

## The safeguarding of Chinese traditional martial arts in the past three decades (1990-2020): a perspective of intangible cultural heritage

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### Abstract

Traditional martial art is a pivotal part of Chinese folk culture. However, due to the impact of modern culture, the inheritance of various martial arts is threatened. Therefore, many efforts have been made by the Chinese government to protect this unique culture in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. To provide practical indications for the safeguard of intangible cultural heritage, we conducted a literature review for the Chinese strategies concerning the safeguard of traditional martial arts (TMA) in the past 30 years, also tried to identify the advantages and shortcomings of current safeguard of TMA. Existing evidence indicates that the legislative safeguarding of Chinese TMA has gradually evolved into a system for preservation. Modern devices are important to maintain the current form of the intangible cultural heritage. Inviting inheritors of the TMA to teach relevant skills and knowledge in university campuses may play an important role in the dynamic safeguard of inheritance. On the other hand, shortcomings are also noticed. For instance, younger generations are not fully aware of the importance of TMA, thus specific education is needed. The means of transmission of TMA is still insufficient in the current information era.

**Keywords:** Martial arts; vernacular martial arts; combat sports; Chinese traditional martial arts; intangible cultural heritage.

### La protección de las artes marciales tradicionales chinas en las últimas tres décadas: una perspectiva sobre un patrimonio cultural inmaterial

#### Resumen

El arte marcial tradicional es parte fundamental de la cultura popular china. Sin embargo, debido al impacto de la cultura moderna, la transmisión de varias artes marciales se ha visto amenazada. Así, desde finales del siglo XX el gobierno chino ha realizado importantes esfuerzos para proteger la cultura única de las artes marciales. Con el objeto de facilitar indicaciones prácticas para la protección del patrimonio cultural inmaterial, llevamos a cabo una revisión de literatura sobre las estrategias chinas relativas a la protección de las artes marciales tradicionales (AMT) en los últimos 30 años, y también tratamos de identificar las ventajas y carencias que tiene actualmente dicha protección. La evidencia existente indica que la protección legislativa de las AMT chinas se ha convertido gradualmente en un sistema de preservación. Los dispositivos modernos son importantes para mantener la forma actual de este patrimonio cultural inmaterial. Invitar a los herederos de las AMT a enseñar habilidades y conocimientos relevantes en los campus universitarios puede desempeñar un papel importante en la salvaguardia dinámica de esta herencia. Por otro lado, también hay carencias. Por ejemplo, las generaciones más

### A salvaguarda das artes marciais tradicionais chinesas nas últimas três décadas: uma perspectiva sobre um patrimônio cultural imaterial

#### Resumo

A arte marcial tradicional é uma prática essencial da cultura popular chinesa. No entanto, devido ao impacto da cultura moderna, a herança de várias artes marciais está ameaçada. Portanto, muitos esforços foram feitos pelo governo chinês para proteger essa cultura única no final do século XX. Para fornecer indicações práticas para a salvaguarda do patrimônio cultural imaterial, realizamos uma revisão da literatura sobre as estratégias chinas relativas à salvaguarda das artes marciais tradicionais (AMT) nos últimos 30 anos, também procuramos identificar as vantagens e deficiências da atual salvaguarda das AMT. A evidência indica que a salvaguarda legislativa das AMT chinesas evoluiu gradualmente para um sistema de preservação. Dispositivos modernos são importantes para manter a forma atual do patrimônio cultural imaterial. Convidar os herdeiros das AMT para ensinar habilidades e conhecimentos relevantes nos campos universitários pode desempenhar um papel importante na salvaguarda dinâmica desta herança. Por outro lado, também são notadas deficiências. Por exemplo, as gerações mais

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jóvenes no son plenamente conscientes de la importancia de las AMT, por lo que sería necesaria una educación específica al respecto. Los medios de transmisión de las AMT son aún insuficientes en la actual era de la información.

