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# INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND SAFEGUARDING IN INDONESIA

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“Intangible cultural heritage” means “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”<sup>1</sup>. Management refers to governance, and also to administration of business concerns or public undertakings<sup>2</sup>. According to the UNESCO 2003 *Convention*, “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 non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage”<sup>3</sup>.

Safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) or living heritage has been going on since time immemorial all over the world, including in Indonesia, even before the term “intangible cultural heritage” was coined and the 2003 UNESCO *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* was adopted by the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Conference of States Members of UNESCO on 17 October 2003. I would like to describe in brief some of the traditional methodologies of management and safeguarding ICH in Indonesia prior to the ratification of the 2003 *Convention*, some of which are still applicable and still being practiced until the present day, and then relate some of the methodologies applied in general and specifically related to certain elements of ICH after Indonesia ratified the

2003 *Convention* in July 2007 and became a State Party to the *Convention* in January 2008.

Intangible Cultural Heritage, or Living Cultural Heritage, has existed in Indonesia since ancient times, when Indonesia consisted of many kingdoms and empires which interacted with the cultural heritage of other countries. Situated as it is on the intersection between two oceans, the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and two continents, Asia and Oceania, Indonesia particularly received cultural influences from the sea trade which went on among Indonesia, India, China, and the Middle East for at least the past two millennia<sup>4</sup>. The coming of Islam to Indonesia five centuries ago brought with it significant cultural influences. Three hundred years of colonial occupation brought with it further cultural influences, particularly from Europe. All of these cultural influences in their original forms did not simply penetrate or replace the culture of Indonesia, but were rather adapted or underwent acculturation, according to the social and cultural environment and creativity of Indonesia. Anthropologists have referred to this phenomenon as *Javanigseringsprocess*<sup>5</sup> or *Javanization*. After Indonesia declared its independence on 17 August 1945, management and safeguarding of the vast diversity cultural heritage existing in the 13,000 islands of the Indonesian archipelago and among the more than 500 ethnic communities which make up the Indonesian nation became the responsibility of the government and people of the Republic of Indonesia, as declared in the 1945 Constitution as amend-

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO 2003 *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, Article 2, Paragraph 1.

<sup>2</sup> Concise Oxford Dictionary.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO 2003 *Convention*, *ibid*, Article 2, Paragraph 3.

<sup>4</sup> ASEAN and Directorate for History and Archeology, *Underwater Cultural Heritage*, Jakarta: 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Pradipta, Dr. Budya, *The Arjuna of Java and of India*, Ph.D Thesis, Delhi University, 2000, unpublished.

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School children in traditional costumes from all 34 Provinces of Indonesia play angklung at Independence Day Celebrations on 17<sup>th</sup> August in Jakarta.

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ed<sup>6</sup>. Culture has mostly come under the portfolio of the Ministry of Education and Culture, apart from a decade from 2000 till 2011 when Culture was part of the portfolio of the (then) Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Provincial and Local/District Education and Culture Services have been responsible for culture in their respective areas.

During the period of kingdoms and empires, certain kinds of cultural heritage developed and were managed within the royal palaces, whereas other kinds developed and were managed among the common people. Even in those times, there were efforts to document such heritage, and to safeguard it by ensuring its regular performance and transmission to future generations. Such transmission was mostly carried out in a non-formal and informal way through traditional schools known as *sanggar* where masters would transmit their particular kind of ICH to students, in a family setting. In fact the students became like the master's family members. There were mostly no formal curricula, and students assimilated the ICH mostly by imitating, doing and living rather than by theoretical learning. Such traditional centres of ICH transmission still exist today. The author had the opportunity to study *wayang* puppetry under a master in such a traditional school for 8 years<sup>7</sup>. Such schools remain the major method of transmitting and safeguarding Indonesian *wayang* puppetry<sup>8</sup>. It is due to these safeguard-

ing efforts that even today we can enjoy many kinds of Indonesian cultural heritage which date back many centuries. Some examples include *wayang* puppetry, the documentation of which dates back at least to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>9</sup>. Indonesian kris, documented as far back as the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries<sup>10</sup>, and Saman, which goes back as far at the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

Another traditional method of transmission and safeguarding of ICH is through associations of enthusiasts of particular elements of ICH. In Java, such associations are called *paguyuban*. They were and are mostly not legal bodies, but just informal associations of like-minded people. The culture of Indonesian Kris, for example, was mostly transmitted through such associations, both in the past and in the present. ICHCAP<sup>11</sup> has referred to such organizations as "ICH Safeguarding Associations".

