

Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage. Policy, Ideology and Practice in the Preservation of East Asian Traditions,
(ed.) Keith Howard, [Farnham, England and Burlington,
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Though music is recognised as an important part of the expression of the intangible cultural heritage in both the 2003 *UNESCO Intangible Heritage Convention*, as well as the designation by UNESCO of *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* inaugurated in 2001, there is still only a limited amount of research literature considering music as part of the intangible heritage, rather than within ethnomusicology and more general musical studies. This is therefore a most welcome addition to the literature on the intangible heritage.

The book builds on the wide-ranging April 2010 symposium on 'East Asian Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage' held in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music of the University of Sydney. The co-ordinator and editor, Professor Keith Howard of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, opens the book with a concise but wide-ranging and incisive chapter reviewing both the principles and practice of preserving the music of China, Korea, Taiwan and Japan as intangible heritage. Japan and Korea in particular have a long history of administrative and legislative support for indigenous musical forms: Japan's first legislation was in 1950, while the Republic of Korea's dates from 1962, and

Taiwan's from 1982. The fourth country examined, China, was later in adopting such policies but is now very actively involved in the field.

Howard points to the influence of UNESCO in developing awareness and practical measures to encourage the understanding, preservation and promotion of the intangible heritage, particularly through first the *Masterpieces* programme and then the 2003 *Convention*. He also analyses the emerging cultural heritage agenda in relation to traditional music, both generally and within the region, and later contributes a chapter on the development of what he identifies as 'conflicting agendas' in Korea, drawing in particular on Korea's State Sacrificial Rituals. This is complemented by a further Korean case study by Roald Maliangkay of the Australian National University, a detailed examination of the ancient *Paebaengi* ritual – a traditional theatrical performance in 50 parts for one performer and one musician, and which, among other things, appears to reflect Korea's shamanistic past.

Helen Rees, Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles, offers a clear and detailed account of the comparatively recent emergence

of concern with, and understanding of the intangible cultural heritage in China, and the current position there. This is complemented by a wide range of her own examples, and by case studies by Catherine Ingram, now of the International Institute of Asian Studies, Leiden, on the traditional *Kam* singing of the Guizhou region of China, and by a study of the preservation of the ethnographic and musicological traditions of the *Nuosu-Yi* mouth harp in part of the Sichuan Province of China. The fourth chapter on China, by Lauren Gorfinkel of the Universities of Macquarie and New South Wales, Sydney, examines the recent and present-day situation in China, particularly the recent efforts to use the medium of State television to create a unified approach to the extremely diverse, multi-ethnic cultures of China, with a total of around 56 recognised ethnic and cultural groups (*minzu*) totalling over 100 million people, in addition to the Han Chinese majority. Ying-fen Wang, Professor in the Graduate Institute of Musicology of the Taiwan National University, complements these accounts of mainland China with an account of the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage in Taiwan.

Finally, but by no means least, there are three chapters concerning Japan. Shino Arisawa of the Tokyo Gakugei University, and formerly of SOAS, London, where he received a PhD in ethnomusicology, explains the development of Japan's now wide-ranging legal and administrative structures for the protection and promotion of the intangible heritage, and focuses particularly on the dichotomies between what are perceived as 'classical' and 'folk' in music and in the wider intangible heritage. Jane Alaszewska, now of Bukkyo University, Kyoto, and also previously at SOAS, offers a case study around the Chichibu Night Festival in relation to the transmission of Japanese folk performing arts, and Matt Gillan of the Christian University, Tokyo, and a performer of Okinawan traditional music, reports on his extensive research on the cultural properties' legislation and distinctive regional identity of Okinawa.

This book is a model of its kind, and will be of great interest to those researching and interested in the intangible musical heritage of other regions far from these four East Asian countries. It would be good to see similar regional and comparative studies covering other parts of the world. 🇬🇧