**Palabras clave:** Artes marciales; artes marciales vernáculas; deportes de combate; artes marciales tradicionales chinas; herencia cultural intangible.

jovens não estão totalmente cientes da importância das AMT, portanto, é necessária uma educação específica. Os meios de transmissão do AMT ainda são insuficientes na era da informação atual.

**Palavras-chave:** Artes marciais; artes marciais vernáculas; esportes de combate. artes marciais tradicionais chinesas; herança cultural intangível.

## 1. Introduction

On December 17, 2020, Taijiquan was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity, which is a success of the Chinese government's long-term safeguarding of traditional martial arts (TMA).

Chinese martial arts, also known as “wushu”, is pride and symbol of Chinese culture (Lu, 2018). Theoretically, it includes concepts for both TMA and modern competitive martial arts (Han, Theeboom, & Zhu, 2020; Qiu & Yang, 2009). According to Chinese history, TMA is originated from the Chinese nation and seldomly affected by a foreign culture. Therefore, traditional martial art has been deemed a kind of intangible cultural heritage rooted in Chinese traditional culture.

From 1949 to 1990, Chinese martial arts have gone through stages of development – setback – redevelopment. The development stage appeared around the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The government advocated martial arts improving the physical fitness of the people (Lu, 2018). However, martial arts encountered a setback during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) due to social objections to feudal culture. After the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government turned to a policy named “Reform and opening”, which aimed to modify governance strategies and accept multiculturalism. During this period, martial arts were redeveloped as a cultural issue. Especially on November 19, 1982, *The Heritage Conservation Act 1982* was passed in the 25th meeting of the Operations Committee of the National People's Congress of the Communist Party of China. This law means a start for cultural protection of Chinese martial arts (Sofield & Li, 1998). Thereafter, in December 1982, a project called “Discovering and Rescuing” of TMA was carried. Numerous TMA materials such as pieces of literature, videos, and equipment were identified and archived (Xu, Niu, & Chen, 2012). These efforts contributed to the foundation for the development and preservation of martial arts (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Protection of the martial arts during the period 1949-1990 (Lu, 2018; Guo, 1989)

Year	The event
1950	The Chinese Sports Federation held a meeting to advocate the development of traditional martial arts.
1953	Chinese physical education departments include traditional martial arts as a formal subject.
1956	The Chinese Traditional martial arts Association was founded.
1957	Traditional martial arts became included as a sporting competition.
1979	Notification of Discovering and Archiving Wushu Legacies was issued by the Sports Ministry.
1982	<i>The Heritage Conservation Act 1982</i> was passed.
1982	“Discovering and Rescuing” of traditional martial arts was carried out.
1985	The International Traditional Martial Arts Invitational Tournament was held.
1986	A Wushu Research Academy was launched in Beijing, affiliated to the Sports Ministry.

Due to the policies for martial arts as an intangible cultural heritage item, China keeps developing its strategies for preserving TMA. According to *the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, “safeguarding” is defined as a management policy that aims to improve the viability of the ICH, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission (particularly through formal and informal education), and revitalization of cultural heritages (UNESCO, 2003).



Based on empirical methods, the safeguarding measures for TMA could be classified into static safeguarding and dynamic safeguarding. Static safeguarding includes collecting, sorting, preserving, and displaying the books and other materials of TMA. Dynamic safeguarding includes inheriting, promoting, and developing vernacular martial arts (Gao, Duan, Han, & Mao, 2014). According to historical records, both the static and dynamic safeguards are driven by related laws. In other words, legislative protection is the foundation of safeguarding TMA. Therefore, we conducted the current study to analyze the safeguarding of Chinese TMA concerning legal, static, and dynamic safeguarding in the past 30 years and try to identify the achievements and shortcomings in the safeguarding of TMA.

