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Panel 5 Rural Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Panel #1167 Rural Intangible Cultural Heritage

Paper in panel #1167: Egyptian Rural Practices and Socio-cultural Tourism: Living Heritage and Musealization (By Mohamed Badry Kamel Basuny Amer)

Paper in panel #1167: Reconceptualising Intangible heritage: The case of the Mongolian Ger (By Xuanlin Liu)

Paper in panel #1167: Rural Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnic Tourism: Experiences of Yunnan, China (By Junjie Su)

Collective Abstract:

Rural areas is the place where rural intangible heritage is found rich and diverse, whereas vulnerable to fast social, cultural, political and economic transformations, in particular in developing and underdeveloped areas. Although the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) has been established in UNESCO and accepted by many ICH Convention signatories, it has not been consistently adopted and implemented from international level to local level without divergencies. An analysis of rural ICH is to analyse how rural traditional culture, memories and past are used by different stakeholders for current society. (Re)defining rural ICH is a way to both rethink and develop the existing concepts of cultural heritage held by national and institutional discourses. This panel, which investigates three cases in China and Egypt, will provide evidence and theoretical rethought on the making and use of the concept of ICH in developing countries where the tangible heritage discourses have been well established and the intangible heritage discourse is polemical. These three papers will present diverse and emerging uses and discourses of ICH in terms of conservation, exhibition, commodification, education and musealisation from various perspectives.

In particular, this panel will address these issues:

1. How is ICH, or intangible heritage, used in rural areas in the fields of heritage tourism, museum, cultural industries, community development and other purposes?
2. How tourists, (non)-local visitors and other stakeholders contribute to the making of ICH through their cultural practices?
3. How can tangible and intangible heritage be understood and managed in an integrated/holistic approach such as the living heritage approach?
4. Are existing tangible-centred mechanism and managerial tools still useful for rural ICH which relates to local community, tangible elements and the landscape? If not, what improvements should be made?

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage (ICH), living heritage, rural heritage, continuity, commodification, musealization, China, Egypt

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Dr. Junjie Su:

PhD (Deakin University, Australia), Associate Professor at Cultural Development Institute, Yunnan University, China, Expert Member of the International Committee on ICH of ICOMOS. Dr. Su holds M.A. in Cultural Heritage and Museology (Fudan, China) and B.S. in Cultural Heritage Conservation (XJTU, China). His research interests concern ICH, protection and use of heritage, heritage tourism, cultural industries, World Heritage, Critical Heritage Studies, Chinese heritage management.

Mohamed Badry Kamel Basuny Amer:

Mohamed Amer is HeritageForAll initiative founder. He is specialized in heritage management and marketing. In particular, he is a research and teaching assistant at GUTech Oman (affiliated to RWTH Aachen Uni.). He Holds M.A. in Heritage Conservation and Site Management from BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg and Helwan Uni. (2015), and he held internships with UNESCO Cairo and GoUNESCO. In 2016, he worked as a heritage development officer at Child Museum. Then, he worked as a heritage researcher at Ecumene Studio participating in the heritage project "SIWI".

Xuanlin Liu:

Ms Liu holds M.Phil. in Archaeology at University of Cambridge and M.S. in Sustainable Heritage at UCL, UK, and she is now a PhD Candidate in Archaeology at the University of York, UK. She worked as an Intern in Cultural Unit at Bangkok Office, UNESCO in 2018. Ms Liu's is a member of ICOMOS China and her research concerns ICH, living heritage, Critical Heritage Studies, Inner Mongolian heritage and World Heritage.

