (Revel 2008), to illustrate how his heritage may be either regarded as a fundamental dimension of his society or a total misfit in the metropolis of today. The necessity, then, to approach heritage as an interdependant whole between auditive perception (the intangible) and visual perception (the tangible) becomes manifest and confronts us with the evidence that no form without function can be saved.

References:
Revel, Nicole (2008). *The Song of an Epic in the Words of Mäsinu Intaräy, a Palawan Singer of Tales*. LMS, Centre national de la recherche scientifique (20’)

Title - Politics and poetics of Intangible Cultural Heritage: The case of Hong Kong within/out China
Presenter - Yu Siu Wah (Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Since China’s economic success and political stability after the 1989 June 4th Massacre, the sentiment of the people and that of the government of the People’s Republic of China can be encapsulated in the title of a recent movie: *qiu qiu ni, biaoyang wo*, or “I beg you to endorse and publicize me (my achievement)”. Such sentiment was illustrated more passionately at the opening and closing ceremony of the 2008 Olympics. Despite its extravagant and spectacular success, the multi-media shows on Chinese history and culture presented were pretty hard-sell and simplistic, if not exaggerated and misleading. Given the over-enthusiasm in selling Chinese culture to the world, it is not difficult to see why the Intangible Cultural Heritage promulgated by UNESCO has become a central and, at the same time, a very much contested issue within the PRC over the past decade.

Hong Kong, the ex-colony of Britain, which handed over its sovereignty to the PRC in 1997, has been struggling to maintain certain differences within the greater Chinese culture and identity, while simultaneously attempting to position itself as a ‘born again’ Chinese city. As a scholar of Hong Kong music culture, and an active member of various performing arts committees of the SAR government, my aim in this paper is to present the ambiguous position of Hong Kong within/out China with respect to Intangible Cultural Heritage.
Whatever ‘culture’ may be, it does not consist of homogeneous agreements between all people in a community. Rather, culture is a site of contestation and continuously re-created by people. Therefore, in studying and safeguarding we should look at processes of producing intangible cultural heritage / living culture, and not only at the products. Furthermore, it would be wrong to neglect the technology involved in these processes, and consider living culture entirely as representations of symbolic meanings. Living culture is the product of human ingenuity and in the performing arts we should look at this technology of enchantment. The power of art objects results from the technological processes that they embody. ‘The enchantment of technology is the power that technical processes have of casting a spell over us so that we see the real world in an enchanted form.’ (Alfred Gell 1999: 163) I shall discuss some of these issues with examples mainly taken from Sundanese musics in West Java.

Many Sundanese songs remind their listeners of the shared past or call them back to their ‘homeland’. However, notions of the ‘homeland’ differ for the different types of music. For instance, in the prestigious Cianjuran music the ‘homeland’ mostly refers to the glorious past of the nobles: the hero’s of the Pajajaran kingdom from the 14th to the 16th centuries. In another instance, in a popular song, the singer Doel Sumbang calls Ema (from Edanna Manusia, ‘the madness of human beings’) back to a life without tripping on ecstasy pills; and in musics inspired by Islam we may be called back to the society of Muslims to lead a proper life.

Living culture is constantly changing, and this is reflected in the definition used by UNESCO: ‘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 ...’ In the 20th century the position of Sundanese female performers has changed considerably. Elsewhere I have described the music of West Java, and in particular Cianjuran, as a feminine form of communication; whereas daily life has many masculine characteristics, in the performing arts the feminine aspects are predominant (van Zanten 1989:189; 2008:42, 48-49, 60). After the army coup of 1965, musics inspired by Islam, including pop music, have become more pronounced throughout Indonesia. Since the downfall of the Suharto regime in 1998 the position of minority groups and indigenous peoples has changed considerably.
How do the changing symbolic meanings and value systems related to specific musical practices shape ideas about safeguarding them? If we only look at the symbolic aspects of living culture, it may easily lead to dismissing the necessity for safeguarding, since safeguarding efforts may end up stimulating disputes between the different communities. The safeguarding of ideas and symbolic meanings is impossible and unwanted, as we then deny the dynamics of cultural processes. I shall also argue that safeguarding living culture should not be primarily concerned with (community) ownership, origins or authenticity (nor with questions of ‘beauty’ and other value judgments), but with the processes of transmitting mainly technical knowledge about how to produce living culture that is now, and will in the future be, important for the communities concerned.

References:
Zanten, Wim van (1989), Sundanese music in the Cianjurian style; Anthropological and musicological aspects of tembang Sunda. Dordecht/Providence: Foris. (With demonstration cassette tape.)