## 2. Literature search

Keywords were searched via Chinese search engines including Baidu and Bing, as well as databases including CNKI (in Chinese), Wanfang (in Chinese) and Web of Science. Paper materials including books and newspapers are also considered. The key words for intangible cultural heritage were: ICH, ICH safeguarding, ICH in school, ICH law, ICH museum. The key words for TMA were: traditional martial arts (TMA) safeguarding, TMA museum, digitalization of TMA, TMA inheritor, TMA in school, TMA transmission (Figure 1).

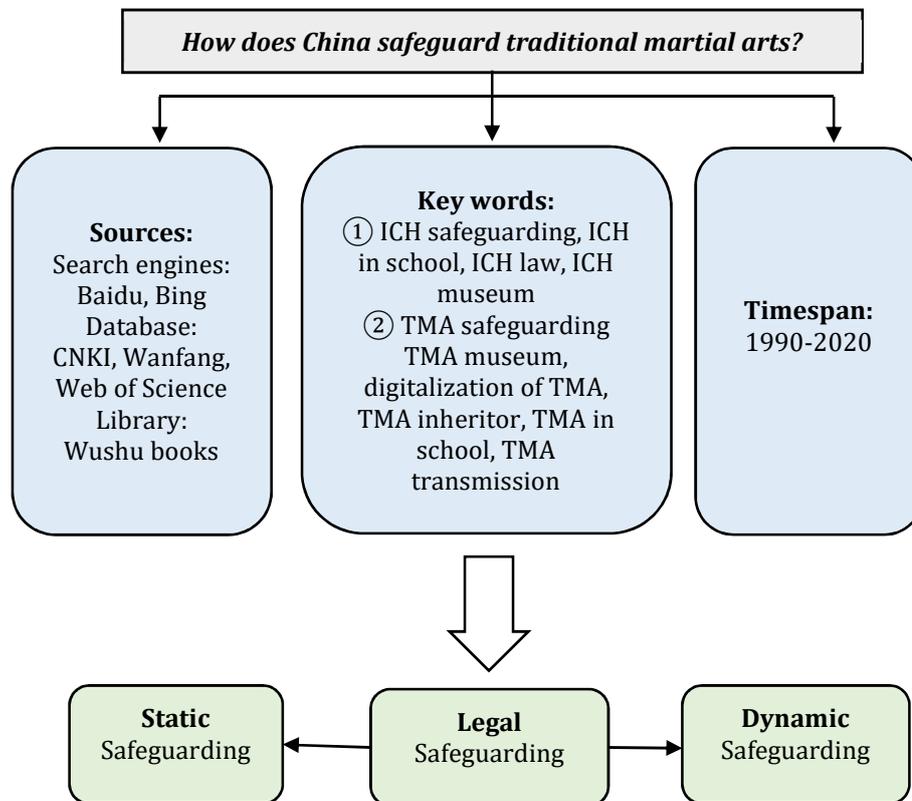


Figure 1. Diagram of literature screening

## 3. Results

### 3.1. TMA items in the national ICH items list

Chinese government classifies ICH into four classes: national, provincial, municipal, and county levels. The list of national ICH items is made up of provincial ICH items. The provincial ICH project list is derived from the municipal ICH project list. The list of municipal items is also the same. Such a declaration system ensures that the higher levels of ICH items are based on those listed at the next level. Generally, such a process may guarantee procedural fairness in the declaration process (Chen, 2010). As the ICH attracts more attention, the government has published five batches of national ICH items in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2021, a total of 3470 items. Among all the items, TMA accounted for 76 (Table 2).

**Table 2.** The 76 traditional martial arts in the 1st-5th batch of national ICH list (data from China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network, <http://www.ihchina.cn>).

