

## V. Living Human Treasures System (LHTS)

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### 1. Title

Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan (National Living Treasures Award)

### 2. Year of establishment

1992

### 3. Objectives

- 1) To acknowledge the importance of traditional folk artist as singular conduit between skills of the past and the future.
- 2) To revitalize a community's artistic tradition thereby protecting a valuable facet of Philippine culture.
- 3) To provide mechanisms for identifying and assisting qualified traditional folk artists to transfer their skills to the community.
- 4) To create opportunities for popularizing their works locally and internationally.

### 4. Legal provisions

**Republic Act No. 7355**, An Act Providing for the Recognition of National Living Treasures, otherwise known as the *Manlilikha ng Bayan*, and the Promotion and Development of Traditional Folk Arts, providing Funds therefore, and for Other Purposes.

**Republic Act No. 7356**, An Act Creating the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Establishing a National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts, and for Other Purposes. R.A. 7356 was signed into law on April 3, 1992.

As the national coordinating body for the culture and arts programs of the country, the NCCA has the mandated function to “formulate and implement policies that shall conserve and promote the nation’s historical and cultural heritage,” “extend recognition of artistic achievements through awards, grants and services to artists and cultural groups which contribute significantly to the Filipino’s cultural legacy” and “preserve and integrate traditional culture and its various creative expressions as a dynamic part of the national cultural mainstream.”

As administrator of the NEFCA, the NCCA provides grants for projects on the safeguarding of intangible heritage under its Conservation of Cultural Heritage program.

**Executive Order No. 236**, Establishing the Honors Code of the Philippines to Create an Order of Precedence of Honors Conferred and for Other Purposes. E.O. 236 was signed on September 19, 2003.

Civilian honors that have been and will be conferred by the Republic of the Philippines are hereby officially ranked by Order of Precedence, to emphasize the relative value, importance and seniority, as well as to enhance the prestige, of such Honors. The National Living Treasures Award is fourth in precedence along with the Order of National Artists, Order of National Scientists and Order of National Social Scientists.

**Republic Act No. 10066**, An Act Providing for the Protection and Conservation of the National Cultural Heritage, Strengthening the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and its Affiliated Cultural Agencies, and for Other Purposes. R.A. 10066 was signed into law on March 26, 2010.

The works of the National Living Treasure shall be considered Important Cultural Property, unless declared otherwise by the pertinent cultural agency. This provision shall protect a cultural property against exportation. Further, it shall be included in the Philippine Registry of Cultural Property.

## **5. Identification and designation process, etc.**

- 1) An Ad Hoc Panel of Experts will be convened for the selection of the awardees, using the criteria and qualifications cited in the law and the Rules and Regulations on the Selection of the National Living Treasure.
- 2) The Ad Hoc Panel of Experts shall constitute from among themselves an Ad Hoc Search Committee, Ad Hoc Screening Committee and Ad Hoc Panel of Reviewers to search, evaluate and screen candidates.
- 3) The Ad Hoc Search Committee shall be deployed to the various parts of the country, after determining the priority areas, to conduct a thorough search and documentation of candidates for the awards.
- 4) The Ad Hoc Screening Committee shall screen and recommend nominees for the award to the Ad Hoc Panel of Reviewers.
- 5) The Ad Hoc Panel of Reviewers shall review the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Screening Committee and evaluate their qualifications.
- 6) The National Living Treasures Committee shall submit to the NCCA the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Panel of Reviewers for appropriate action.
- 7) The names of the awardees approved by the NCCA Board shall be submitted to the President of the Philippines for proclamation.
- 8) The awardee shall forthwith be notified of the award.

9) The title of National Living Treasure shall be formally presented to the awardee by the President of the Philippines at appropriate public ceremonies in Metro Manila.

#### **6. The commission of experts**

The National Living Treasures Committee was created by the NCCA to make policy recommendations, implement plans and programs and conduct the search and selection of potential awardees.

To conduct a thorough search and ensure a fair selection and careful review of the potential awardees, the National Living Treasures Committee shall be assisted by an Ad Hoc Panel of Experts consisting of experts in the traditional folk arts categories.

#### **7. Criteria selection**

To become a National Living Treasure, the candidate must possess the following qualifications:

- 1) The nominee is an inhabitant of an indigenous/ traditional cultural community anywhere in the Philippines that practice indigenous customs, beliefs, rituals and traditions and/or has syncretized whatever external elements that have influenced it.
- 2) The nominee must have engaged in a folk art tradition that has been in existence and documented for at least 50 years.
- 3) The nominee must have consistently performed or produced over a significant period, works of superior and distinctive quality.
- 4) The nominee must possess a mastery of the tools and materials needed by the art, and must have an established reputation in the art as master and maker of works of extraordinary technical quality.
- 5) The nominee must have passed on and/or will pass on to other members of the community their skills in the folk art for which the community is traditionally known.

#### **8. Number of nominees**

There is no limit to the number of traditional artists who may be nominated. The search for nominees is a continuing process throughout the year. Nominations are received from different sources. A Search Committee checks out the nominees discretely. But the selection process takes place every two years or so, depending on the situation. This is also done very discretely without the nominee knowing that he is being considered for an award. Neither is the community around him know what is going on.

#### **9. Rewards for appointees**

- 1) Per RA 7355:
  - The awardee shall receive a medal.
  - An initial grant of One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) and Ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) a month thereafter for life shall be given.

- 2) Additional benefits and funeral assistance per NCCA Board Resolution No. 2003-209:

Additional Fourteen thousand pesos (P14,000.00) as personal allowance.

Medical and hospitalization benefits to the awardee shall be authorized to

- the maximum cumulative amount of Seven hundred fifty thousand pesos (P750,000.00) annually.
- The NCCA shall appropriate funds for the holding of appropriate
- ceremonies to honor the passing of a National Living Treasure. The ceremony shall observe the traditional death and burial practices followed by the community of the awardee.
- Additional monetary assistance may be extended by the NCCA if found appropriate.
- A marker shall be installed in the burial site of the awardee.

- 3) A Grants Program for the National Living Treasure has been established to consider other projects the awardee could undertake to further safeguard, document and promote their folk art tradition, exceptional skills and know-how, with funding assistance from the NCCA.

Since transfer of skills through apprenticeship and training is already embodied in RA 7355 under the duties and responsibilities of awardees, corollary activities that would complement the awardees' apprenticeship/training program shall be considered.

#### **10. Duties of appointees**

It becomes the responsibility of the awardee to undertake the following:

- 1) Transfer the skills of his/her traditional folk art to the younger generation through apprenticeship and such other training methods as are found to be effective.
- 2) To cooperate with the implementing agency in the promotion and propagation of his/her traditional folk arts.
- 3) To donate to the National Museum a sample, copy or documentation of his/her work.

#### **11. Cancellation of appointment**

There is no provision in the law that cancels the title of a proclaimed "National Living Treasure". However, an awardee who refuses to comply with his/her duties and responsibilities despite due notice shall have his/her monthly grant, personal allowance, and other benefits forfeited by the NCCA.

#### **12. Training**

Awardees are encouraged to establish their own *Manlilikha ng Bayan* Center in his/her community for his/her training/ apprenticeship program using

the P10,000.00 monthly grant he/she receives from the government. The set up of the training program is non-formal.

**13. Copyright**

Section 7, item (d) of RA 7355 states that the NCCA shall undertake measures to protect the intellectual/ cultural property rights of the awardees.