Regarding identification, documentation and research on ICH, which are now often referred to as "inventory" of ICH, this had also been going on since ancient times in Indonesia. Despite the ravages of time, many ancient palm leaf texts or "*rontal*"/"*lontar*" still exist. Some of the biggest collections of these ancient texts are found in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta, Gedung Kirtya in Singaraja, Bali, and in Leiden University in Netherlands. Regrettably, many of these invaluable ancient texts have been stolen or purchased illegally and taken away to other countries<sup>12</sup>. One similar situation which had

<sup>6</sup> 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia as Amended (2002), Article 32, Paragraphs (1) and (2).

<sup>7</sup> Sanggar Redi Waluyo, directed by the late Ki Kamsu Redi Wiguno, now by Sri Rahayu Setyowati.

<sup>8</sup> Inscribed as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2003, and on the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* in 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Arjuna Wiwaha, quoted in Pradipta, Dr. Budya, *ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> Haryonoguritno, Haryono, *Keris Java: Antara Misik dan Nalar*, JakartaL 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific, a UNESCO Category 2 Centre in Republic of Korea.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Muchlis Paeni reports that many texts from South Sulawesi Province which he had previously catalogued in private collections have

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Traditional School of  
Kris Craftsmanship  
(Sanggar Indonesia).

taken place in the Latin American context is the large number of Peruvian Inca artefacts and texts from the Machu Picchu heritage site taken and kept in Yale University in USA. Fortunately today more enlightened diplomacy and international instruments are making possible the return of such texts and artefacts to their countries of origin<sup>13</sup>.

Some examples of ancient inventory of now disappeared, reportedly purchased by treasure hunters from a neighbouring country.

<sup>13</sup> UNIDROIT *Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects* (Rome, 1995) is the international treaty on the subject of cultural property protection. It attempts to fill gaps of the 1970 UNESCO *Convention* (UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*) which lies at its core.

Indonesian ICH are as follows. We can find references to Indonesian wayang puppetry in the ancient text “*Arjuna Wiwaha*” from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>14</sup>. There are many references and pictures of Indonesain kris<sup>15</sup> in ancient texts with pictures, and also carved in reliefs on ancient temples<sup>16</sup>, references

<sup>14</sup> Pradipta, Dr. Budya, *The Arjuna of Java and of India*, Ph.D Thesis, Delhi University, 2000, unpublished.

<sup>15</sup> Kris is an original element of Indonesian cultural heritage in the form of a dagger of asymmetric and detailed form, containing the cultural values of tradition, social function, art, philosophy and mystique. For more than 100 years is no longer used as a functional weapon.

<sup>16</sup> Haryono Guritno, Ir. Haryono, *Keris Jawa, antara Nalar dan Mistik*, Jakarta: Indonesia Ke-bangaanku, 2005.

**The ICH we enjoy today is in many cases the result of centuries of creativity of ICH practitioners**

to Indonesian batik date from as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. References to Indonesian *angklung* are found in the chronicles of travellers during the colonial period from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and earlier<sup>17</sup>, and references to Saman Dance of Aceh in texts from as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>18</sup>. So inventory of ICH is not a new thing. However, times have changed, and these references to ICH from ancient times may no longer present an accurate picture of the safeguarding status of these ICH elements today. The 2003 Convention insists therefore, on inventory which involves community members (meaning those who are presently living) and which is updated regularly<sup>19</sup>.