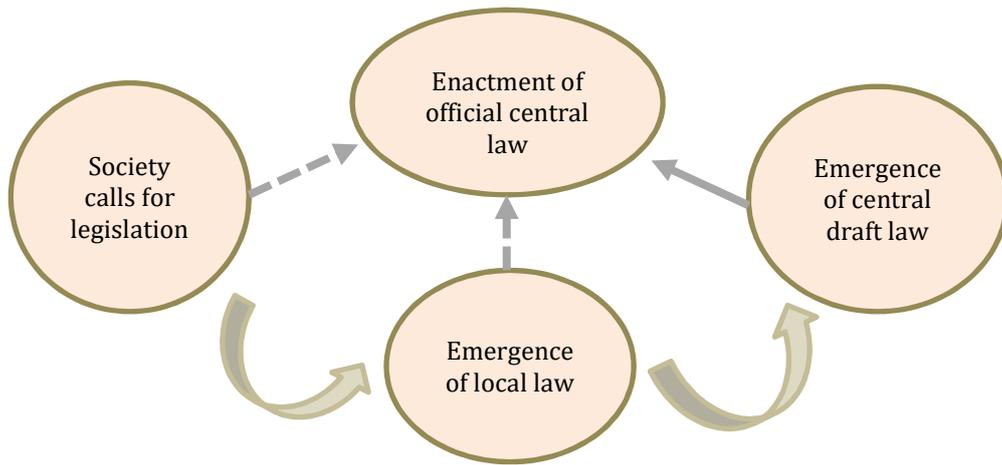
Batch	Name of various types of traditional martial arts		
<b>The 1st</b> n = 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaolin Kung Ku</li> <li>• Cangzhou Wushu</li> <li>• Plum blossom Boxing (Xingtai )</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wudang Wushu</li> <li>• Taijiquan (Yang's style)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hui's heavy Sword</li> <li>• Taijiquan (Chen's Style)</li> </ul>
<b>The 2nd</b> n = 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cangzhou Wushu (chop-and-parry Boxing)</li> <li>• Taichi (Wu's Style Hebei)</li> <li>• Eagle-claw Boxing</li> <li>• Six harmony heart-and-will Boxing (Luohe)</li> <li>• Mantis-style Boxing (Laiyang)</li> <li>• Emei wushu</li> <li>• Yue's style Boxing (Wuxiu)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cangzhou Wushu (Yanqing- style Boxing)</li> <li>• Eight-diagram Boxing (Langfang)</li> <li>• Eight-diagram Boxing (Yueshan)</li> <li>• Six harmony heart-and-will Boxing (Zhoukou)</li> <li>• Chang-style Boxing</li> <li>• Red Boxing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cangzhou Wushu (Mengcun eight extremes Boxing)</li> <li>• Form-and-will Boxing (Shenzhou)</li> <li>• Heart-and-will Boxing (Jinzhong)</li> <li>• Five-ancestor Boxing</li> <li>• Choy-Li-fut Boxing (Xinhui)</li> <li>• Cha's shadow Boxing</li> </ul>
<b>The 3rd</b> n = 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cangzhou Wushu (Six harmony Boxing)</li> <li>• Eight-diagram Boxing (Hebei)</li> <li>• Mantis-style Boxing (Qixia)</li> <li>• Back around Boxing</li> <li>• Sunbin style Boxing (Qingdao)</li> <li>• Skill in wielding the 18 kinds of weapons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plum-blossom Boxing (Wei County)</li> <li>• Form-and-will Boxing (Taigu County)</li> <li>• Mantis-style Boxing (Qingdao)</li> <li>• Di-shu Boxing</li> <li>• Sunbin style Boxing (Anqiu)</li> <li>• Hus-tuo five-animal Boxing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight-diagram Boxing (Beijing)</li> <li>• Heart-and-will Boxing (Qi county)</li> <li>• Lan-shou-men wushu</li> <li>• Buddhist-style Boxing</li> <li>• Elbow Boxing</li> <li>• Rolling stone Boxing</li> </ul>
<b>The 4th</b> n = 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taijiquan (Wu's Style)</li> <li>• Taijiquan (He's Style)</li> <li>• Pass-back Boxing</li> <li>• Mian Boxing</li> <li>• Yue-style Boxing (Huangmei)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taijiquan (Li's Style)</li> <li>• Mantis Boxing (Qingdao)</li> <li>• Poking-Foot Boxing</li> <li>• Xu-style Boxing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taijiquan (Qihe Wang-Style)</li> <li>• Wing Chun (Fuzhou)</li> <li>• Fist of Fury-style Wushu</li> <li>• Meishan Wushu</li> </ul>
<b>The 5th</b> n = 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wuji Boxing</li> <li>• Yi-jin-jing (Tiantai)</li> <li>• Wu's style Boxing</li> <li>• Six harmony Boxing (Fujian)</li> <li>• Taijiquan (Sun's Style-Baoding)</li> <li>• Eight-diagram Boxing (Beijing)</li> <li>• Wing Chun (Foshan)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qingping Sword (Jia's Style)</li> <li>• Xilang Palm</li> <li>• Rock-eagle Boxing</li> <li>• Qingcheng Wushu</li> <li>• Taijiquan (Wu's Style-Shanghai)</li> <li>• Heart-and-will Boxing (Shanghai)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shao Bei Boxing</li> <li>• Buyi Wushu</li> <li>• Mo's style Boxing</li> <li>• Taijiquan (Sun's Style-Beijing)</li> <li>• Plum blossom Boxing (Liangshan)</li> <li>• Choy-Li-fut Boxing (Beisheng)</li> </ul>

