

Hong Kong ICH item selected as one of the Remarkable Examples of Good Practice for Safeguarding the National ICH Items (with photos)

The Mid-Autumn Festival – the Tai Hang fire dragon dance, a local intangible cultural heritage (ICH) item, has been selected as one of the Remarkable Examples of Good Practice for Safeguarding the National ICH Items by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in recognition of the efforts of various sectors in Hong Kong in safeguarding this ICH item.

The ministry launched the selection of the Remarkable Examples of good safeguarding practice by calling for nominations of the qualified ICH items from across the country in March this year. The ministry selected the outstanding items based on criteria such as whether the safeguarding work complied with the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH adopted by UNESCO, respected the leading role of the bearers, and formulated and implemented targeted safeguarding measures according to the actual situations of the ICH items.

Among the 347 nominated items, the Mid-Autumn Festival – the Tai Hang fire dragon dance has been awarded as one of the 50 items showcasing good safeguarding practice. The selected items have not only received high commendation from the ministry for the safeguarding work carried out in the regions, but also serve as role models for other ICH items of the same category.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has long been maintaining close contact with the related bearers and bearer organisation. A variety of public education activities have also been held regularly by the ICH Office under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, such as fire dragon crafting workshops, exhibitions and talks, allowing the bearers to introduce to members of the public the history of the Tai Hang fire dragon dance and its crafting techniques. With support from different sectors of the community, the Tai Hang fire dragon dance has successfully transformed from a district-based event into one of the most iconic festive events in Hong Kong.

The Tai Hang fire dragon dance has been held for more than 100 years. Tai Hang was originally a Hakka village which reportedly once suffered from plague. Since the epidemic, villagers in Tai Hang have performed a three-day fire dragon dance to ask for blessings during the Mid-Autumn Festival in the eighth lunar month every year.

With the founding of the Tai Hang Residents' Welfare Association, a successor system was established to pass on the knowledge and skills required

for the fire dragon dance to the next generation systematically. The Tai Hang fire dragon dance was inscribed onto the third national list of ICH in 2011.

For more information on local ICH and related activities, please visit the ICH Office's website at www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/ICH0/.

