

Unequal Inscriptions of the Hungry Ghosts (Yulan) Festival Celebrations as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Hong Kong

SELINA CHING CHAN is Academic Vice President and Professor of Sociology at the Hong Kong Shue Yan University, 10 Wai Tsui Crescent, North Point, Hong Kong (scchan@hksyu.edu).

ABSTRACT: This paper delineates unequal inscriptions of the Yulan Festival, whether as national intangible cultural heritage (ICH) or local ICH, for different ethnic groups in Hong Kong. I argue that the authorised heritage discourse that underlies the inscription of the Yulan Festival is based on the fossilised imagination of ethnic traditions and identities. Classifying the Yulan Festival according to ethnic ritual traditions implies an assumption on the existence of a homogenous ethnic community and tradition, and seems to overlook the dynamic of ethnic tradition, as well as the hybrid and flexible nature of culture and identity. This authorised system has acknowledged and exaggerated differences between various ethnic traditions and has understated the importance of integrated practices, diversified, flexible, and hybrid practices, the changing ethnic complexity of local communities, as well as the subjective agency of individuals. A gap between what was practiced and what was institutionalised is noted, and individual agency is observed in negotiating the festival in relation to the institutionalised heritage designations.

KEYWORDS: Hungry Ghosts Festival, Yulan Festival, intangible cultural heritage (ICH), religion, authorised heritage discourse, ethnicity, identities, Hong Kong, China.

Introduction

This paper adopts a critical heritage approach to interrogate the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) inscription exercise in Hong Kong by reference to the case study of the Yulan 盂蘭 (Hungry Ghosts) Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow (Chaozhou) community since 2009. The Yulan Festival has its origin in the Yulanpen Sutra (*yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經), which recounts how one of the Buddha's disciples, Mulian 目連, found that his deceased mother was reborn and starving in the hungry ghost realm. Mulian sought help from the Buddha and managed to release his mother from suffering by offering food to the monastic community. Today, the festival is held on the seventh month of the lunar calendar and is celebrated in different Chinese communities, including mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. It is a festival for believers to pray for their ancestors and pacify the wandering ghosts of the netherworld.

The festival celebrations were mainly brought to Hong Kong by

migrants from different parts of Guangdong Province in mainland China. Elaborate celebrations were organised by the Chiu Chow people who came from the Chaoshan region – the prefecture-level cities of Chaozhou, Shantou, and Jieyang – in mainland China's eastern Guangdong Province in the last century.¹ These migrants imitated the festival celebrations in their hometowns and built temporary structures in the public space. These celebrations include offering sacrifices to ancestors and wandering ghosts in the netherworld, burning incense and joss paper, ritual chanting, opera performance, as well as distributing free rice for several days. Today, each celebration organised by the local community lasts for one to five days and costs hundreds of thousands to over a million HKD.² The amount of donations depends on grassroots mobilisation

1. Chiu Chow is a native place with a distinctive dialect and culture that has become a form of ethnic identity arising from that geographical region. On native place and ethnicity, see Honig (1992).

2. Many temples also have Yulan celebrations. They are beyond the scope of this paper.

by organisers in the local communities. These celebrations were inscribed as Hong Kong's ICH in 2019 and national ICH in 2011, under the category of "festive events."³

Existing research on ICH labelling exercises focuses on three issues. Firstly, the institutionalised inscription exercise as a heritagisation process has had an impact on identities. In mainland China, heritagisation helps the state to enhance ethnic integration, national identities, and governance (Ashiwa and Wank 2009; Blumenfield and Silverman 2013: 5; Zhu and Li 2013: 67; Zhu and Liu 2021). In Hong Kong, it is widely known that there was a so-called no cultural policy discourse within the laissez-faire ideology of the colonial era. This passive cultural governance mechanism has failed to satisfy the social craving for local heritage and identities since decolonisation (Lu 2009; Chan and Lee 2016; Chan 2021).⁴ Through organising and participating in different conservation activities of the Yulan Festival since heritagisation, various participants have negotiated their fluid identities – Chiu Chow, Hong Kong, and Chinese (Chan 2019a, 2021: 141).

Secondly, the inscription exercise has led to debate over authenticity and changing social relationships between different stakeholders (Zhu 2016, 2017). Hafstein (2018: 128) argues that the inscription exercise will lead to a change "in the relationship of the practicing subjects with themselves (through social institutions of heritage that formalise informal relations and centralise dispersed responsibilities)." In mainland China, new meanings were negotiated by the locals (Oakes 2010: 71) or reinvented for different expressions by the state in which local morality and cosmology have sometimes been ignored (Liang 2013). For instance, Dongba rituals, Dongjing music performance in Yunnan and Kunqu in Zhejiang, have new manifestations for tourists or new audiences (Wong 2009; McKhann 2010: 204; Su 2019: 249), while the transmission of traditional versions may sometimes be problematic (McKhann 2010: 204). Tensions between the government and locals in the pursuit of listing as a UNESCO World Heritage site have been observed (Zhao 2013: 88-9, 98). Heritage ownership is also negotiated between locals and migrants (Su 2019: 112). In Hong Kong, Gao (2017: 41) suggested that the government and commercial corporations have taken a supportive role in funding the religious-based communal Jiao Festival without much intervention in the event, while Chew (2009) has argued that cultural inauthenticity, commercialisation, lack of local economic development, and local disempowerment are clearly observed in tourism development. Interestingly, local residents are not entirely against such development and in fact often approve of tourism development, which attracts economic benefit and wider public participation that also makes this heritage sustainable (Chew 2009; Gao 2017). In the case of the Yulan Festival, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) started documenting and promoting the festival through seminars and tours (Chan 2019a, 2019c). A new cultural festival was also invented and organised by elites from one of the most prominent Chiu Chow ethnic associations as a kind of conservation activity (Chan 2019a).⁵ This ICH-related cultural festival is an attempt to sanitise and overwrite the old-fashioned stereotypical creepy images associated with the traditional Yulan Festival. It is also meant to promote it to young people and the wider nonreligious public (Chan 2019a). The cultural festival, however, attracts minimal grassroots participation

in Yulan celebrations organised by local communities where the greater concern is religious and communal values.

