The Role of Museums in Safeguarding ICH

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ICOM Museum Definition 2007

• A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment.
Comparative Museology

• The systematic study and comparison of diverse museological forms and behavior cross-culturally

• Can contribute to the development of more culturally appropriate museological practices by helping us understand similarities and differences across cultures and how practices considered appropriate or “the best” in one time and place may not be in others
Indigenous Curation

- Indigenous models of museums can be found in traditional architecture, structures or spaces for the collection, storage, display, and protection of things people value.
- Curatorial methods are any activity behavior or body of knowledge related to the care, use, treatment, interpretation, display, and conservation of cultural property and expressions.
- Concepts of cultural heritage preservation are conceptual frameworks that support the transmission of culture through time.
Examples of indigenous curation may be found in

• Vernacular architecture
• Religious beliefs, practices, and ceremonies
• Systems of social organization and structure (e.g., kinship and ancestor worship)
• Artistic traditions and aesthetic systems
• Knowledge connected to people’s relationship to their natural environment
The word “curator” is derived from the Latin word *curare*, meaning to take care of. Traditional curators can be anyone who is responsible for safeguarding a family, group’s, or community’s cultural knowledge, practices, creations and transmitting them from one generation to the next. Examples include religious leaders, shamans, ritual specialists, artists and craftspeople.
Abbot of Ton Kaew Monastery
2009

Abbot and Dr. Paritta during meeting with field school participants
Intangible cultural heritage is:

The *practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills...as well as 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, is *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 (Article 2.1, Definitions)
Safeguarding means:

Measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission (particularly through formal and informal education) as well as revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage (Article 2.3, Definitions)
Appropriate Museology

• Is an approach to museum development and training that adapts museum practices and strategies for cultural heritage preservation to local cultural contexts and socioeconomic conditions

• It is a bottom-up, community and culture-based approach that combines local knowledge, assets and resources with professional museological technologies and practices
Pua with ancestor motif
Pua with animal and plant motifs