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Department of Culture
Ministry of Home & Cultural Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan



Message from the Director

At the core of Bhutanese life lies a multifaceted intangible cultural heritage (ICH) generated from the living experiences of many generations of Bhutanese people. This heritage has evolved, been maintained and then passed down to successive generations over many centuries. Although it may include some elements that are common with those of other societies in the region, due to the threefold influence of physical landscape, way of life and spiritual traditions rooted in both Buddhism and pre-Buddhist culture, the Bhutanese ICH appears in many ways unique in its richness and vibrancy. Such an invaluable cultural resource compels comprehensive research and documentation to ensure its preservation for future generations in the face of the ever-increasing (if inevitable) pressures of change.

Thus, in line with the policy of cultural preservation and promotion, the Research and Media Division, National Library and Archives has brought out this comprehensive and timely book on the ICH of Bhutan with the generous funding support of the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region, under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP), Republic of Korea.

The book includes descriptions of different elements of Bhutanese intangible culture under five chapters, and is the result both of the unfailing support of ICHCAP and of the sterling efforts by the respective researchers, who are to be congratulated for their valuable contribution towards preservation of our rich cultural heritage.

Learning, studying, promoting and transmitting the Bhutanese culture, and its essence — the intangible cultural heritage — is a sublime obligation for each and every Bhutanese today. This book will not only serve as a basic manual for the study of the ICH of Bhutan for the future generations, but also inspire them to renew and share their awareness of (and engagement in) the research of our culture and traditions. Many of our students, I hope will thereby enjoy carrying on in-depth research on all aspects of this intangible cultural heritage.

I sincerely hope that this important publication in cultural studies will play a major part in invoking wider enthusiasm among the younger generations and appreciate their values with respect and pride. I wish the readers joyful reading!

Rinzin Penjore

Director

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