Thirdly, the inscription exercise has created an authorised heritage discourse that reveals a certified elitists' definition and value of heritage, as well as relationship to identities (Smith 2012). Its subjective, elitist, rigid, and exclusionary structure has created inequalities and competition among cultural practitioners (Hafstein 2008: 93, 128-9; Blumenfield 2018; Maags 2018a). It also undermines the dynamic nature of heritage and fluid attributes of identities (Smith 2012). In mainland China, elites such as scholars and experts have played an important role in the ICH listing process (Maags and Holbig 2016), and the four-tier policy design has created inequalities and competition among local practitioners (Maags 2018a: 128, 2018b). In Hong Kong, a prominent entrepreneur has played a significant role in shaping the institutionalisation of six unique milk tea techniques (steps) as ICH and in interpreting its implications for Hong Kong identity (Mak 2020). Similarly, elites represented by the ethnic association have also played a significant role in heritagising the Yulan Festival of the Chiu Chow people as national ICH (Chan 2015, 2018). The festival celebrations held by other ethnic groups are, however, considered only as Hong Kong's ICH, and thus a hierarchy of cultures has resulted from the inscription exercise. This paper will further investigate how this authorised heritage discourse reveals the regulation and imagination of historical and cultural narratives on ethnicity with reference to the contribution of scholars, ethnic associations, and the government. By examining two contested cases and linking the discussion to the politics of recognition, I will delineate how the state provides authorisation to certain expressions of culture and heritage through the inscription exercise. I argue that this exercise has created a system of exclusion and inclusion that overlooks the historical complexity, fluidity, and hybridity of ethnic cultures in everyday practices, the dynamics of identities, as well as the agency of locals in understanding the festival under various circumstances. This paper will problematise the official discourse of ICH by demonstrating the flexible classification adopted by locals with different interpretations in various contexts. It will investigate the gap between the official designation and the locals' classification, as well as different people's understanding of ICH in the context of postcolonial Hong Kong.

3. ICH is defined as "oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship." Intangible Cultural Heritage Office 非物質文化遺產辦事處, "What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage?", https://www.icsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/ICH/en_US/web/icho/what_is_intangible_cultural_heritage.html (accessed on 1 July 2022).

4. Neither the British government nor locals paid much attention to Hong Kong's heritage during the colonial days. Legislation in the form of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance was established in 1976, and the Antiquities and Monuments Office has been in charge of tangible heritage, but it has limited power in saving historical buildings from being demolished (Lu 2009: 260). Since decolonisation, the government has developed cultural policies relating to infrastructure buildings (e.g., the West Kowloon cultural district) and the cultural and creative industries for the purpose of cultural tourism development (Ho 2017).

5. This differs from the situation in mainland China, where the word "cultural" is used in such contexts to avoid the impression that the government is promoting superstition. In Hong Kong, where religious freedom is protected under the "one country, two systems" principle, the preference for the term cultural festival is not motivated by concerns about superstition.

This paper is based on information collected from long-term anthropological fieldwork since 2012. Observation and repeated field trips were made in more than 60 communities during festival celebrations. I and/or my assistants, who are fluent in Cantonese, have conducted more than 350 in-depth interviews at festival celebrations sites, Yulan associations, and ethnic associations. Informants include organisers of the festivals, leaders of different ethnic associations, and scholars on local cultures, who are predominantly older men. I have also made an effort to interview women organisers and younger participants. Worshippers of different genders were also interviewed. Many informants were repeatedly interviewed to facilitate a better understanding of the meanings of the festival celebrations. A long-term relationship with different informants from various Yulan organisations and ethnic associations has been established, and the researcher has consistently been invited by them to attend the celebrations and conservation activities. Many informants have also actively shared updated photos of their celebrations on social media with the researchers from time to time. In addition, newspaper reports from 1880 to 1991 on the Yulan Festival were also analysed, with extracts from a total of 985 articles on the festival having been examined with reference to the meanings and categorisation of the festival in the early days.

Inscriptions of ICH in Hong Kong: Politics of recognition

Hong Kong's ICH policy closely follows the central government's cultural policy formed after the People's Republic of China (PRC) government ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in early 2004. The convention, which took effect in Hong Kong on 7 December 2004, stipulates that the government should identify, define, and take measures to safeguard ICH with the participation of communities of NGOs. In 2005, the central government's "Directives on Enhancing the Work of Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection"⁶ stipulated the establishment of a four-tier listing system of representative items of ICH at national, provincial, municipal, and county levels (Chau 2011: 127). In the following year, an ICH unit was established by the Hong Kong government under the Hong Kong Heritage Museum of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to identify an inventory list, as well as to safeguard and promote Hong Kong's ICH (Chau 2011: 122). In Hong Kong, a two-tier listing system was adopted – the listing of ICH at the Hong Kong and national levels.

It is important to note that the ICH inscription exercise in Hong Kong began with contributions from scholars. Firstly, the ICH Advisory Committee including scholars and experts familiar with local culture was set up in July 2008 to advise the government on the territory-wide compilation of the inventory of ICH in Hong Kong. Nine members have doctorate degrees in history, anthropology, or relevant disciplines, and most of them are academics. Based on their knowledge of local culture, they are meant to advise the government on the inscription exercise and approve the inventory list. There is indeed a limit to the help they can provide through a few meetings per year, given the huge amount of data.

Secondly, the research team, comprising anthropologists and historians from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, has played a significant role in identifying Hong Kong's ICH inventory. In 2009 and 2010, the team was commissioned with conducting a survey to draw up Hong Kong's ICH inventory list.⁷ The selection criteria include:

- (1) the item is transmitted from generation to generation within particular groups or areas, reflecting its history and development in Hong Kong;
- (2) the item facilitates community relations and provides a sense of identity and continuity in the community; and
- (3) the item is compatible with international human rights instruments.⁸

To encourage engagement from local communities, the research team also prepared posters, pamphlets, and a website to attract submissions from the public with information regarding any ICH items, and has followed up with investigations (Chau 2011: 132). The list submitted by the South China Research Centre was subsequently discussed, endorsed, and approved by the ICH Advisory Committee in 2012. Among the 781 items investigated, 134 items were reported by members of the public. Five criteria were set up by the government with reference to the selection framework set by UNESCO and the PRC government: the number of practitioners, the condition of transmission, the uniqueness, historical depth, and communal relationship. It is noted that some items could not be pursued for the listing exercise because the practitioners refuse to share knowledge for case evaluation due to its commercial value. In 2014, 480 items were inscribed on Hong Kong's ICH inventory list.⁹

Interestingly, several items became inscribed as Hong Kong's ICH in 2009, before the first listing exercise was completed, including the Yulan Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community. In fact, the inscription of the festival went through an *ad hoc* procedure that began as an urgent response to the Ministry of Culture's call for applications to submit Hong Kong's ICH and national ICH applications on 17 July 2009. Below I will analyse how the listing of the Yulan Festival originated with the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community (FHKCCO).

To begin, we need to first understand the background of the Chiu Chow community and its ethnic associations in the larger historical context of Hong Kong as a migrant city. Since the beginning of the colonial regime, the government had classified locals into four groups – Punti, Hoklo, Tanka, and Hakka. Punti and Hakka are the two major groups that settled in the New Territories villages,

6. UNESCO's convention stipulates the creation of a representative list of the ICH of humanity, a list of ICH in need of urgent safeguarding designation, and national inventories of ICH (Hafstein 2008: 93).

