



Monthly Commentary

September 2005, Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP) published an article, praising the Chinese government for the establishment of Cultural Heritage Day (which is set for the second Saturday of every June). This year on June 13th, Cultural Heritage Day celebrates its fourth year.

During last year's Cultural Heritage Day, CHP organized a group of 180 volunteers in an investigative activity focused on ten areas of Old Beijing's "Historical Cultural Protection Areas", interviewing nearly 600 residents. Of those who were asked, "Who has the most influence on cultural protection?" 73% of respondents said, "the government," 20% responded saying, "the people," and 3% of respondents replied, "the media."

Now, a year later, will these responses have changed? We look forward to finding out.

In this issue of Heritage Update, an essay titled "The People Are the Rightful Owners of Cultural Heritage" re-emphasizes that cultural heritage belongs to local residents. Local residents ought to treasure their cultural heritage and feel a sense of responsibility for its protection. The mission of CHP is to help local communities to protect their own cultural heritage.

In the view of CHP, the media has the most influential voice and, thus, has worked with the media on issues such as Kashgar, Qianmen, or Ke Yuan. Recently, we have seen news media such as The New York Times and the China Daily gain greater influence on issues related to cultural preservation.

At the same time, our Ethnic Minority Cultural Revitalization project in Congjiang has begun its initial fieldwork, producing important research.

Established in 2003 as registered non-governmental organization in Beijing, CHP passed the 2008 inspection last month. The audit report is available for viewing.

Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center

Articles

The people are the rightful owners of cultural heritage

Recently during a speech at the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Director-General of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), Mr. Shan Jixiang, clearly stated that: "The people are the rightful owners of cultural heritage. Their active participation and support are the material strength on which the existence and development of cultural heritage depends. They are the hope and the future."

We believe that cultural heritage belongs to the local people of a place, and likewise they should value and be aware of the importance of cultural heritage protection. Our goal is to help community residents protect their culture heritage.

we also believe the government must continue to encourage this idea. This requires recognizing that cultural heritage protection is one of a citizen's most basic cultural rights, and making sure the legal system allows local people exercise their right to protect their cultural heritage.

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Project Updates

Ethnic Minority Cultural Revitalization

Cong Jiang Archive Project Completes Its First Field Investigation

From May 4th to 8th , CHP's Cong Jiang Archive Project officer traveled with officials from UNESCO, UNFAO, and the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund to Guiyang and Cong Jiang County in Guizhou. From May 9th to the 18th , the director traveled by herself to continue carrying out investigations, research, and hold discussions and visit with the local people.

The results of the investigations are as follows:

The Guizhou Province Private Hmong-Xiu Museum possesses important information that is valuable to the Project.

Pan Laoxian, the singer/ director of the performance troupe, told our project officer that the Dong minority has over three hundred songs that they regularly perform strictly from memory.

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Media mobilization

【The New York Times】 [To Protect an Ancient City, China Moves to Raze It](#)

【The Time Weekly】 [SOHO China Qianmen Project Falls Through](#)

【China Times】 [Qianmen Project Halts, Next Targe of Pan Shiyi Reveals](#)

【Oriental Outlook】 [Beijing's 'Secret Garden'](#)

【CHINA DAILY】 [Now Here, Gone Tomorrow](#)

【China Radio International】 [The Greater Great Wall](#)