### 3.2. Legal safeguarding

Due to previous successful cases in other Asian countries such as *Cultural Properties Protection Law* (Korea, 1962) and *Cultural Property Protection Act* (Japan, 1950) (Hyojoo, Yu-Mi, & Seung-Hi, 2018), legal safeguarding attracted great concerns during the 1990s. In this context, the Chinese state system and policy management system accelerated the legislative process concerning safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (Jeong, 2015). As a result, China launched *the Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2011. The Chinese legislative process regarding TMA can be divided into two stages throughout the past three decades. In the first stage, TMA were not determined as an ICH item. In the second stage, the government determined TMA as an intangible cultural heritage item.

#### 3.2.1. The period before traditional martial arts was determined as ICH item

During this period, local legislation was ahead of central legislation. Local governments legislated for the traditional cultural resources within their jurisdictions. As the local legislative affairs increase, the central government will enact corresponding cultural protection regulations according to national conditions. These regulations are built on the legislative experience of local governments (Figure 2).



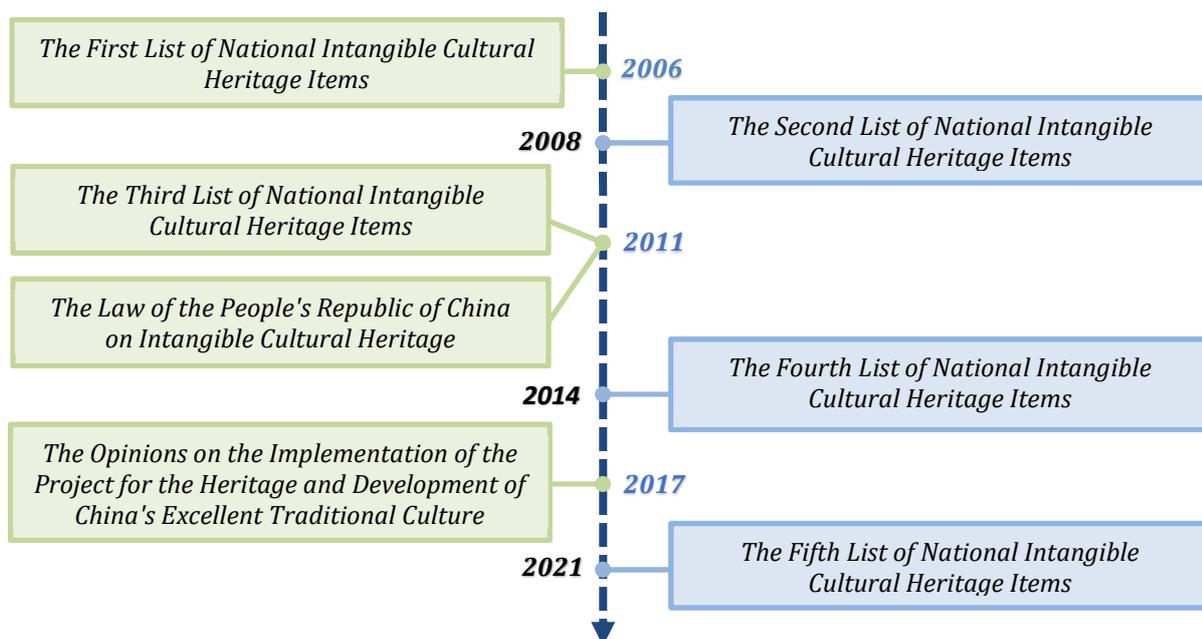
**Figure 2.** The process of enacting the law.