7. The South China Research Centre was commissioned to conduct a pilot study on Hong Kong's ICH with reference to 78 provincial-level ICH items in Guangdong in 2006 (Chau 2011: 124).

8. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, "First Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Hong Kong Announced," 14 August 2017, <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201708/14/P2017081400655.htm> (accessed on 1 July 2022).

9. Intangible Cultural Heritage Office 非物質文化遺產辦事處, "ICH Inventory of Hong Kong," https://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/ICHO/en_US/web/icho/the_first_intangible_cultural_heritage_inventory_of_hong_kong.html (accessed on 1 July 2022).

with the Punti settling there as early as the tenth century while the Hakka came later (Hayes 2012: 26). Tanka and Hoklo are known as the boat people, who were originally from Guangdong and Fujian Provinces (Balfour 1970: 136; Hayes 2012: 28).¹⁰ Hoklo mainly came from northeast Guangdong and Fujian (ibid.: 27). They were from Haifeng and Lufeng Counties, which belonged to the prefecture-level city of Shantou in 1959 but were restructured to become part of the prefecture-level city of Shanwei since 1988. Many Tanka and Hoklo immigrants initially came to Hong Kong for fishery and/or maritime trade and later settled in Hong Kong. Apart from these social groups, immigrants from different parts of mainland China arrived in Hong Kong during different periods of the last century due to the Sino-Japanese War, Communist revolution, and economic hardship. The majority of these migrants came from various places in the southern part of mainland China, especially from Guangdong and Fujian Provinces. Native place, with its culture and dialect, came to define identities that are ethnic (Honig 1992). This ethnic identity was often invoked for constructing boundaries and we/them dichotomies in interaction with other social groups in the immigrant society of Hong Kong. These ethnic connections were of fundamental importance to migrants settling in Hong Kong at that time. For instance, many Chiu Chow people settled in the same neighbourhoods, living in squatter areas or tenement buildings and working in the same industry, such as many who lived in Tsim Sha Tsui, Haiphong Road, and Canton Road and worked as coolies in the Kowloon Godown in the 1930s (Sparks 1976: 33). Neighbourhoods around the Kowloon Walled City were another area where Chiu Chow squatter communities were found (ibid.). Voluntary or regional associations based on ethnicities or native places were also established by these immigrants who were “minorities” in the new city. Some associations from local Chiu Chow communities in different neighbourhoods have organised Hungry Ghosts Festival celebrations. Many other larger voluntary associations in the wider community have also provided social, economic, cultural, political, religious, and recreational services to fellow-regionals (*tongxiang* 同鄉), shared information about their native places, enhanced solidarity among them, promoted their global networks with counterparts in other parts of the world, and also acted as guardians of their cultures and traditions (Hsieh 1980; Sinn 1997). Voluntary associations became close to the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region around 1997 in preparation for Hong Kong’s reunification with mainland China. With the encouragement of the central government, they became active participants in local communal affairs and politics, as well as promoting solidarity among the fellow-regionals in developing Hong Kong. This is the context for the formation in 2001 of the FHKCCO, which includes around 43 different medium-sized Chiu Chow voluntary associations in Hong Kong. Membership exceeds 160,000, and includes two representatives from each Yulan-focused small-scale voluntary association in the various communities. Prominent members are successful businessmen in Hong Kong’s Chiu Chow ethnic associations who have investments in their hometowns as well as other parts of mainland China and Hong Kong.¹¹ Several leaders in the FHKCCO told me that officials from local governments in mainland China and the central government

have actually encouraged them to submit applications because the Yulan celebrations involve a huge number of grassroots citizens and therefore serve as a golden opportunity for reaching out during elections and to promote solidarity (Chan 2021). This is important for strengthening pro-Beijing forces, patriotism, and governance in postcolonial Hong Kong (ibid.).

Two key leaders of the prominent FHKCCO, who had been devoted participants in the festival, were very proud that the festival celebrations were eligible for cultural heritagisation. Under their leadership, the FHKCCO contracted preparation of the application dossier to a team of scholars in mainland China recommended by the cultural bureau in Chaozhou and paid the costs incurred. Arrangements were made for that team to make a brief visit to Hong Kong and collect information from a few Yulan organisers who were close to the FHKCCO. Nevertheless, local organisers and practitioners of the Yulan Festival were not involved in writing the dossier. It is important to note that the team was actually recommended by officials of the cultural bureau in Chaozhou. They were experts in submitting ICH applications in accordance with the official language and style acceptable to the Chinese government. Indeed, businessmen-scholar-government networks are important resources in this heritage application exercise. Such an elite-driven approach to heritagisation is similar to the situation in the Mainland, where Maags and Holbig (2016: 72) observed a heavy reliance on scholar-government networks.

To the FHKCCO, the submission for heritagisation was not only a means of conserving their religious culture, but also an opportunity for promoting their ethnic culture and identity, and enhancing solidarity among their ethnic community in Hong Kong. The application dossier highlighted that the festival celebration was brought to Hong Kong in the late nineteenth century by Chiu Chow migrants from mainland China. It claimed:

There are about 1.2 million people originating from Chiu Chow in Hong Kong. As they miss their families and ancestors deeply, they actively carry on their traditions (...). Song and performance stages and a sacrificial altar are set up at each venue, and the dramas are mainly in Chiu Chow style (...). Activities in relation to the Chiu Chow Yu Lan Festival are held at 60 different places in the territory.¹²

Due to urbanisation and secularisation, the scale of the festival has become smaller and the public has grown disinterested over time. Today, the organisers are mostly elderly and there is limited participation by young people (Chan 2015).

Shortly after receiving the application, the ICH unit set up a panel composed of several scholars or experts whose specialisations were in local history and culture.¹³ A set of criteria used in the standard

10. Tanka and Hoklo are constructions authorised by the colonial authority. In practice, some boat people identified themselves as water people (*shuimian ren* 水面人) and are not sure whether they are Tanka.

11. FHKCCO was founded in 2001 with the famous tycoon Li Ka-shing 李嘉誠 as the honorary chairman and wealthy entrepreneurs of Chiu Chow ethnicity as members.

12. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, “Hong Kong’s First Application for Inscription on National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage,” 28 September 2009, <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200909/28/P200909280288.htm> (accessed on 1 July 2022).

13. The author was one of the panel members.

inventory listing exercise was also provided to the scholars for reviewing the application. The panel unanimously agreed that the celebrations involve local communities, have unique features, a long history, and have become endangered. Hence, it supported the application for recognition as Hong Kong's ICH. Subsequently, the government approved the application of the "Yu Lan Ghost Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community" as Hong Kong's ICH and also supported its application for inscription onto the national ICH list. In 2011, the "Yu Lan Ghost Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community" was recognised as a national ICH (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Main altar of the Yulan festival celebration held by the Buddhist Sam Kok Mar Tou Yulan Organisation



Credit: photo taken by the author.

