

Jitka Cirklová and Václav Liška, *Traditions Through Time: The Radiant Intangible Heritage of Czech Culture,*

National Folk Museum of Korea, Seoul (2024),

ISBN 978-89-289-0428-0

ISBN SET 978-89-289-0429-7

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This book offers a profound exploration of the complex relationships between tradition and modernity, locality and globalism, and preservation and innovation – all centered around Czech intangible heritage. Through concrete case studies and scholarly analysis, it persuasively demonstrates how intangible heritage within Czech culture continues to evolve as a living practice, adapting to contemporary society while intersecting with design, tourism and digital technologies to create new opportunities.

A particularly compelling dimension of the book is its contextualization of intangible heritage within historical and political change. Czech glassmaking, for example, has withstood dramatic shifts – ranging from wartime destruction and communist-era control to the post-socialist transition – while continuing to uphold its distinctive artistic identity. Despite state oversight during the socialist period, the craft survived through formal educational institutions and gradually re-emerged through small-scale studios and experimental designs. This endurance not only preserved the high level of craftsmanship for which Czech glass is known – including its famed clarity and refined engraving techniques – but also demonstrated how heritage practices can maintain continuity amid socio-political upheaval.

Similarly, the book provides a striking example of how intangible heritage operated as a form of cultural resistance during the Nazi era. As German-style dirndls became widespread under Bavarian and Tyrolean influence, Czech designers turned to native textile traditions to reassert national identity. Josef Sochora's 1936 'Šohajka' collection, for instance, introduced mass-produced fabrics with stylized Czech folk motifs such as hearts, tulips, linden trees and doves. The fabrics were distributed through popular women's magazines and exported abroad, serving both to preserve folk-tradition aesthetics and to subtly assert cultural autonomy. In this way, intangible heritage became both a creative industry and a symbolic assertion of identity.

The authors consistently argue that intangible heritage should not be regarded as a static relic of the past, but rather as an ongoing cultural practice and a vital resource for the future. The book presents a wide range of traditions found across Czech culture – such as glassmaking, puppetry, falconry, *modrotisk* (blueprint dyeing), the *Masopust* carnival, and rites of passage – and explains how these practices are deeply embedded in communal identity. Among these, Czech glassmaking is especially highlighted as a distinctive art form that reflects

both national creativity and aesthetic refinement, skillfully combining traditional techniques with contemporary design to establish a globally recognized cultural brand.

Equally compelling are the examples of modern reinterpretation – where traditional textile patterns are integrated into contemporary fashion, and folk arts such as puppetry are transformed into innovative cultural content. These cases illustrate how Czech intangible heritage is no longer confined to the past but actively engages with present-day cultural trends, becoming a dynamic force that generates new value and relevance in today's world.

A notable strength of this book is its multifaceted analysis of how digital technologies are reshaping the transmission and reception of intangible heritage. By examining digital games, documentary films, mobile applications and virtual platforms, the authors reveal how Czech intangible heritage is being reconstructed as 'digital heritage'. The example of the Ride of the Kings (*Jízda králů*) being adapted into digital content is particularly illustrative of how heritage can be transformed into both a cultural expression and an economic resource. At the same time, the authors raise critical concerns about the risks of oversimplification and the loss of cultural context during digital mediation, offering a balanced and timely

perspective.

The chapters addressing the commodification of intangible heritage in tourism and marketing are equally insightful. Campaigns such as CzechTourism's 'Unexpected Traditions' demonstrate how heritage can be strategically employed to build national branding. Yet, the authors also highlight pressing challenges, such as the potential erosion of community agency and the selective emphasis on certain traditions over others – an issue they identify as 'selective bias'.

In conclusion, this book provides a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on Czech intangible heritage – its historical roots, current transformations and future directions. It offers valuable insights not only for scholars in heritage and folklore studies but also for practitioners working in design, tourism and cultural content development. Above all, it invites readers to reflect critically on how intangible heritage continues to carry meaning in today's rapidly changing world. In this regard, the book offers important insights into the universal challenges currently facing intangible heritage across the world, prompting a renewed questioning of its meaning and value. 🇨🇪