The above strategies spared human and material resources for central government, meanwhile making the regulation more practical with the local government's efforts. Some substantial effects were recorded concerning the strategies. For instance, some highly rated laws such as *The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Safeguarding of Ethnic and Folk Traditional Culture (draft)* were established, which is deemed as a milestone for folk culture protection. Zhu Bing, an expert who experienced this legislation, has mentioned that "Such a strategy can provide a good reference and basis for central legislation" (Zhu, 2012). Based on local legislation, the central government has accelerated the process of safeguard legislation.

### 3.2.2. The period after traditional martial arts was determined as ICH item

In May 2006, the State Council promulgated the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists, and Shaolin Kung Fu and Wudang TMA were listed. Since then, TMA have become a social consensus as ICH items.

After the TMA are recognized as ICH items, the safeguarding strategy aims to discover TMA and to evaluate more national TMA intangible cultural heritage items. As a consequence, the central government has enacted a number of legal provisions as well as national TMA projects to promote the safeguarding of TMA. (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Laws and regulations for the safeguarding of traditional martial arts

During this stage, *the Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage* was established. This law is deemed as an important milestone in the safeguarding journey of Chinese ICH, which indicated that the legal status of the ICH and transferred the safeguarding of the ICH became a legal issue (Ren & Zhu, 2013; Zeng, Deng, & Pang, 2013). Besides, the law has attracted the local government and society's attention to TMA.

In an interview, Beijing Normal University professor Xiao Putian commented that the law has played a key role in promoting the protection, transmission, and development of ICH. It protects ICH with the force of national legislation, also underlines the social responsibility for safeguarding ICH. Wang Chen, a member of the Central Political Bureau, also stated that “In the ten years since the promulgation and implementation of this law, the protection of intangible cultural heritage in China gets a valuable chance to develop.” The enactment of this law has, of course, provided indispensable safeguards for the development of TMA.

### 3.3 Static safeguarding

Theoretically, safeguarding the TMA through museums is a major method. In the past thirty years, static conservation of the TMA has been carried out mainly through museums + digitalization. Digitized intangible cultural heritage can be defined as digital resources that are digitized from audio-visual recordings, photographs, or ephemera which document and preserve practices and the tools or spaces associated with them (Erturk, 2020). With the development of networks and media, the Chinese government has paid more attention to the digital development of TMA preservation and has gradually started some digital items. (Table 3)

**Table 3.** Digital museums of traditional martial arts

Year	Name of the museum	Features of the construction	Website of the museum
2005	the Chinese Traditional Martial Arts Museum	showcase the history and culture of TMA	<a href="http://museum.wushu.sus.edu.cn">http://museum.wushu.sus.edu.cn</a>
2015	Digital Museum of Traditional martial arts in Henan Province	storage, excavation, scientific research, education	<a href="https://www.htu.edu.cn/wushu/main.htm">https://www.htu.edu.cn/wushu/main.htm</a>
2019	Traditional Wushu Digital Museum of Overseas Chinese	safeguarding, publicity and promotion, education, development	<a href="http://www.zgqxws.com/">http://www.zgqxws.com/</a>

As the digital museum of TMA is just at the beginning, only a few digital museums are available in China, and many problems are inevitable, such as the inconsistent national standards of the TMA database, which remain further coping strategies.