Interestingly, the bureaucratic procedures only allowed the panel and the officials to appraise cases with applications but not to consider other similar cultural practices in the community without applications. In fact, different celebrations of the Yulan Festival have also been conducted by various people in different communities in Hong Kong. Records show that the celebration existed as early as 1857, when it was organised by an association called Sei Wan Yu Lan Kung So (*sihuan yulan gongsuo* 四環孟蘭公所). A detailed examination of 985 articles relating to the festival found in old newspapers from 1880 to 1991 shows that organisers of the festival included wealthy merchants, temples, recreational associations, Chiu Chow people, maritime industry-related associations, and local neighbourhood communities. Wealthy merchants were the leaders who organised the celebrations in local communities in the nineteenth century. Recreational organisations such as swimming clubs were also organisers of the festival, with the aim of pacifying souls of those who died accidentally while swimming. Associations related to the maritime industry also organised the celebrations. Temples have also been active in conducting rituals during the Yulan Festival. Most ritual celebrations were conducted on land by residents of neighbourhoods, although others were performed on the sea. Some ritual celebrations have been conducted by Buddhist priests and others by Daoist priests. Occasionally, both Buddhist and Daoist priests were found together in the celebrations. Today,

the celebrations are found to be organised by temples, people in different local communities and maritime-related associations, and are held in public places, temples, and on boats at sea. Nevertheless, the Hong Kong government's administrative procedures in 2009 could not include these Yulan celebrations for consideration because none of these organisers submitted applications. In other words, the initial official listing exercise created a system of exclusion and undermined the participation of cultural and ethnic groups who had limited social and economic capital for submitting applications.

It was not until 2014 that celebrations of the Yulan Festival conducted by people other than the Chiu Chow became inscribed as Hong Kong's ICH, arising from the release of the first Hong Kong ICH inventory list. A total of 85 celebrations of the Yulan Festival held by different local communities were identified as Hong Kong's ICH.¹⁴ Clearly, all celebrations held by various groups have rich social, cultural, religious, and historical meaning. Nevertheless, Yulan celebrations held by communities other than the Chiu Chow were listed only as Hong Kong's ICH in 2014 but not as national ICH. This is largely due to administrative concern over the slim chance of success in getting another item relating to the Yulan Festival inscribed as a national ICH. More interestingly, the Chiu Chow Yulan Festival was also listed as one of 20 items in the first representative list of Hong Kong's ICH in 2017,¹⁵ largely due to its status as a national intangible cultural heritage. Inequalities and hierarchies of culture are therefore imposed by the authorised inscription exercise.

Classifying the Yulan Festival by ethnicity?

The first ICH inventory list classified the Yulan celebration according to different traditions – Chiu Chow (33), Punti (37), Hoklo (12), and Boat People (3).¹⁶ Chiu Chow tradition refers to those originally from Chaozhou in Guangdong Province. Although the list did not explain who the boat people were, it was widely believed that boat people were fishermen and maritime traders classified as Tanka and Hoklo. The three types of traditions – Chiu Chow, Punti, and Hoklo are clearly ethnic-based categories, while the boat people include two ethnic groups. This classification follows the earlier heritagisation exercise in which categorisation was based on ethnic classification. Nevertheless, the 985 entries (1880-1991) on the Yulan Festival in local

14. The actual number of Yulan celebrations held in various local communities was more than that, and some were hardly known by the public at that time (Chan 2015: 16-7).

15. The selection criteria include "(a) the item has been inscribed onto the ICH inventory of Hong Kong; (b) the item embodies local traditional culture and carries significant historical, literary, artistic, scientific, technological or arts and crafts values; (c) the item is transmitted from generation to generation and has a dynamic and living nature; (d) the item possesses the distinct traits of an ethnic group or a region, or manifests the characteristics of the local living culture as a typical example of that culture; and (e) the item exerts significant influence on the community, reinforces community ties and provides communities or groups with a sense of identity and continuity." The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, "First Representative List of Intangible (...)," op. cit.

16. Intangible Cultural Heritage Office 非物質遺產辦事處, "First Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory of Hong Kong," https://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/ICHO/documents/10969700/23828638/First_hkich_inventory_E.pdf (accessed on 1 July 2022).

newspaper archives usually reported on the location, scale, and duration of the celebrations, number of temporary mat-sheds, opera performances, and rice offerings to the public, while only occasionally on the ethnicity of the organisers. The gap between the official classification and the locals' understanding of the festival is hence observed.

According to the inventory list, each ethnic tradition has a distinctive set of rituals:

3.30.1 Boat people's tradition: The rituals of "boat people's tradition" consist of setting (opening) altar(s), chanting scriptures, feeding the water ghosts, releasing animals, and giving offerings to wandering ghosts.

3.30.2 Punti tradition: The Yu Lan Festival is known as "beating Yulan." The rituals consist of hanging up vertical banner(s), opening (setting) altar(s), inviting deities, chanting scripture, and giving offerings to wandering ghosts.

3.30.3 The rituals of Hoi Luk Fung / Hoklo tradition consist of breaking earth, inviting deities, opening (setting) altar(s), offering meals to deities, chanting scripture, afternoon offerings, releasing animals, and giving offerings to wandering ghosts.

3.30.4 The rituals of Chiu Chow tradition consist of inviting deities, chanting scripture, hanging up vertical banners, sale of blessed objects by auction, seated lectures, giving offerings to "good brothers," giving out free rice, giving offerings to wandering ghosts, and sending off deities. (The Yu Lan Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow community was inscribed on the third national list of intangible cultural heritage in China in 2011).¹⁷ The activities include burning paper offerings in the street, performing Chiu Chow operas for thanksgiving to the deities, burning effigies of the Ghost King, distributing auspicious rice, and auctioning auspicious objects.

The description of the ritual tradition by each group on the inventory list is brief and unclear. Many features listed under the same ethnic tradition are in fact not exclusively found in that particular tradition, but are shared traits in Yulan celebrations. For instance, chanting scripture, offering meals to deities, afternoon offerings, and offerings to wandering ghosts are key common components in all Yulan celebrations. Hanging up vertical banners, setting altars, and inviting deities are also commonly found in celebrations at various sites by different ethnic groups. Giving out rice is found in most Yulan celebrations and in nearly all communities across all ethnicities, although it has only been listed in the Chiu Chow tradition (Chan 2017: 67-72).

