

## VII. Register of Best Safeguarding Practices

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As of November, 2014, after the 9th Session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 1 item from P.R. China was inscribed into "Register of Best Safeguarding Practices".

### 1. Strategy for training coming generations of Fujian puppetry practitioners (福建木偶戏传承人培养计划)

#### 1) Background and Rationale

- Fujian Puppetry is an outstanding representative of Chinese performing arts. It consists mainly of string-pulled puppetry and hand puppetry. This performing art started to spread in Quanzhou, Zhangzhou and the surrounding areas in the 10th Century. In the course of its history, it has not only accumulated a considerable amount of traditional plays and changqiang (i.e. arias, vocal music in Chinese opera), but also developed rich and exquisite performing techniques, a unique performing system, as well as marvellous craftsmanship in the modelling of puppets. As a result, Fujian Puppetry has become an art cherished by the people of local communities where it is an integral part of cultural life.
- Since 1980s, changes in economic production and life style; economic globalisation and a diversified cultural dissemination and, on the other hand, the highly sophisticated performing techniques that require long and painstaking practice are the reasons behind young people's reluctance to learn and inherit Fujian Puppetry.
- Given the above-mentioned situation, from 2006 communities, groups and representative bearers concerned formulated the 2008-2020 Strategy for the Training of Coming Generations of Fujian Puppetry Practitioners in order to promote the safeguarding of Fujian Puppetry transmission by focusing on the training of younger practitioners.
- The key objective of this strategy is to safeguard the transmission of Fujian Puppetry:
  - a. through systematic professional training, bringing up a new generation of puppetry practitioners and raising the self-sustainability of Fujian puppetry;

- b. through overall safeguarding, educating coming generations of puppetry practitioners and appreciators, and improving the habitat of Fujian Puppetry.

## **2) Relevant Information**

- Year of inscription in the Register : 2012
- Community(ies) and group(s):  
Quanzhou Puppetry Troupe  
Jinjiang Hand Puppetry Troupe  
Zhangzhou Puppetry Troupe  
Zhangzhou Campus of Fujian Vocational Collage of Art

- Activities :  

This strategy is a response to the puppetry holders' desire and relies on the common participation of governments, communities, groups, schools and individuals. The success of this strategy is based on the common people's interest, on the government's financial assistance and the enthusiasm of communities, groups and individuals.
- a. The process of discussion and preparation: 2006-2008  

The development and implementation of this strategy was fostered by the joint appeals of professional puppetry troupes, bearers and insightful individuals, as well as the positive reaction from common people and educational institutions.
- b. The process of implementation: 2008-2010
  - In 2009, Jinjiang Hand Puppetry Troupe enrolled 57 students and sent them to study at Shanghai Academy of Theatre; in 2010, Quanzhou Puppetry Troupe enrolled 60 students and sent them to study at Quanzhou Art School, Zhangzhou Puppetry Troupe enrolled 60 students and sent them to study at Fujian Vocational Art College; in 2008, Zhangzhou Puppetry Troupe trained 11 apprentices in their troupe, of these 7 had already become professional performers of the troupe; representative bearers such as Zhuang Chenhua, Li Bofen (passed away in 2012), Yan Sarong and Chen Zhijie participated in the teaching programmes and troupe trainings mentioned above;
  - Quanzhou Puppetry Troupe, Zhangzhou Puppetry Troupe and Jinjiang Hand Puppetry Troupe, with the active support and help of related schools and kindergartens, annually conducted the "100 Puppetry Shows on Campus" activity to cultivate the interest of young students and children in puppetry; every year, about 1000 shows are offered by more than 10 amateur puppetry troupes – for instance, under the direction of representative bearers, for several years the Children's Puppetry Troupe of Xiangkou Primary School (in Xiangcheng District, Zhangzhou City) have written and performed by themselves more than

70 shows, performing 50 times annually. The activities mentioned above have played a very significant role in the popularization of puppetry, in the raising of awareness and appreciation among the people of local communities. As a result, when enrolling new students of puppetry, the number of those signing up has been increasing enormously.

- Representative bearers together with personnel from the communities concerned, collected and collated traditional repertoires – such as Mu Lian Quan Bu (a puppetry series about Mu Lian, the boy who saves his mother in a tale adapted from a Buddhist epic) and Luo Long Bu (3 volumes, puppetry series of classical Quanzhou puppetry) –, wrote and published academic works – such as Basic Wire Gauge Image of Puppetry, Musical Qupai-Standards of Puppetry, Quanzhou String-Pulled Puppetry, and Southern Style (Nanpai) Glove Puppetry. They also wrote and published popular reading materials such as Quanzhou Puppetry Art, Jinjiang Hand Puppetry, and Universe in Hand – Marvellous Puppetry. Their works have been beneficial to the creation of better conditions for the teaching and dissemination of puppetry.

### **3) Transmitters**

- Communities in Quanzhou, Zhangzhou and Jinjiang, middle schools and primary schools, students of middle schools, primary schools and kindergarten, and Fujian Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Centre.
- Transmitters are Xu Zhuchu, Huang Yiluo, Zhuang Chenhua, Xia Rongfeng, Chen Zhijie, etc.

### **4) Safeguarding Measures**

Fujian Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Centre coordinates the parties concerned, promoting together with them the transmission and development of Fujian Puppetry by:

- Bringing up coming generations of puppetry practitioners by means of school education, cultivation of apprentices, and troupe training;
- Promoting the activity of “Puppetry on Campus, Puppetry in Community”, thus popularizing knowledge of puppetry and raising community awareness about puppetry, as well as communities’ ability to appreciate it;
- Compiling teaching material and popular reading material on puppetry, producing video and audio on puppetry so as to facilitate its teaching and dissemination;
- Completing the safeguarding mechanism of representative bearers by encouraging and supporting bearers to carry out activities;

- Setting up puppetry performing venues, training institutes and exhibition halls thus providing better conditions for puppetry demonstrations, training and dissemination, and facilitating the participation of the public;
- Developing regional and international cooperation, and increasing artistic exchange;
- Establishing research and information centres so as to enhance research on the puppetry performing art and the art of puppet modelling, thus providing theoretical support to puppetry.

#### **5 ) Information Resource**

- <http://www.ihchina.cn/show/feiyiweb/index.html>
- [http://www.qzwb.com/mnwhw/content/2011-12/08/content\\_3861139\\_2.htm](http://www.qzwb.com/mnwhw/content/2011-12/08/content_3861139_2.htm)
- <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&Art18=00624>