

## Overview

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The Field Survey Project on the Traditional Tug-of-War in South East Asia was successfully completed on April 2013. The Project was funded by Dangjin City and initiated in January of 2013 by the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (IHCAP). The purpose of the project was data collection on tug-of-war, a seasonal custom from agricultural societies in the Asia-Pacific region, protection of traditional tug-of-war's, and to create the basis for comparative research and transmission of the custom.

Tug-of-war is a cultural phenomenon found worldwide. In Asia, tug-of-war has been a custom deeply embedded in rice cultivation and is therefore found largely in agricultural societies in East Asia and South East Asia. Generally tug-of-war was performed as a prayer for rain or to predict the bounty of the upcoming harvest and has common features worldwide in keeping with climate and environment. However differences arise with the distinct and unique characteristic, and the creativity of the region, which makes tug-of-war a worthwhile subject of research as Asia's joint heritage.

In addition, the practice of traditional tug-of-war in the respective countries has died out prior to its systematic research due to urbanization and globalization. Therefore it is necessary to perform in depth research to prevent the end of traditional tug-of-war. The lack of governmental awareness on this issue means there are no plans for tug-of-war protection or its preservation. In such an environment, it is imperative to research the distribution and collect baseline data of traditional tug-of-war in South East Asia. The Project will accomplish what is required thereby helping realize the urgency of preservation and construct concrete methods for preservation.

There is also a distinct lack of academic research information on tug-of-war outside of Korea for students and scholars researching tug-of-war as seasonal custom and community game. The expectation of the project is to provide the baseline data required for invigoration of traditional tug-of-war research.

In tandem with the trend, Dangjin City has made significant efforts to preserve the tug-of-war of the region. In Dangjin City, tug-of-war has evolved with the city throughout its 500 year history to become the city's intangible cultural heritage. Efforts for preservation include annual tug-of-war festivals and hosting of global conferences. Special measures are taken to establish the foundation that aids the transmission of the intangible cultural

heritage that is tug-of-war, amass traditional information, research, and etc. while attempting to preserve and transmit tradition while simultaneously planning for the success of the festivals. Furthermore Dangjin city actively collaborates with other Asian countries to further research of traditional tug-of-war.

As part of such efforts, Dangjin city and ICHCAP proposed conducting a field survey project on the traditional tug-of-war in South East Asia. The Project formed the basis for the interchange of culture and information, established international collaborative research between institutes and researchers, and formed the framework for comparative research of various tug-of-war cultures. Furthermore, the Project hoped to catalyze a renaissance of tug-of-war by utilizing collaborative efforts for the project and to reaffirm the need for preservation and research for the tug-of-war culture.

Below is an outline of the proposed Project.

1. Collection and Analysis of Existing Traditional Tug-of-War Data
  - A. Investigate distribution of traditional tug-of-war and baseline data
  - B. Collect existing traditional tug-of-war literature
  
2. Investigate Present-Condition of Traditional Tug-of-War
  - A. Inspector: Local Organization
  - B. Content
    - i. Identification of traditional tug-of-war, current state of transmission and characteristics, persons concerned with preservation, preservation measures, related formalities and rituals, related organizations, institutes, and etc., situation survey of each country (refer to attached survey), collect existing literature and audio-visual data.
    - ii. Interview persons involved in preservation and transmission of traditional tug-of-war
    - iii. Submission of final report: End of March
  
3. Final Report Preparation
  - A. Duration: April (entire month)
  - B. Author: site survey team
  - C. Method: Data collection using internet resources and criterion-specific surveys
  - D. Report Publication: publish collection of important materials

ICHCAP established plans for the Project and from January 2013 made written agreements with intangible cultural heritage centers of various countries, prior to the

conclusion of Project collaboration agreements. The ICHCAP formed a guideline to enable systematic and unified investigation worldwide and developed and delivered situation questionnaire to enhance the quality and quantity of the investigation (Refer to attachment).

### **Composition of Site Field Research Team**

ICHCAP concluded agreements with ICH institutions in Vietnam, Philippines, and Cambodia. The institutes in the respective countries formed field research teams consisting of experts and researchers in intangible cultural heritage. A plan was formed for data collection, site visits, and report preparation.

The field research team collected existing information and materials related to traditional tug-of-war, develop an understanding of traditional tug-of-war distribution, and research and analyze baseline data. Site visits to gather first hand observation of traditional tug-of-war and recorded interviews with persons related to preservation and transmission were conducted. Local institutes submitted an interim report and a final report detailing the result of situation surveys and collected literature and audio-visual materials. These reports were drawn up with reference to the questionnaire distributed by the ICHCAP.