Diversity within "each tradition" is also observed in practice, and the above description seems to ignore it. For instance, ritual attributes listed under each tradition may not always appear, such as releasing animals under the boat people's tradition. Under the Chiu Chow Yulan celebration, Chiu Chow opera was listed as a required performance to the gods. In practice, the Chiu Chow organisers of the Tsim Sha Tsui Yulan Festival had both Chiu Chow opera and Cantonese opera in 1965, 1968, and 1969.¹⁸

In practice, ritual performances vary according to the financial power, preference, and interpretations of the organisers, as well as the prevailing practices of the specific religious organisation responsible for the rituals. In deciding the ritual celebrations, the preferences of the organisers and the religious organisations are important. The organisers may follow practices passed down from previous generations and/or make changes while taking economic resources, limitations, and preferences of organisers and community residents into account. Ritual practices performed by various religious organisations may change according to the amount charged, as well as preferences, practical concerns, and the creativity of the religious organisations.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, travel restrictions stopped religious organisations from getting religious specialists to Hong Kong in 2020 and 2021. Yulan organisers had no choice but to turn to local religious specialists who neither specialised in Yulan rituals nor spoke the dialects used in traditional performance. In 2021, the organiser of the Mong Kok Yulan Festival celebration even invited two religious organisations to perform both Daoist rituals in Cantonese and Buddhist rituals in Chiu Chow dialect. Indeed, classifying the Yulan Festival according to ethnic-based ritual tradition may undermine the diverse and hybrid local practices in different communities.

While the official classification seems to imply that ritual traditions are closely related to ethnicity, it is unclear whether ritual traditions are related to the ethnicities of the organisers or the religious organisations involved. For religious organisations, the majority of them follow either Buddhist or Daoist tradition.¹⁹ While some of these religious organisations were founded or managed predominantly by one ethnic group, other religious organisations include different ethnic groups.²⁰

To further enquire about the ethnic-related ritual traditions stipulated in the inventory list, we also need to first understand whether the Yulan celebrations of different ritual traditions have existed in relation to different ethnic groups and their meaning to them. In the early days, migrants from different hometowns tended to settle in the same place, as a result of which various ethnic neighbourhood communities organised celebration of the Yulan Festival with traditional cultural practices observed in their

17. Intangible Cultural Heritage Office 非物質遺產辦事處, "First Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory of Hong Kong," op. cit.

18. "尖沙咀與官涌孟蘭勝會完隆派白米給貧苦大眾" (*Jianshazui yu Guanchong yulan shenghui wan long pai baimi gei pinku dazhong*, Tsim Sha Tsui and Kwun Chong Yulan association distributed rice to poor people after the festival), *Overseas Chinese Daily News* (華僑日報), 23 August 1965; "尖沙咀官涌坊眾今起孟蘭勝會三天在佐治公園內開演潮粵兩劇" (*Jianshazui Guanchong fangzhong jin qi yulan shenghui san tian zai Zuoji gongyuan nei kaiyan Chao Yue liang ju*, Three-day Yulan Festival starts today in Tsim Sha Tsui and Kwun Chong: People will play Cantonese and Chaozhou operas in King George Park), *Overseas Chinese Daily News* (華僑日報), 17 August 1968; "各區孟蘭法會" (*Ge qu yulan fahui*, Yulan assembly of each district), *Overseas Chinese Daily News* (華僑日報), 11 September 1969.

19. For the historical development of various religious organisations in charge of the Yulan Festival celebration in Hong Kong, see Chow (2015: 69-117).

20. Many of these organisations also had religious specialists coming for short visits from Vietnam, Thailand, and China to enhance their religious knowledge at different times (ibid.). In 1970, one religious organisation invited 19 Chinese Chiu Chow religious specialists from Thailand to participate in 13 Yulan celebrations at various places in Hong Kong (ibid.: 86). Today, most of the religious organisations responsible for the Yulan ritual performance hire ritual specialists from China due to the shortage of specialists in Hong Kong.

respective hometowns in mainland China. The names of these Yulan organisations and voluntary associations contain localities, and sometimes also the organisers' ethnicity. It was also not unusual to find celebrations held by different ethnic settlements in the same district on various days within the seventh month of the lunar calendar. Competition between different ethnic groups from various native places in southern China could be seen in the way the celebrations were conducted in elaborated forms. My informants also recalled that flamboyant Yulan celebrations displayed the power, finance, and culture of the organisers from various hometowns. Competition between ethnic groups was demonstrated through their respective traditional opera performances, such as Cantonese opera, Hoklo opera, and Chiu Chow opera. Sometimes, both Cantonese and Chiu Chow opera were performed to demonstrate the financial power and cultural inclusiveness of the organisers.

Nevertheless, as urbanisation and town planning began in the 1970s, ethnic squatter settlements formed by migrant communities also gradually disappeared when the government scattered their residents in the course of demolition and subsequent redevelopment as public housing estates. The respective ethnic traditions are also changing or disappearing rapidly in response to interaction with other ethnic groups in the local community, as well as the globalisation of Hong Kong. Indeed, hybrid cultures are now found and have been observed as an important element of Hong Kong culture and identity (Fung 2004; Chan 2019b). Locals have identified with Hong Kong and developed a closer identification with Hong Kong culture and identity while their identification with their native places is less prominent. Indeed, ethnic identity is a subjective and fluid process of creation and negotiation in response to the changing socioeconomic and political context (Marcus and Fischer 1986).

More interestingly, a few of these Yulan organisers told me that some organisers or devoted helpers today are not of Chiu Chow ethnicity. Their participation is largely due to religious devotion, or because of recommendations by friends or family. All organisers highlighted that the celebrations are a kind of service to their local communities. Praying for peace, commemorating ancestors, and pacifying the wandering spirits in their local community are the most important objectives. Organisers emphasised the inclusiveness of their celebrations in which everyone is welcome to pray alongside them during the festival regardless of ethnicity. Food offerings and paper offerings of different styles are offered by worshippers from different ethnicities in all Yulan celebrations.

Today, most organisers have difficulty pinpointing distinctive ritual features of their respective Chiu Chow, Hoklo, and Punti traditions. The majority of them are not knowledgeable about the details of ritual traditions, and only a few of them know the overall flow of the rituals. However, most of the organisers are able to recognise that the deities and the offerings provided by the organising committee reflect the ethnicity/ethnicities of the organising committees. Various offerings to deities and ghosts were nostalgically narrated by organisers as styles relating to their ethnic traditions. Food offerings follow the ethnic traditions that have been passed down from the organisers of Yulan celebrations in local communities. However, diversity of food is also found

across different localities, and there is uniqueness in each celebration. For instance, Chiu Chow organisers explained that offerings to ghosts piled up in a cone two to four feet in height symbolise a mountain and the abundance of food available for lonely ghosts. However, the types of food found in the cone may vary at different celebrations sites.

