

What is ICH?

Each State has its own definition of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), and what constitutes ICH varies.

According to UNESCO's 2003 Convention, ICH is the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. It includes, among others, oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, rituals, festive events, traditional knowledge and practices, and traditional craftsmanship. ICH is all in all the living heritage.

It is being transmitted from generation to generation and is constantly recreated by its practitioners' communities, whereby providing the community with the sense of identity and continuity.

Workshop in Vietnam



Visit IRCI's website for more information
<http://ichdb-irci.org/>



IRCI updates information in multiple languages including Japanese, English, Vietnamese, Thai, Tamil, Singhalese, Khmer, Lao, Myanmar, Urdu and Hindi. (example: website in Tamil)

Access to IRCI

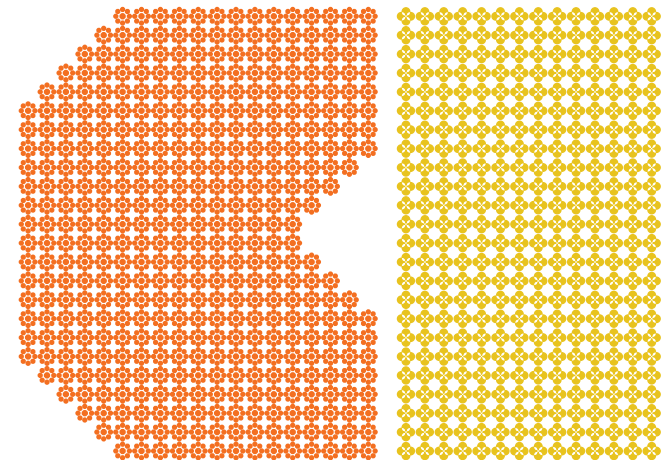
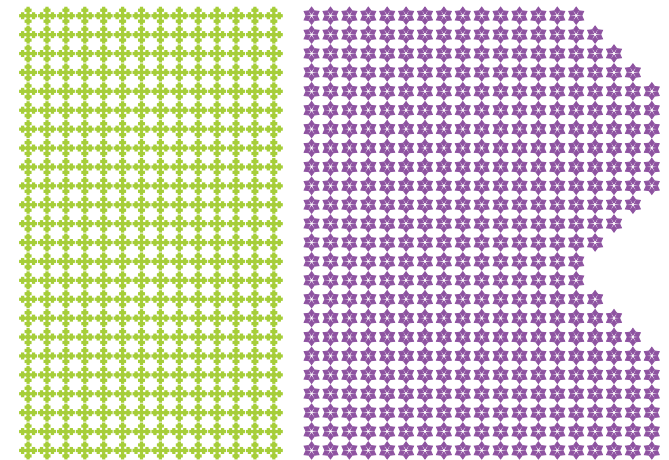


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IRCI

International Research Centre
 for Intangible Cultural Heritage
 in the Asia-Pacific Region



About IRCI

Many elements of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) are endangered in the face of increasing globalization and its corollary decreasing cultural diversity, rapid urbanization and rural exodus. In this context if safeguarding measures are not taken sufficiently, the viability of ICH is all the more threatened.

International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI), an institution belonging to the National Institutes of Cultural Heritage of Japan, was established in October, 2011 as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO, for promoting the safeguarding of ICH in the Asia-Pacific region. IRCI's objectives are to promote UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and its implementation, and to enhance the safeguarding of ICH through instigating, facilitating, and coordinating researches, in the Asia-Pacific region. To achieve these objectives, IRCI works in cooperation with universities, research institutions, museums, community representatives and other governmental and non-governmental organizations in Japan and elsewhere in the region, while assisting notably developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region in implementing effective safeguarding measures.

IRCI is currently conducting the following activities in Asia-Pacific region, which are in line with UNESCO's strategic goals and in conformity with endorsement of its Governing Board:

- Instigating research regarding the safeguarding of ICH, through organizing international forums and conferences involving academics and experts, while collecting and sharing information for the study of ICH safeguarding
- Conducting research related to the disaster risk management of ICH, such as the impact of natural disasters, and the role of ICH in the recovery process
- Facilitating research into the legal framework related to ICH safeguarding



Mapping Project is an on-going effort to enhance the research for ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region. As part of this project, IRCI held an international meeting in Bishkek in 2015, where experts discussed the issues on ICH safeguarding based on the surveys on research trends in Asia-Pacific countries.



IRCI has developed **Research Database on ICH Safeguarding** (<http://ichdb-irci.org/>) for sharing the information collected in the Mapping Project.

IRCI's Activity Focus

Instigating Research for ICH Safeguarding

Investigating ICH Safeguarding and the Risk of Natural Disasters



The frequent occurrence of natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, floods and volcanic eruptions in recent years, is a factor threatening the transmission of ICH. In the following 5 years, IRCI is going to implement a project focusing on **the impact of natural disasters on ICH**, as well as **the role of ICH for disaster preparedness and in the recovery process.**

- ← ← A traditional house in Vanuatu destroyed by Cyclone PAM
©National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan
- ← Massive tsunami caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake
©Sendai City



As a part of the **study of legal systems related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region**, IRCI held a workshop in Toyama to discuss legal framework for ICH safeguarding at the local level through the lectures by local government officers and the visits to craft studios in Takaoka City.