Protection of ICH was achieved in ancient times by providing venues for its performance, execution, exhibition and transmission. Sometimes this took place within

<sup>17</sup> Batik Indonesia, Nomination File for the Representative List, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Centre for Research and Development of Culture, *Saman Dance*, Nomination File for the List in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> The present 2003 *Convention* compliant ICH inventory system in Indonesia prescribes update of the inventory every 2 years.

the confines of royal palaces, but also outside among the general public. ICH artists and craftspersons were supported by kingdoms in those days. Saman Dance, for example, was often transmitted in *mersah* or dormitories where young boys lived. Promotion was mostly by word of mouth, as modern media for rapid dissemination of news had not been invented in those times. Enhancement of ICH took place through a process of continuous recreation and creativity, keeping in mind certain essential standards (referred to in Java as "*pakem*"<sup>20</sup>). The ICH we enjoy today is in many cases the result of centuries of creativity of ICH practitioners. Transmission of ICH was mostly through non-formal and informal education, as by artists and ICH practitioners, and evolved along with the tastes and development of the times.

More intensive documentation was carried out during the centuries of colonization, and even more so in the post-independence era. Efforts were made by the Ministries responsible for cultural heritage to inventory the cultural heritage of Indonesia, with a view to safeguarding Indonesia's ICH<sup>21</sup>.

Ratification of the 2003 *Convention* by Indonesia, and subsequent inscription of certain elements of Indonesia's ICH on the Lists and Register established under Articles 16, 17 and 18 of the 2003 *Convention*, has obviously impacted the methodology of safeguarding ICH in general and these elements in particular. The impact of the 2003 *Convention* on governance has been elaborately described by Dr. Seong-Yong Park, Asst. Director General of ICHCAP<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Pradipta, Dr. Budya, *ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the Integrated Culture Information System of 2000, and the Culture Mapping system of 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Park, Seong-Yong, Dr., *On Intangible Cultural Heritage Governance: An Asia Pacific Context*, New-

School children learning the cultural heritage of Batik. 1.



Ratification brings with it an obligation on the part of State Parties to safeguard ICH in its territory, and in particular to inventory ICH with participation of communities, groups and individuals concerned.<sup>23</sup> More detailed measures to be executed by States Parties, including adoption of policies, establishment of competent bodies, fostering studies, adoption of legal technical and administrative measures<sup>24</sup>, and then education, awareness raising and capacity building<sup>25</sup>. These obligations are not to be taken lightly, and the State Party must report to the Intergovernmental Committee every 6 years regarding the general condition of ICH safeguarding within its territory as described in the above Articles of the *Convention*. Regarding the present condition of inscribed elements, the State Party whose elements are inscribed must report every 4 years in the case of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List and every 6 years in the case of elements inscribed on the Representative List.<sup>26</sup> Preparation of these general and specific reports is not an easy task, and must be submitted using the forms provided.

Safeguarding methodology for inscribed elements has been particularly impacted, as each nomination file is required to contain a systematic “Action Plan” to safeguarding the respective element or carry on cooperation in the case of a “Best Practice” for safeguarding ICH.<sup>27</sup> Such action plans are not intended to replace traditional methods of safeguarding, but rather to

enhance them. I would like to give examples of present safeguarding of some elements and practices of Indonesia's ICH after they were inscribed on the UNESCO lists and register.

The following elements were already recorded on inventories maintained by the (then) Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the (now) Ministry of Education and Culture. The inventory system was upgraded to comply with the 2003 *Convention* in 2009. This inventory system has been published jointly by the Ministry and UNESCO Jakarta Office<sup>28</sup>. There are presently some 4300 elements recorded on this inventory system<sup>29</sup>. In 2013 the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a system of Indonesian Cultural Heritage, based upon the UNESCO system, to inscribe elements at a national level. Presently nearly 200 elements have been inscribed.

The system for inscription of elements of Indonesian Cultural Heritage was created in view of the limit of one nomination per country per year introduced by the 2003 *Convention* Intergovernmental Committee at its 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting in 2011. Indonesia as a vast archipelago with over 500 ethnic groups and literally thousands of elements of ICH spread all over the 13000 islands of Indonesia felt the need to give recognition and encourage safeguarding of its wealth of ICH. The system is similar to the UNESCO system. The nominations are evaluated by a board of experts, and the certificates of

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castle-upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> UNESCO 2003 *Convention*, *ibid*, Article 11 Para a) and b) and Article 12.

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO 2003 *Convention*, *ibid*, Article 13

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO 2003 *Convention*, *ibid*, Article 14.

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO, *Basic Texts*. Operational Directives for the 2003 *Convention*, 2012 Edition.