Apart from the ethnic features of the festival celebrations, local organisers are in fact more enthusiastic about pinpointing the unique features and memories of Yulan celebrations in their own communities and localities in Hong Kong. Ghost stories relating to disaster memories passed down from people in the communities were recalled. For instance, haunting spirits were rumoured in a playground where the Japanese killed locals during the war. A shadow of a spirit was found in the warehouse where a coolie died while working. The specific need to appease wandering spirits who died of accidents in the neighbourhood has been repeatedly highlighted by the organisers as one of the key objectives of the festival (Chan 2015). Communal relationships embedded in the festival have also been pointed out, while the organisers also recalled how the festival marks an important occasion for people living in the community and those who returned for the gathering after moving to other districts. The unique sources of donation were explained with reference to the specific composition of communities. Financial support from specific small entrepreneurs or neighbours ("kaifong," *gaai fong* 街坊) in local communities was often mentioned to highlight the communal spirit in spite of different ethnicities.

In sum, fluid identities relating to two layers of place-memories – local place and native place – are embedded in the Yulan celebrations. Native place memories and the Chiu Chow ethnic identity are observed in traces of offering and ritual styles. Local place memories and identifications are objectified as connections to the neighbourhood communities with unique ritual practices, personal festive experience, communal spirits, and sentiments. Through celebration of the festival, two layers of place-memory and fluid identities have been negotiated by the people to maintain communal collective ties and ethnic ties under different circumstances.

Negotiating the categorisation of the Yulan Festival: Hybrid and diverse practices

This section will investigate how the classification of the Yulan Festival into different ethnic traditions has undermined diverse and hybrid practices with reference to two case studies. I argue that flexible and hybrid celebrations in local communities contest the authorised ethnic-based heritage discourse, which assumes significant ethnic differences in the celebrations and hinders the fluid integration of various cultural practices. The first case is the Yulan celebration organised by the Central 30 Houses Kaifong Yulan Association near Central District in the city centre. The ICH inventory list published in 2014 classified this celebration under the Punti tradition.

Some locals claim that the celebration was established around the 1920s. Some said it was initially organised by Hoklo people, while others said it was first organised by Chiu Chow people.

Today, the organising committee includes people from various ethnicities. The key organiser, Sai Koh, is the only Chiu Chow person in the organising committee. His family is close to elites in the FHKCCO, so the organising committee gets an annual grant that covers part of the costs of the celebration. The organising committee has also received from the FHKCCO a mini-plaque with the inscription of Chiu Chow Yulan Festival as national ICH. Sai Koh explained that all those who participate in the Yulan Festival are indeed contributing to the national ICH despite ethnic differences. He disagrees with classifying the Central 30 Houses Kaifong Yulan Association as either Punti or Chiu Chow.

Sai Koh recalled that their Yulan Festival celebrations lasted for two days and two nights 60 years ago. He remembered seeing Cantonese opera performances when he was a child, although it was said that an opera performance in the Hoklo dialect was performed one night and Cantonese opera was performed another night. In the past, the local community included coolies, rickshaw drivers, hawkers, people who worked in the printing houses, and Buddhist nuns from small nunneries in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the scale of the festival celebration has been in decline since the area has undergone transformation. Coolies, nunneries, and markets disappeared, and local residents moved to other districts as the area underwent redevelopment. Today, the area has been gentrified with pubs, chic Western restaurants, and expensive high-rise apartment buildings. The celebration is endangered and lasts only one day now.

Fieldwork conducted in 2012 and 2018 noted that Daoist priests were invited to perform rituals and chanting (Figure 2). Sai Koh explained that such arrangements resembled Punti practice. Food offerings and daily essentials were offered to the ghosts and placed on the ground in the form of banquets, which is known to be part of the Hoklo tradition (Figure 3). The ritual of beating the paper Ghost King with a long wooden stick before burning it as an offering at the end of the celebration was also observed as part of Hoklo tradition.

Figure 2. Taoist priests were chanting during the Yulan celebrations organised by the Central 30 Houses Kaifong Yulan Association in 2019



Credit: photo taken by the author.

Figure 3. Food and daily essentials were offered to the ghosts and placed on the ground in the form of banquets during the Yulan celebrations organised by the Central 30 Houses Kaifong Yulan Association in 2019



Credit: photo taken by the author.

Paper offerings found in the celebrations further revealed how hybridity of the celebrations is creatively arranged by the organiser. The celebration involved two deities formed from papier-mâché as commonly practiced by the Punti. The paper Ghost King, which was supposed to monitor the wandering spirits, had an interesting and creative design. The Ghost King had a blue face, resembling the Chiu Chow style, but there was a porcelain Guanyin placed on his chest, resembling a key feature of the Punti paper Ghost King. Sai Koh told me that this arrangement catered to the preferences of both ethnic groups – Chiu Chow and Punti – in the community.

When asked about the ethnic classification of the Central 30 Houses celebration, Sai Koh fondly recalled an incident encountered by his father, a key organiser in the 1960s. One year his father was shocked when the flower plaque to be hung at the entrance of the celebration grounds was delivered. On the plaque was written “Central 30 Chiu Chow Yulan Festival,” with the term Chiu Chow clearly incorrect. Sai Koh’s father insisted on removing the term Chiu Chow and replacing it with *gaai fong*. That was because the local community included people of various ethnicities

and the celebration was for residents of the community, including Hoklo, Chiu Chow, and Punti. To Sai Koh and the organisers, the local community's practices are far more important than the ethnicity highlighted in the authorised heritage discourse.

The celebration of the Yulan Festival by the Yulan Festival Association of Tak Yeung Hall in Fu Tei Au Village in Sheung Shui (*Soeng seoi fu dei aau dak joeng tong jyu laan sing wui* 上水虎地劫德陽堂盂蘭勝會), which was classified under the Punti tradition in the 2014 inventory list, is another interesting case. It was noted that Daoist Punti priests were hired for rituals that consist of “opening altars, feeding the water ghosts, enshrinement ceremony, chanting scripture, breaking the hell gate, sitting on the lotus, giving offerings to wandering ghosts, selecting committee representative, and sale of blessed objects by auction.”²¹