### 3.4. Dynamic safeguarding

Due to the characteristics including the “living state” of ICH and the “physical action” of TMA, static protection alone may not be enough. Therefore, dynamic safeguarding can be a supplementary strategy. In the past 30 years, the dynamic protection of TMA mainly focuses on two aspects. One is the protection of the inheritors; the second is to teach TMA in schools.

#### 3.4.1. Protection of inheritors

The ICH is a “living” culture that requires inheritors to perform and inherit. For instance, inheritors of TMA are usually skilled, experienced, and creative masters. They play a dominant role in inheritance activities (Zhang, 2014). Therefore, the protection of inheritors is a priority in safeguarding ICH.

Usually, a qualified inheritor must meet the following criteria: working on the transmission of national ICH items; representing a particular field; being highly influential in a particular region; and must be recognized by the government (Yu, 2020). So far, China has announced five batches of

inheritors of national ICH items in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, and 2018. For practical methods, the Chinese government took a route of “announcement - financial assistance - inheritance activities.” Such a strategy was announced via government documents, which helped to coordinate different departments. Among them, the most representative ones are *The Interim Measures for the Identification and Management of Representative Inheritors of National Intangible Cultural Heritage Items (2008)* (Tian, 2013) and *The Measures for the Identification and Administration of Representative Inheritor of State-level Intangible Cultural Heritage (2019)*. The former document made criteria for the application of national inheritors, indicating a standardized protocol for identifying and managing national ICH inheritors (Song, 2020). The latter document is a modified version of the former one, which further stated the responsibilities and obligations of ICH inheritors, also underlined the conditions for disqualification. This strategy enhanced ICH inheritors’ social impacts and therefore increased their income, making them focus on the maintenance and inheritance of ICH.

On the other hand, with the guide of some other government documents, these registered inheritors and their personal information, skills, and cultural memories of inheritors’ families were archived. Besides, the local governments hold regular training sessions for inheritors to exchange skills, which may promote the sustainability of TMA.

### 3.4.2. Promotion in school

School education is an important path for preserving sustainable heritage (Barghi, Zakaria, Hamzah, & Hashim, 2017). In Korea and Malaysia, the courses about cultural heritage are a part of the primary school curriculum, which turns out as an effective strategy for the safeguard of ICH (Barghi et al., 2017; Younghoon, 2019). Therefore, the Chinese government also tried to add relevant courses to promote TMA in the younger generation (Table 4).

Table 4. The documents about promoting the development of TMA to schools

Year	Name of the file	Details	Website of the file
2000	<i>Physical Education and Health Syllabus (6th Edition)</i>	Traditional martial arts as a compulsory part of the physical education curriculum in primary and secondary schools.	<a href="http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xxgk/gk_gbgg/moe_0/moe_7/moe_445/tnull_6327.html">http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xxgk/gk_gbgg/moe_0/moe_7/moe_445/tnull_6327.html</a>
2004	<i>The Implementation Outline of Promoting and Cultivating the National Spirit in Primary and Middle Schools</i>	Required that more Chinese traditional martial arts should be added to the physical education classes in primary and middle schools.	<a href="http://www.moe.gov.cn/s78/A06/jcys_left/moe_7_10/s3325/201005/t20100527_88477.html">http://www.moe.gov.cn/s78/A06/jcys_left/moe_7_10/s3325/201005/t20100527_88477.html</a>
2010	<i>Martial Arts-Aerobics for Primary and Secondary Schools</i>	A set of gymnastics based on traditional martial arts was promoted and implemented in ordinary primary and middle schools.	<a href="http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2010-09/10/content_1699965.htm">http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2010-09/10/content_1699965.htm</a>
2011	<i>The Physical Education and Health Curriculum Standards</i>	Clearly stipulated the requirements of traditional martial arts courses for primary and middle school students	<a href="http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A26/s8001/201112/t20111228_167340.html">http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A26/s8001/201112/t20111228_167340.html</a>

To make the course more professional, some masters, such as inheritors of Chang-style boxing and Tang Hand boxing are usually invited to teach courses in universities, middle schools, and primary schools (Chen, 2020).

