

which are rich in ethnic cultural heritage, and museums featuring the cultures of half of China's ethnic minorities have been opened. From 2006 to 2009 the state set aside 1.973 billion yuan as a special subsidy to enable free access to museums and memorial halls in the ethnic minority areas.

2. Timely rescue and protection measures have been taken on behalf of the intangible cultural heritage of the ethnic minorities.

Since the founding of the People's Republic, governments at all levels have given priority to rescuing the intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities. In 2003 a project was launched to ensure timely rescue and protection of endangered intangible cultural heritage, including those of the ethnic minorities. The objective is to ensure the ongoing diversity of Chinese society. From 2002 to 2009, the central government provided 386 million yuan for preserving items of intangible heritage, a quarter of which was applied in ethnic minority areas. Since 2006, the second Saturday of June has been celebrated every year as China's "Day of Cultural Heritage."

By 2010, among the 28 Chinese items listed in UNESCO's "Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind," 10 were associated with ethnic minorities; among the six items listed in the "Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding," three belonged to ethnic minorities; among the 40 items included in the World Heritage List, six were distributed in the minority areas.

By 2011, of 1,219 items on the national intangible cultural heritage list published by the State Council, 425 were associated with ethnic minorities, making up over one third of the total. Of 1,488 individuals nominated as "trustees" responsible for ensuring the survival and perpetuation of the nation's intangible cultural heritage,

393 belong to ethnic minorities, accounting for over one quarter. Since 2008, each "trustee" receives annual financial aid of 8,000 yuan from the central coffers.

Of the nation's 10 current cultural ecological protection experimental areas, four are located in ethnic minority areas: the Tibetan cultural ecological protection experimental area in Regong of Qinghai Province and Deqen of Yunnan Province, the Qiang cultural ecological protection experimental area in Sichuan Province, and the Tujia and Miao cultural ecological protection experimental area in the Wuling Mountain in Hunan Province.

Various actions carried out to preserve and promote the traditional cultures of the ethnic minorities

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the promotion and development of ethnic minority traditional cultures. It organizes regular cultural activities to demonstrate their unique charms and improve exchanges between different ethnic minorities. These activities include: a festival of ethnic minority arts held every five years; the National Traditional Ethnic Minority Sports Meet held every four years; a competition for literary works reflecting the life of minority peoples, a festival of ethnic minority folk arts, and a festival of ethnic minority operas, all held every three years. All these have played an important role in protecting, preserving and perpetuating the traditional cultures of the ethnic minorities.

Local festivals are also organized every year to highlight ethnic minority traditions, such as the Nanning International Folk Song Arts Festival in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the International Folk Dance Festival in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and the Zhaojun* Cultural Festival in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, to promote the traditional cultures of the ethnic minorities.

* Famed as one of the Four Beauties of ancient China, Wang Zhaojun and her story as a "political bride" has been handed down through the generations.

THE CULTURES OF CHINA'S ETHNIC MINORITIES





China is a unified multi-ethnic country. The 56 ethnic groups have worked together in creating the colorful and profound civilization that is China. The diverse cultures of China's ethnic minorities are a vital part of Chinese civilization. The Chinese government has devoted enormous manpower, material and financial resources to the protection, development, and perpetuation of traditional ethnic minority cultures since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

A policy system established to protect and develop the cultures of the ethnic minorities

The Constitution, the Law of Regional Ethnic Autonomy, the Law of Protection of Cultural Relics and the State Council Provisions on Implementation of the Law of Regional Ethnic Autonomy all expressly include provisions on protecting, developing, and perpetuating traditional ethnic minority cultures, and accelerating economic and cultural development in the ethnic minority areas. In the 21st century, the state has issued a series of important regulations and documents, including the Outline of the 11th Five-year Plan for National Cultural Development, the 11th Five-year Plan for the Development of the Ethnic Minorities, and the Guidelines on

Further Strengthening the System of Public Cultural Services. At the National Ethnic-minority Cultural Work Meeting in June 2009, the State Council issued the Opinions on Further Developing Ethnic Minority Cultural Services. All these regulations and policies cover such areas as ethnic minority languages, education, radio, film and television, press and publications, and protection of cultural relics, intensifying the government's support to the development of ethnic minority culture.

State financial support directed to accelerate the cultural development of the ethnic minorities

In the 1970s China began to establish a variety of funds to subsidize development in the ethnic minority areas, border and economically underdeveloped areas, as well as to support publication and cultural heritage protection in these areas. These efforts have greatly accelerated the cultural development of ethnic minorities. In the 21st century, the state has further strengthened its efforts to aid cultural development in the minority areas. In 2006, 690 million yuan was allocated to cultural and sports undertakings in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, Guangxi and Ningxia. In 2009, this amount was 1.884 billion yuan, representing an average annual growth rate of 40 percent. From 2006 to 2009, 4.4 billion yuan was invested in initiatives such as subsidies to museums offering free access in minority areas, maintenance of key cultural relic sites under state protection, protection of major cultural relic sites in Tibet, the project of "extending radio and TV coverage to every village",

dubbed films and radio and TV programs in minority languages, and publications in minority languages.

Constructing a public cultural service system to safeguard the cultural rights and interests of the minority people

In the 1990s the state began a new round of major construction projects in the minority areas to deal with the lack of public cultural service facilities, limited access to books, newspapers, films, TV and radio, and other widespread problems in these areas.

By 2010, a network of cultural facilities had taken shape at provincial, municipal, county and township levels, basically achieving the goal of setting up county-level libraries and cultural centers, and township and town cultural stations. Thanks to the efforts to "extend radio and TV coverage to every village," satellite broadcasting of 43 radio programs and 48 TV programs in minority languages, including Tibetan, Mongolian, Uygur, Kazak and Korean, is now accessible to minority people. Ten minority-language dubbing centers have been set up in Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Yunnan, Gansu, Sichuan, Guangxi, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Guizhou and Jilin. In 2008 alone, the state allocated 130 million yuan to subsidize film and TV program dubbing for minority languages. On average, 45 copyright-free films have been provided annually for minority-language dubbing. Every year since 2005, 1,000 episodes of copyright-free TV series have been given to Tibet and Xinjiang for minority-language dubbing. Within five years, 199 films and 5,157 episodes of 211 TV series were

dubbed.

From 2001 to 2010, the state engaged in a number of initiatives to improve the cultural life of minority peoples and effectively meet their growing cultural needs, including the creation of a network of public cultural services in the minority areas.

Strengthening the protection of cultural heritage of the ethnic minorities to build a sense of belonging

1. Major goals have been achieved in the protection of cultural relic sites.

In 2001 the state launched a project for the protection of major cultural relic sites, including those of ethnic minorities. From 2006 to 2010 the government provided special funds amounting to 570 million yuan for the maintenance and protection of 22 major cultural relic sites in Tibet, and 400 million yuan for preserving over 20 key cultural relic and other historical sites in Xinjiang. Of these, 380 million yuan were reserved for projects involving three key cultural relic sites in Tibet, namely Potala Palace, Norbulingka and Sakya Monastery. Completed in 2009, these projects were unprecedented in the history of cultural relic protection in Tibet in terms of sums invested, scale of work, technological content, and technical requirements.

Though starting relatively late, the development of museums has been accelerated in the minority areas. Partial data indicates that there are already more than 500 museums in the western region