Unlike Sai Koh, who refused to have the Central 30 Houses Kaifong Yulan Association classified under a single ethnic tradition, the organisers in Sheung Shui have disagreed with the Punti classification listed in the government records and claim that their celebration should be categorised under the Chiu Chow tradition. This is because the celebration was founded by 11 villagers of Chiu Chow ethnicity who first settled there more than half a century ago. While Chiu Chow deities were always worshipped in the ritual celebrations, the celebrations attracted the participation of indigenous villagers nearby who were predominantly Punti. Hence, the Chiu Chow organisers decided to “localise” their celebrations by adding elements that were familiar to the Punti people. Instead of having Buddhist priests pray in the Chiu Chow dialect during the celebrations, Daoist priests were invited to pray in Cantonese around 2000. During the celebration, offerings of different styles traditionally used by both Chiu Chow and Punti people were found. In addition, the organiser even abandoned the “traditional” blue-faced Ghost King, which was considered to be widely adopted by the Chiu Chow people. Instead, they use the style widely used by the Punti people. For some years, however, Ghost Kings in the Punti and Chiu Chow styles took turns appearing in the celebrations. The Ghost Kings of the Chiu Chow, Hoklo, and Punti traditions were used in 2016, 2015, and 2014, respectively. In 2019, a gigantic 7.1-metre-tall Ghost King in the traditional Hakka style was used for ritual purposes in order to cater to the interests of Hakka worshippers in the local community. Meanwhile, three 3.8-metre-tall Ghost Kings of Chiu Chow, Punti, and Hoklo styles were put on display for the purpose of multiculturalism and inclusiveness (Figure 4). Japanese-style Yulan Festival (Obon) features such as lanterns of red, yellow, and white and paper umbrellas were also added next to the giant paper offerings to the Ghost King. In 2018, Korean hip-hop was performed by some young villagers as part of the entertainment during the celebration. This is significantly different from the conventional entertainment found in any other Yulan celebrations, where traditional Cantonese, Hoklo, or Chiu Chow opera are performed. Indeed, multiculturalism, hybridity, and globalisation are clearly observed in the festival, and may overshadow the “Chiu Chow ethnic tradition.”

In sum, the above two cases inform us that the celebration is ultimately for the community, which is often composed of people with various backgrounds and ethnicities, depending on the time period and district. The Yulan celebration practices of different or

multiple and even flexible ritual traditions are intended to cater to the interests of diverse communities with changing needs. It is therefore not unusual to find hybrid ritual traditions fused together in the Yulan celebrations to suit the multicultural background of people in the community.

Figure 4. Ghost Kings in different styles (Chaozhou, Punti, Hakka, Hoklo)



Credit: photo taken by Mr Kai-Kwong Choi on 21 August 2019.

Conclusion

Despite the “one country, two systems” principle, China’s central government has played a significant role in encouraging the heritagisation of the Yulan Festival by the Chiu Chow community as ICH with the aim of enhancing governance, while the Hong Kong government has taken a passive role. The successful inscription was driven by important input from elites – scholars and ethnic associations – as well as their interaction with the government. While compiling the Yulan celebrations into Hong Kong’s inventory list, the state’s bureaucratic practices, the elites in the FHKCCO, and scholars have all contributed to the construction of an authorised heritage discourse that has led to an unequal representation of heritage and inequality among cultures.

The authorised heritage discourse that underlies the inscription of the Yulan Festival is based on a fossilised imagination of ethnic traditions and identities. Classifying the Yulan Festival according to ethnic ritual traditions assumes a homogenous ethnic community and tradition and overlooks the dynamic of ethnic tradition, and the hybrid as well as flexible nature of culture and identity. In practice, ethnicity is a fluid process of construction and reconstruction, which is subject to the interpretations of individuals and negotiation in response to changing social contexts and structures (Chan 1998; Eriksen 2002; Fung 2004). Ethnic cultures are also constantly changing because of interaction with other cultures, especially in urban and globalised contexts. Nevertheless, the official system of

21. Intangible Cultural Heritage Office 非物質文化遺產辦事處, “First Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory of Hong Kong,” op. cit.

listing and hierarchical classification is drawn from imagined and homogenous ethnic and cultural traditions and is decontextualised from ever-changing and currently heterogenous and hybrid communities. This authorised system has acknowledged and exaggerated differences between various ethnic traditions and has understated the importance of integrated practices, diversified, flexible, and hybrid practices, the changing ethnic complexity of local communities, as well as the subjective agency of individuals. A gap between what was practiced and what was institutionalised is noted, and individual subjectivity is observed in negotiating the festival in relation to the institutionalised heritage designations.

Future research will be needed to further examine whether the unequal labelling of festival celebrations affects development in different local communities with respect to the resources available to them.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and would also like to thank Florence Padovani for organising this special feature.

Manuscript received on 18 July 2022. Accepted on 16 December 2022.

References

- ASHIWA, Yoshiko, and David L. WANK (eds.). 2009. *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- BALFOUR, Stephen. F. 1970. "Hong Kong Before the British: Being a Local History of the Region of Hong Kong and the New Territories before the British Occupation." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10: 134-79.
- BLUMENFIELD, Tami. 2018. "Recognition and Misrecognition: The Politics of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South China." In Christina MAAGS, and Marina SVENSSON (eds.), *Chinese Heritage in the Making: Experiences, Negotiations and Contestations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 169-94.
- BLUMENFIELD, Tami, and Helaine SILVERMAN (eds.). 2013. *Cultural Heritage Politics in China*. Cham: Springer.
- CHAN, Selina Ching 陳蓓. 1998. "Politicizing Tradition: The Identity of Indigenous Inhabitants in Hong Kong." *Ethnology* 37(1): 39-54.
- . 2015. 潮籍盂蘭勝會: 非物質文化遺產, 集體回憶與身份認同 (*Chaoji yulan shenghui: Feiwuzhi wenhua yichan, jiti huiyi yu shenfen rentong*, Chiu Chow Hungry Ghosts Festival: Collective memories, intangible cultural heritage, and identities). Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Book Co.
- . 2017. "Moral Taste: Food for Ghosts in Hong Kong's Chiu Chow Hungry Ghosts Festival." *Journal of Chinese Dietary Culture* 13(2): 51-86.
- . 2018. "Heritagizing Chiu Chow Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong." In Christina MAAGS, and Marina SVENSSON (eds.), *Chinese Heritage in the Making: Experiences, Negotiations and Contestations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 145-68.
- . 2019a. "Creepy No More: Inventing the Chiu Chow Hungry Ghosts Cultural Festival in Hong Kong." *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 6(2): 273-96.
- . 2019b. "Tea Cafés and Hong Kong Identity: Food Culture and Hybridity." *China Information* 33(3): 311-28.
- . 2019c. "宗教節日與大城市的小故事: 中環士丹頓街三十間盂蘭勝會" (*Zongjiao jieri yu da chengshi de xiao gushi: Zhonghuan shidandun jie sanshi jian yulan shenghui*, Religious festivals and local stories in a global city: Central 30 Houses Hungry Ghosts Festival celebration). In ZHENG Wan-tai 鄭宏泰, and CHOW Man-kong 周文港 (eds.), 半山電梯青雲路 (*Banshan dianti qingyun lu*, The path along the Mid-level escalator). Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Book Co. 348-80.
- . 2021. "Heritage Conservation and Ethnic Associations: The Chiu Chow Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong." In Shu-Li WANG, Michael ROWLANDS, and Yujie ZHU (eds.), *Heritage and Religion in East Asia*. London: Routledge. 124-47.
- CHAN, Yuk Wah, and Vivian Pui Yin LEE. 2016. "Postcolonial Cultural Governance: A Study of Heritage Management in Post-1997 Hong Kong." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23(3): 275-87.
- CHAU, Hing Wah. 2011. "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Hong Kong Experience." In Tik-Sang LIU (ed.), *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Local Communities in East Asia*. Hong Kong: South China Research Centre, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and Hong Kong Heritage Museum. 121-33.
- CHEW, Matthew Ming-tak. 2009. "Cultural Sustainability and Heritage Tourism: Problems in Developing Bun Festival Tourism in Hong Kong." *Journal of Sustainable Development* 2(3): 34-42.
- CHOW, Shu Kai 周樹佳. 2015. 鬼月鉤沉: 中元, 盂蘭, 餓鬼節 (*Gui yue gouchen: Zhongyuan, yulan, egui jie*, Ghost month: Zhongyuan, Yulan, Hungry Ghosts Festival). Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Book Co.
- ERIKSEN, Thomas Hylland. 2002. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.
- FUNG, Anthony. 2004. "Postcolonial Hong Kong Identity: Hybridising the Local and the National." *Social Identities* 10(3): 399-414.
- GAO, Chong. 2017. "Cheung Chau Bun Festival: Durability of an Intangible Cultural Heritage in Contemporary Hong Kong." In Khun Eng KUAH, and Zhaohui LIU (eds.), *Intangible Cultural*

