

Serial Academic Webinars

Cultural Transmission against Collective Amnesia: Bodies and Things in Heritage Practices

Second Session: Transmission of Things

Date: 20 February 2021 (Sat)

9:00 – 9:20 UTC (18:00 – 18:20 JST)

Introduction

9:20 – 9:50 UTC (18:20 – 18:50 JST)

Reclaiming a Wooden Crate as Afro-Peruvian Musical Heritage

Aromica Bhattacharya (PROMPERÚ India Office, India)

The *cajon* was fashioned out of a simple wooden crate by African slaves taken to Peru in 1527. Adapting to an inherently disadvantageous socio-political position, the Afro-Peruvian community came to life with the ingenious invention of the now-famous percussion instrument. This paper analyses the *cajon* as a thing in cultural transmission, placed in the intersection of race and collective history, and as a story of recuperation of identity and revival of culture of a community steeped in systematic invisibility. Recognised as cultural heritage of Peru, and a “Instrument of Peru” for the Americas, I seek out the “afro” lost to collective amnesia.

Ms. Aromica Bhattacharya is a researcher in Latin American Studies and a Spanish linguist. Her thesis analysing role of the *cajon* as a subaltern voice of the Afro-Peruvian community gained her a M.Phil. degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi in 2019. Professionally, she looks after the promotion of Peru as a tourist destination in India.

9:50 – 10:20 UTC (18:50 – 19:20 JST)

Inheritance of embroidery techniques among Miao women: Case Studies from the Guizhou Province, China

Wakana Sato (Niigata University of International and Information Studies, Japan)

This presentation explores the inheritance of the embroidery techniques used in their ethnic costumes among the Miao women in southwest China, since the 1990s. As is evident from the recent history, many men and women in rural China have moved to the coastal regions in their productive years to work as migrant laborers. Almost simultaneously, the Miao women began receiving compulsory education for nine years, before they could join the other migrant laborers. Consequently, these young women neither learnt costume-making skills, nor made their costumes. Instead, some women acquired the embroidery techniques during their pregnancy by learning it from their mothers or neighbors. Additionally, new digital technology, such as embroidery machines, also assisted them with stitching. Furthermore, the ethnic Han and the other sub-groups of Miao women also took on embroidery as part-

time jobs. This presentation thus explores how the Miao women have inherited their embroidery techniques since the 1990s, with emphasis on their embroidery skills.

Dr. Wakana Sato is a researcher in Niigata University of International and Information Studies. Her recent interests are social relationships created by Miao's ethnic costumes and embroidery techniques in southwest China, and exhibitions of ethnic costumes in Japan and China. Her publications include *Women Living with Their Costumes: The Material Culture and Mother-daughter Relationships of the Miao* (in Japanese, Kyoto University Press, 2020), and "Sympathetic Relationships between Miao Mothers and Daughters as Mediated by Ethnic Costumes: Case Studies from Guizhou Province, China" in *Déjà Lu* (2017).

10:20 – 10:50 UTC (19:20 – 19:50 JST)

Masks and Costumes in the Transmission of Balinese Performing Arts

Yukako Yoshida (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan)

Although a performance is an “intangible” and temporary event that disappears when the performance is completed, items—such as masks and costumes—are relatively stable entities that remain visible and tangible even after the performance. In this lecture, I will discuss how masks and costumes play crucial roles in the transmission of Balinese performing arts. Because they are repeatedly used, inherited from one generation to another, and duplicated, those items not only serve as indexes of past performances, but also motivate people to perform with these items, guide their performance, and further spread the arts. However, items are sometimes broken, stolen, or forgotten. I will also discuss how these unstable or unreliable qualities of items provide unique phenomena in the transmission of the arts.

Dr. Yukako Yoshida is a researcher in cultural anthropology on dance and drama, and material culture studies. Her recent interests are Balinese performing arts and performing objects. Her publications include *The Anthropology of Balinese Masked Dance Drama: A Performance Interwoven by Human and Non-Human Agency* (in Japanese, Fukyo-sha, 2016), and “Masks as Performers: Topeng, a Balinese Masked Dance Drama” (In I. Tokoro and K. Kawai (eds.) *An Anthropology of Things*, Kyoto University Press & Trans Pacific Press, 2018).

10:50 – 11:20 UTC (19:50 – 20:20 JST)

General Discussion

11:20 – 11:25 UTC (20:20 – 20:25 JST)

Closure