<sup>27</sup> UNESCO. Forms ICH-01, ICH-02 and ICH-03.

<sup>28</sup> Centre for Research and Development of Culture, Guidebook to Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia, Jakarta: UNESCO Jakarta Office and Directorate General for Cultural Values, Arts and Film, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Marijan, Kacung, Prof. Dr. Director General for Culture, Report to the Minister for Culture and Tourism upon the Inscription of 96 elements on the List of ICH of Indonesia, National Museum Jakarta, 17 October 2014.

Traditional School of  
Wayang Puppetry  
(Sanggar).



inscription are given by the Minister of Education and Culture. 70 elements were inscribed in 2013, and 96 elements in 2014. Inscription carries with it an obligation to carry out safeguarding activities, as is the case with UNESCO inscription. Issuing of the certificates is carried out at a grand event inviting governors and heads of local governments, and ICH practitioners, artists, and community members as well as

Elementary School  
Children learning  
Angklung at Dr. Cipto  
Elementary School in  
Bandung.



national press and TV media. Such an event was held on 17 November 2014 in the National Museum in Jakarta. Such events facilitate increase in public awareness of ICH and its safeguarding.

In the case of *Indonesian Wayang*, which was inscribed as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2003, and on the Representative List in 2008, a safeguarding action plan was executed from 2005-2007. The Action Plan proposed to strengthen transmission of Wayang ICH through formal and non-formal education, but preparation of teaching materials for various styles of wayang, and assistance to selected traditional schools of wayang (*sanggar*). These teaching materials in the form of books and audio-visual materials were also used in Arts Vocational High Schools and Arts Universities teaching wayang puppetry<sup>30</sup>. Another significant measure was the introduction of Wayang Philosophy as a subject at bachelors, masters and doctoral levels at Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, the second largest university in Indonesia.

In the case of *Indonesian Kris*, which was inscribed as a Masterpiece in 2005, and on the Representative List in 2008, the Action Plan created a National Secretariat for Indonesian Kris (SNKI), which gathered together the *paguyuban* associations of Kris lovers and other stakeholders (at that time there were 15, now there are over 60<sup>31</sup>), to be responsible for sharing information and joint safeguarding efforts. The safeguarding measures included awareness rising through publication of books and magazines, meetings and internet, preparation of teaching materials, research about Kris particularly in places where little research had been

<sup>30</sup> ISI and STSI Arts Universities in Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Bandung, and Denpasar.

<sup>31</sup> Sekretariat Nasional Perkerisan Indonesia, *Congress Report*, 2011.

conducted, Kris is now taught as an area of study at ISI Surakarta Arts University.

*Indonesian Batik* was inscribed on the Representative List in 2009. In the case of Indonesian batik, many activities have been carried out by communities, groups and individuals to safeguard it. One very significant activity, which was recognized in 2009 as a Best Practice for safeguarding ICH by the Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding ICH, is *Education and Training in Batik Cultural Heritage for Students in Collaboration with the Batik Museum in Pekalongan*. This programme essentially inserted batik cultural heritage into school curricula at all levels, as local content or extracurricular activity. Many seminars and exhibitions have been held on batik, and many books have been written and published. The President of Indonesia in 2009 has declared 2 October as “National Batik Day”, resulting in a large quantum increase in awareness of and love for batik cultural heritage all over Indonesia. On National Batik Day, people of all ages all over Indonesia wear batik to their school or place of work, and there are many events celebrating batik culture. A World Batik Summit was held in Jakarta in October 2011.

*Indonesian Angklung* was inscribed on the Representative List in 2010. Safeguarding activities in relation to Indonesian angklung have included preparation and publication of teaching materials by Angklung maestro Obby Wiramihardja<sup>32</sup>, training of angklung teachers, training in making and playing angklung, seminars and concerts of angklung music, both within Indonesia and overseas. Thousands of sets of angklung have been exported all over the world, and are being played and enjoyed by people of

<sup>32</sup> Wiramihardja, Obby A.R, *Panduan Bermain Angklung Jakarta: Masyarakat Musik Angklung and Centre for Research and Development of Culture*, 2011.



all ages. Saung Angklung Udjo in Bandung holds hands-on interactive performances of angklung several times a day throughout the year, for visitors from Indonesia and from overseas.