Heritage in Contemporary China: The Participation of Local Communities. London: Routledge. 30-49.

HAFSTEIN, Valdimar Tr. 2008. "Intangible Heritage as a List: From Masterpieces to Representation." In Laurajane SMITH, and Natsuko AKAGAWA (eds.), *Intangible Heritage*. London: Routledge. 93-111.

———. 2018. "Intangible Heritage as a Festival; or, Folklorization Revisited." *Journal of American Folklore* 131(520): 127-49.

HAYES, James. 2012. *The Hong Kong Region 1850-1911: Institutions and Leadership in Town and Countryside*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

HO, Louis Kin Chung. 2017. "From 'No Cultural Policy' to 'Centralised Market Orientation': The Political Economy of Hong Kong Cultural Policy (1997-2015)." *Global Media and China* 2(1): 57-73.

HONIG, Emily. 1992. *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850-1980*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

HSIEH, Jiann. 1980. "Persistence and Preservation of Hakka Culture in Urban Situations: A Preliminary Study of Voluntary Associations of the Waichow Hakka in Hong Kong." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20: 34-53.

LIANG, Yongjia. 2013. "Turning Gwer Sa La Festival into Intangible Cultural Heritage: State Superscription of Popular Religion in Southwest China." *China: An International Journal* 11(2): 58-75.

LU, Tracey Lie Dan. 2009. "Heritage Conservation in Post-colonial Hong Kong." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 15(2-3): 258-72.

MAAGS, Christina. 2018a. "Creating a Race to the Top: Hierarchies and Competition within the Chinese ICH Transmitters System." In Christina MAAGS, and Marina SVENSSON (eds.), *Chinese Heritage in the Making: Experiences, Negotiations and Contestations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 121-44.

———. 2018b. "Struggles of Recognition: Adverse Effects of China's Living Human Treasures Programs." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25(8): 780-95.

MAAGS, Christina, and Heike HOLBIG. 2016. "Replicating Elite Dominance in Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding: The Role of Local Government-scholar Networks in China." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 23(1): 71-97.

MAK, Veronica Sau Wah. 2020. "The Heritagization of Milk Tea: Cultural Governance and Placemaking in Hong Kong." *Asian Anthropology* 20(1): 30-46.

MARCUS, George E., and Michael M. J. FISCHER. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

McKHANN, Charles F. 2010. "Naxi Religion in the Age of Tourism: Persistence and (Re)creation." In Tim OAKES, and Donald S. SUTTON (eds.), *Faiths on Displays: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. 183-210.

OAKES, Tim. 2010. "Alchemy of the Ancestors: Rituals of Genealogy in the Service of the Nation in Rural China." In Tim OAKES, and Donald S. SUTTON (eds.), *Faiths on Displays: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. 51-77.

SINN, Elizabeth. 1997. "Xin Xi Guxiang: A Study of Regional Associations as a Bonding Mechanism in the Chinese Diaspora. The Hong Kong Experience." *Modern Asian Studies* 31(2): 375-97.

SMITH, Laurajane. 2012. "Discourses of Heritage: Implications for Archaeological Community Practice." *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*. <https://doi.org/10.4000/nuevomundo.64148>

SPARKS, Douglas W. 1976. "The Teochiu: Ethnicity in Urban Hong Kong." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 16: 25-56.

SU, Junjie. 2019. "Understanding the Changing Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism Commodification: The Music Players' Perspective from Lijiang, China." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 17(3): 247-68.

WONG, Isabel K. F. 2009. "The Heritage of Kunqu: Preserving Music and Theatre Traditions in China." In D. Fairchild RUGGLES, and Helaine SILVERMAN (eds.), *Intangible Heritage Embodied*. Cham: Springer. 15-36.

ZHAO, Wei. 2013. "Local Versus National Interests in the Promotion and Management of a Heritage Site: A Case Study from Zhejiang Province, China." In Tami BLUMENFIELD, and Helaine SILVERMAN (eds.), *Cultural Heritage Politics in China*. Cham: Springer. 73-100.

ZHU, Yujie. 2016. "Heritage Making in Lijiang: Governance, Reconstruction and Local Naxi Life." In Christoph BRUMANN, and David BERLINER (eds.), *World Heritage on the Ground: Ethnographic Perspectives*. New York: Berghahn Books. 78-96.

———. 2017. "Authenticity and Heritage Conservation in China: Translation, Interpretation, Practices." In Katharina WEILER, and Niels GUTSCHOW (eds.), *Authenticity in Architectural Heritage Conservation: Discourses, Opinions, Experiences in Europe, South and East Asia*. Cham: Springer. 187-200.

ZHU, Yujie, and Junmin LIU. 2021. "Cultural Reproduction: Ethnic Festivals as Intangible Cultural Heritage in China." *Society and Leisure* 44(3): 415-28.

ZHU, Yujie, and Na LI. 2013. "Groping for Stones to Cross the River: Governing Heritage in Emei." In Tami BLUMENFIELD, and Helaine SILVERMAN (eds.), *Cultural Heritage Politics in China*. Cham: Springer. 55-71.