As we moved towards the end of the editorial phase for this volume of the Journal, one of the authors with whom we had worked intensively over the weeks of preparation responded patiently to one of the many probing questions I asked by saying, ‘Don’t apologise! It is our shared undertaking!’ He was right. This volume was indeed our mutual project and passion, as it has been, I know, for my predecessors.

Most impressive and revealing for me was seeing so much new knowledge being brought to public attention. Equally impressive was the dedication and commitment of all of our authors, for most of whom English is a foreign language. Just as important was Pamela Inder’s determination as Text Editor to ensure that the writers’ authentic voices spoke for them through these articles. She joined me in exploring the many different aspects of traditional life and culture, revealed through responses to our myriad questions, and which we hope are presented clearly in this volume.

Traditional fishing practices and the close observation of the marine environment is the subject of The Catalan Fishermen’s Traditional Knowledge of Climate and the Weather. Their highly effective traditional early warning systems are now under threat as new technologies tighten their hold on the struggling fishing industry. Their understanding of climate is based on minute observation - the colours and the clouds, the waves and currents, the movements of the fish shoals – their meanings have been identified and transmitted, in their own distinctive language, and have served Arenys’ fishermen for centuries. But for how much longer?

Preservation of lives at sea is also the subject of The Ritual of Boat Incineration on Viz. The authors examine the sociological significance of an endangered, centuries-old tradition – Komiza villagers’ annual ‘sacrifice’ of boats on a burning pyre, just below the ancient church of St. Nicholas. Invoking their patron saint, Saint Nicholas’ (Sveti Nikola) protection for the coming year, the ritual continues the cycle of birth, death and renewal reflecting their anthropomorphic concept of boats. It also offers the intriguing insight that the early December tradition of gift-giving on St. Nicholas’ day may have been the origin of the Santa Claus myth.

St. Nicholas’ statue carried through the streets of Viz parallels the Holy Week processions in the rural Philippines. While Sponsorship for Processional Images describes in meticulous detail the cycle of birth, death and resurrection depicted through elaborate tableaux of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ and the sorrow of the Virgin Mother, it is the hereditary tradition of santo-ownership amongst the Cablao ‘elite’, and the continued family sponsorship over generations, of the traditional processions underpinning the social and economic structure, which is key to this study.

In Women’s Dances from the Javanese Court the focus turns to women as the tradition-bearers of culture. As the country moved to adapt to the modern world, the author observed the traditional rulers’ struggles to keep pace with the times, making accessible their royal dances yet still communicating their sacred and symbolic value. Dances which originally celebrated important events at court have now been transformed into cultural performances. Of these the bedhaya and srimpi are deeply laden with spiritual meaning for both performers and spectators. They are slow, ritualistic group dances performed with exquisite intensity and discipline by women, to the accompaniment of choral singing and gamelan music. For some, the sheer length of these presentations is intimidating, but the author reminds us that the
aesthetic principles embodied in the movements are linked to concepts of beauty and strength, and the dancing can invoke a kind of meditative state, very healing even today.

The role of women in the transmission of cultural traditions is continued in Asian Indian Celebrations of Ethnicity. The writer highlights the miniscule amount of research that has focused on the everyday experiences of Asian Indian families who have made new lives in the United States. This paper explores the efforts of migrant Asian Indian women based in the American Mid-West to retain and transmit their indigenous culture, and to balance this with the need to integrate. Here she seeks to explain the women's strategies to retain their ethnic identity through both public and private celebrations, and the day-to-day negotiations required to balance cultural practices both within and outside the home with life in the U.S..

Hereditary practices are also to be found in Mongolia, home to one of the last remaining horse-based, nomadic cultures in the world. A few hundred Kazakhs in the Altai highlands retain the ancient tradition of hunting with female golden eagles, a practice which has taken place on the steppes of Central Asia for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The Secret History of the Mongols mentions Genghis Khan catching an eagle for his father, and Marco Polo writes of Kublai Khan going on massive hunting expeditions with eagles and falcons. Contemporary Falconry in Altai-Kazakh reminds us that although eagle falconry declined as nomads were forced onto collective farms under the former communist regime, the practice has nevertheless been maintained by a people determined to reclaim their cultural identity. The article provides enthralling insights into both training eagles and hunting with them, and can be complemented by viewing short videos, such as: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uJq0eiaP6w&feature=related

Concentrating on the same region in The Documentation of Endangered Altaic Languages, the authors have reported on the techniques of field research, the results of a comprehensive survey of these languages, and the construction of a major new tool – a Digital Archive – which should help these communities to safeguard their linguistic diversity and help others to appreciate their riches. Methodological approaches of a different kind are reported in Exhibiting Arirang, illustrating techniques appropriate for a museum display of this key component of Korean intangible heritage. The author opines here that Culture is a whole, it is fluid and changes according to context. . So was it ever going to be possible for us to create a tangible exhibition out of 'intangible Arirang', something that is best known as a form of song?

This highly pertinent question reiterates the perennial issue for museums with their mission of permanence and authenticity of experience. The answer might perhaps be found in the 2009 publication Intangible Heritage, reviewed in this volume for our readers. While the reviewer posits the brief definition of heritage as the present's use of the past in examining the multiple perspectives presented in this volume, he too asks the question Is the 'heritage' in tangible heritage the same as the 'heritage' in 'intangible heritage'? This is not merely a question of semantics, he stresses, but as is demonstrated by the historical and technical viewpoints examined, as well as the case studies presented both in the reviewed volume and in this issue of the Journal, each element has important consequences for both practitioner and audience, and all other actors in between.
As the world industrialises and modernises, it is worthwhile to recognise, comprehend and appreciate these multiple histories, cultures and societies. All of our authors have focused on the vigilance and commitment of communities, aware of the fragility of their cultural expressions and alert to the danger that they may disappear. Modernisation brings homogeneity. Many elements of traditional societies, therefore, tend to disappear, especially products and services for which there is no ready market beyond their own communities.

Unifying themes which emerge from this wide-ranging selection of articles are those of change, adaptation and evolution. Another theme is language and its invaluable role in conveying the richness of human creativity and experience. Both authors and editors are united in ensuring that the audience captures the essential ‘voice’ of the communities and practitioners involved, because it is only through this that the authenticity of human experience is affirmed.

I wish to offer my gratitude to both the Editorial Board and the Advisory Committee, my colleagues and predecessors, the IJIH secretariat and most especially, the Director General [and indeed his predecessors] for their vision and commitment to continuing the invaluable role of the Journal, as a vehicle to give voice and meaning to the traditional knowledge and practices enshrined in UNESCO’s International Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Alissandra Cummins
Editor-in-Chief
Editorial Board