

Views on the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in China amid the growing awareness of intangible cultural heritage

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With the development of globalization since the beginning of the 21st century, every country has been striving to show its traditional culture and art of living passed down from generation to generation as its cultural strengths. In response to this situation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005. This stimulated countries throughout the world to actively establish their global cultural identities based on their traditional and folk cultures, and many countries made significant progress over the last ten years. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which signifies the preservation of cultural identities of all countries and ethnic groups, now numbers 161 States Parties. Moreover, as of November 2014, 369 cultural practices and expressions were inscribed on the Convention's major list of intangible cultural heritage. This high number indicates that the innovative significance of the list is recognized by national governments around the world.

In light of this background, this paper will look at the history and development of activities to preserve intangible cultural heritage that countries have been engaged in with the aim of forging their cultural identities. Challenges that those countries face will be also examined. Then, China's nation-wide efforts to safeguard its intangible cultural heritage will be introduced and discussed. Furthermore, based on the past studies, this paper will reveal basic policies that the country has been following in protecting its intangible cultural heritage over the course of history.

Keywords : cultural identity, intangible cultural heritage, soft power, UNESCO, China