Individual Abstract:

Rural Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnic Tourism: Experiences of Yunnan, China

By Junjie Su

Abstract:

China is an active player in the international arena of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). While China is transforming from an agricultural country to an industrial country, rural heritage,

either tangible or intangible, is facing tremendous challenges and opportunities. Among Chinese provinces, Yunnan in Southwest of China can be regarded as the best case to investigate the issues of protection, use and transmission of rural heritage as Yunnan is a unique province of China because of its ethnic cultural diversity and geographic diversity. Based on literary studies and fieldworks, this paper illustrates history, cases, theories and practices in the protection and use of ICH in ethnic tourism development in the past 20 years. Yunnan has long been regarded as a “peripheral” part of China and ethnic cultures were treated as “primitive” that needs transformation. However, after China’s reform in 1978, the ethnic culture in rural areas in Yunnan has been changed into traditional and folk culture, cultural heritage (ICH, World Heritage, protected traditional villages and towns, etc) and ethnic tourism attractions. Meanwhile, several rural areas in Yunnan have evolved from a backward area into a popular tourism destination recognised home and abroad. With specific cases in terms of performing arts (dance, music, etc), handicrafts (metal, ceramics, textile, wood carving, etc), festivals and ICH related to cultural spaces (traditional villages, towns, landscapes, etc) in Yunnan, the paper will elaborate how rural ICH is transmitted, and/or re-created in a matrix of tourism commodification with participation of the local governments, entrepreneurs, local elites, community members and tourists. As well as advancing theoretical discussions in regard to authenticity, commodification and continuity, this paper also reflects on the practical strategies in commodifying rural ICH in ethnic tourism.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), ethnic minority, commodification, authenticity, continuity, Yunnan, China, rural tourism

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Egyptian Rural Practices: Living Heritage and Musealization **By Mohamed Badry Kamel Basuny Amer**

Abstract:

Rural heritage is a complicated cultural knowledge. Considering the visitors who come, to the living heritage sites, spending their spare time and at the same time, to get a piece of new knowledge in a nostalgic context, the heritage exhibition is the ideal EDUTAINMENTAL deliverable that could transmit the rural heritage knowledge using the interactive thinking methodology. The former approach creates a kind of curiosity for the visitors guaranteeing the life-long learning process. Therefore, reviewing the cultural significance of intangible cultural heritage, especially the manifestations of the rural socio-

cultural heritage practices, the research paper aims at presenting a new aspect musealization that contributes to sustaining the cultural heritage especially this kind of the material culture. The musealized spaces will contribute in particular to revive the cultural identity of the Egyptian rural communities; as well as will be spots to present, educate and safeguard the folklore.

Keywords: Rural Heritage , Musealization, Living Heritage

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Reconceptualising Intangible Heritage: The case of Mongolian Ger.

By Xuanlin Liu

Abstract:

Intangible cultural heritage has been gaining increasingly attention and is now being used to critique the tangible-dominated authorized heritage discourses. However, the emphasis on non-material discourse could lead to a dichotomy between tangible and intangible heritage and overlook the materiality in intangible heritage. This has been found in the analysis of the development of cultural heritage discourse, the professional heritage management works and people's experience in heritage tourism. In order to mitigate the dichotomy, this paper proposes a living heritage approach to investigate the making of heritage values through an understanding of people's cultural practices of the materiality with their subjective agencies and experiences.

This research uses Mongolian Ger as an example. Mongolian Ger is traditional dwellings that have predominantly located in central Asia for over three thousand years. These traditional dwellings form an essential part of pastoralism. The making craft of Mongolian Ger has been listed as national intangible cultural heritage in China in 2008. However, the Ger in recent times has been influenced by permanent grazing, tourism and modernity. The wooden material has been replaced by bricks, and the Gers has been transformed to solid structure instead of movable ones. They are now frequently used as tourism attractions and restaurants that have less original functions, which corresponds to the changes of Inner Mongolia's society.

Noting insufficient consideration on the intangible aspects of the Ger, including traditional handcraft skills of the Mongolian Ger as well as various people's use of the Ger, the research tends to redefine the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage, based on an analysis of professional and public opinions of the differences between "traditional Ger" and "modern Ger". Through observation it is seen that even though the physical environment is changing inevitably, people could still perceive the process of cultural creation in the tangibility because it can be seen as an embodiment of the living culture. In this scenario, the material creation does not only lead to culture changes but also becomes a medium that enable people to perceive and adopt culture changes. This research finally provides a living holistic thinking to explore Mongolian Ger in respect to living heritage approach, which requires balanced practices and sufficient considerations on both tangible and intangible dimensions.

Key words: Living heritage, dichotomy, materiality, intangibility, modernity, change

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