Saman Dance, which comes from Gayo Lues District in Aceh Province, was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2011. Safeguarding measures enacted according to the safeguarding action plan include preparation of teaching materials, introduction of Saman into school curricula at various levels, as local content and extracurricular activity, increase in public performances of Saman. A simultaneous performance of Saman by a record number of 5000 participants, lead personally by the Head of Gayo Lues District, Dr. Ibnu Hasim, is scheduled for 24 November 2014 in Blankejeren, Gayo Lues, Aceh. A Saman Summit was held in 2012 in Jakarta.

Noken Multifunctional Knotted and Woven Bag Handcraft of the People of Papua was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2012. Several books and a curriculum handbook have been written and published by Noken expert Mr. Titus Pekei. A Noken Museum has been constructed in Jayapura,

Performance of Saman Dance in Blankejeren, Gayo Lues, Aceh.

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Elementary school children learning Saman cultural heritage.

Papua, and is awaiting opening. Inclusion of Noken as extracurricular activity has been tried at some schools in Papua and West Papua Provinces. Seminars and workshops have been held on Noken. 4 December has been declared “Noken Day” for the provinces of Papua and West Papua, and is celebrated annually in those two provinces.

Batik Maker in Kauman Batik Village, Pekalongan.

Management of ICH in Indonesia is carried out in collaboration between the Min-



istry of Education and Culture, Provincial and Local Culture and Education Services, and communities, groups and individuals active in relation to particular elements of ICH. Such collaboration has made possible guidance, education and development in relation to these elements. It has also made possible the organization of large scale events to stimulate public awareness of safeguarding ICH. Some examples include: *Wayang Summit* (2012); *Saman Summit* (2013); *World Wayang Puppet Carnival* (2013), *Annual Angklung Competitions*, *World Batik Summit* (2011). The Ministry also gives assistance to groups practicing cultural heritage in the form of grants for improvement of facilities. Training workshops are also organized regularly. One example is a wayang training workshop held in 2013 in collaboration with the National Wayang Secretariat (SENA WANGI) and the Indonesian Dalangs’ Union (PEPADI), two national organizations active in safeguarding Indonesian Wayang.

Indonesia has also been active in ICH on the international level. Indonesia has participated in the Intergovernmental Meetings and General Assemblies of the 2003 *Convention*, serving as a Member of the IGC from 2010 till 2014, and hosting the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IGC in Denpasar, Bali in November 2011. Indonesia also co-hosted a Sub Regional Meeting on ICH, in collaboration with ICHCAP Korea and Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park (nominated as a Best Practice), in September 2012. Speakers from Indonesia have addressed seminars, workshops and conferences on ICH in many countries, including China, Japan, Korea, Kyrgyz, Mexico and Vietnam.

In summary, it may be said that traditional methodologies for managing safeguarding ICH in Indonesia, such as traditional schools (*sanggar*) and associations (*paguyuban*) continue to play a role in safeguarding and transmission of ICH in Indo-

nesia. These efforts are now augmented by transmission of ICH in formal contexts (Arts Vocational High Schools and Arts Universities). Indonesia's ratification of the UNESCO 2003 *Convention* has positively impacted management safeguarding of ICH in Indonesia, both in general, and specifically in relation to elements inscribed on the UNESCO Lists and Register of Best Practices, particularly through the execution of Safeguarding Action Plans included in the nomination files of these elements. Public awareness of ICH and the responsibility for its safeguarding has certainly increased since Indonesia ratified the 2003 *Convention*. Examples include the national inventory system which presently has some 4300 entries, and the Indonesian Heritage Inscription, which has to date inscribed nearly 200 elements. Many seminars, symposia and workshops have been held in Indonesia in relation to ICH in general, and in relation to particular ICH elements. Manage-



Ladies making Noken knotted and woven bag handcraft in Wamena, Papua.

ment and safeguarding of ICH, in Indonesia's experience, is best carried out through partnerships between Government Provincial and Local Governments, and communities, groups and individuals responsible for particular elements of ICH. ☆

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School children learning the cultural heritage of Batik. 2.