More than just physical education, TMA may contribute to a connection between students and traditional culture. In an interview on TMA inheritor, the inheritor held the view that teaching TMA in school is an ideal method to create national pride and make more young people enjoy and love this activity (Youth, 2014). Besides, by participating in these martial events, students can be affected by the masters or inheritors and learn to be confident and focused, which may evoke their passion for traditional culture.

#### 4. Discussion

From a cultural perspective, making TMA an intangible cultural heritage item is a smart strategy to draw social power and attention. This strategy may guarantee the development and transmission of TMA by the power of law. In other countries such as Korea and Japan, similar martial arts are also included in the intangible cultural heritage, and they are thus under the protection of their laws.

In terms of static safeguard, promoting TMA through museums plus digitization is a nice try. Globally, digital and virtual technologies are increasingly applied to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (Rodil & Winschiers-Theophilus, 2018; Rossau, Skovfoged, Czaplá, Sokolov, & Rodil, 2019). Nowadays, the network is a part of life. In China, more than 70 percent of people are users of short-video and other advanced media (The 48th Statistical Report on the Development Status of the Internet in China) (CNNIC, 2021). In this circumstance, some online programs and live videos are employed to protect animals and cultural relics, such as Panda TV and Restoration in the Forbidden City (CCTV, 2016; NEWSSC, 2020). Therefore, emerging media may play a pivotal role in spreading TMA to the public.

Safeguard the intangible cultural heritage by school education is a strategy that is widely adopted by many countries, e.g., Korea (Kicheol, 2020), Japan (Junko, 2011), Malaysia (Barghi et al., 2017). TMA is a cultural item, which needs more social engagement to guarantee its sustainability. In addition to spreading its cultural elements via the network, teaching TMA in school may help younger generations cultivate relevant interests, which is crucial to developing martial people, and is fundamental for living culture. Many scholars also advocate that the safeguarding of TMA should be carried out in a living way, such as strengthening the safeguarding of inheritors and integrating TMA with education (Li & Xie, 2009; Niu & Yu, 2008; Wang & Wu, 2010).

On the other hand, when taking martial arts as a competitive sport, some points could be learned from the spreading of taekwondo. In Korea, taekwondo is successfully listed as an Olympic event. This success may come from the following aspects. First, there is a well-established system and standardized technical skills for education and competitions (Guo, 2004). Second, numerous TV programs and other streaming media platforms deliver relevant content such as competitions, reality shows, e-learning classes, and movies (Shi, 2020). These media platforms offer optimized contents to attract different populations to focus and participate in taekwondo, thus promoting taekwondo's cultural environment. By comparison, though China has some martial competitions and media platforms, most people get to know the TMA through oral transmission and traditional media (Zhao, 2020). In other words, the TMA is not well advertised due to a lack of integration with other popular elements. Future work should be focused on the demands of different target groups and design specific content concerning popular elements.

Generally, China has been dedicated to safeguarding TMA in the past 30 years, and many strategies have been proved effective. In future work, more TMA items should be considered for the application of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Moreover, more attempts are needed to deliver TMA to the general public with the aid of advanced media and popular elements.

#### 5. Conclusions

China has made significant efforts in safeguarding TMA, which resulted in two types of strategies called static and dynamic safeguards. Legislative protection is the main part of static safeguard, which is also widely adopted by other countries. On the other hand, safeguarding TMA using digital museums is another part of static safeguard, but which is not well-applied yet due to limited attempts. For dynamic safeguard, protection of inheritors and school education are the two methods, which may be crucial to maintain and increase related population and thus keep the sustainability of TMA.

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