



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Memory of the World



GENDER EQUALITY

BASELINE STUDY OF
MEMORY OF THE WORLD
IN ASIA-PACIFIC



Published in 2020 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

and

UNESCO Bangkok Office

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This brochure was printed on 100% recycled paper

THA/DOC/CI/20/005

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Foreword

The Asia-Pacific region is home to a rich and diverse documentary heritage that reflects the cultures, histories, traditions and values of its nations. In order to prevent the irrevocable loss of collective memory, UNESCO launched the Memory of the World Programme in 1992. Its objectives are to facilitate universal access to this heritage and to raise public awareness of the existence of, significance of and need to preserve fragile documents.

In 1998, the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP) was established as a regional forum to support Member States in the region in pursuing these goals. With the number of inscriptions at the international, regional and national levels regularly increasing, the Memory of the World registers not only represent an affirmation of UNESCO's recognition of the significance of this documentary heritage, they also provide a platform for showcasing it – thus drawing the attention of decision-makers, professionals and the general public to the importance of its conservation and accessibility.

Nonetheless, a quick scan of the current Memory of the World inscriptions from Asia and the Pacific through a gender lens reveals a wide gap. As of January 2020, there are 426 inscriptions on the international register – including 109 from the Asia-Pacific region – and 56 inscriptions on the regional Asia-Pacific register, among which only four highlight the gender dimension. Only one inscription is recognized as effectively contributing to the promotion of gender equality.

As one of UNESCO's global priorities, gender equality is required to be integrated across all of the Organization's programmes, processes and policies through two distinct but complementary approaches: gender mainstreaming; and gender-specific initiatives. Unfortunately, to date, neither of these approaches has been fully reflected in the Memory of the World Programme.

This lack of a gender equality perspective is not only visible in the archives and the records themselves, but also in the nomination forms and the General Guidelines of the Programme. As a result, the many women who have made remarkable contributions to the history of the world are not being recognized appropriately.

For this reason, we firmly believe that it is high time that a gender equality perspective be made an integral requirement for nominations and assessment of applications. In so doing, we aim to articulate the need to consider gender equality throughout the whole process of the nominations, and – most importantly – to echo our commitment to making a positive and lasting contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality.

This publication is not only a pilot study that reviewed the current inscriptions through a gender lens; it is also a call to action to work together to record the significant roles that women have played in the memory of the world.



Shigeru Aoyagi

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Preface

Considerations of gender equality, or measures to highlight this significant theme, have not as yet been high on the agenda for nominations to the Memory of the World registers, particularly at the international level.

While women have been implicitly included in nominations that encompass whole groups and societies, their presence has been submerged in a generic consideration of the significance of documentary heritage under the criterion of 'People'. Unless nominators have specifically identified women's presence in the documents, this has gone unremarked in general descriptions.

Of the 426 inscriptions on the Memory of the World international register to date, only five relate directly to women, and to women's empowerment: the 1893 Women's Suffrage Petition from New Zealand; the Astrid Lindgren Archives from Sweden; the Nita Barrow Collection from Barbados; the Permanent Collection of the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers from the United States of America; and the Gertrude Bell Archive from the United Kingdom.

Their documentary heritage records a breakthrough moment in the achievement of women's suffrage; and the lives and achievements of remarkable women in the fields of literature, human rights and international relations. Many other women around the world have made their marks on history in these fields, and in science, medicine, the arts and the achievement of social justice. Their records have yet to be inscribed on Memory of the World registers.

Scrutinizing possible nominations from a gender perspective, and identifying the role that women have played in the narrative, or the ways in which women's empowerment has been enhanced as a result of the actions demonstrated in the documents, should be an essential part of the nomination process.

Identifying individual women or groups of women who have achieved distinction across a wide range of cultural, social or political areas, and seeking out the documents that demonstrate this achievement, should also be a priority for nominators to the national, regional and international registers.

Only if a proactive approach is taken will we address the massive imbalance with regard to gender equality that is now a feature of all the Memory of the World registers. It will take time, but it is a goal that must be pursued, and one that is specifically endorsed by UNESCO.

I encourage all those intending to nominate documentary heritage to a Memory of the World register to read it and act on its findings and recommendations.



Roslyn Russell

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Research Overview and Design

Background

The UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme was established in 1992 with the objectives of facilitating preservation of the world's documentary heritage; assisting universal access; and increasing awareness worldwide of the existence and significance of the documentary heritage.

The Programme comprises three types of register: international, regional and national. The international register lists documentary heritage which has been endorsed as corresponding to the selection criteria regarding world significance. It comprises, as of February 2020, 426 items including 109 from Asia and the Pacific region. The regional registers inscribe documentary heritage which has been influential within that region and therefore has regional significance. The Asia-Pacific regional register – the MOWCAP register – comprises 56 items.

However very few items of inscribed documentary heritage address or promote the issues of gender equality in society, or contain records or portrayals of women who have influenced history. A strong gender gap thus tends to exist and persist in the Memory of the World registers.

UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality

Gender equality is one of the two global priorities of UNESCO. For UNESCO, gender equality refers to the equal rights, responses and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men¹. UNESCO's gender equality priority calls for both

specific actions and, equally importantly, the integration of a gender perspective into all programmes and activities.

Objectives of the Study

The purposes of the Gender Equality Baseline Study were to assess the degree of gender sensitivity of the MoW inscriptions, with a particular focus on the inscriptions from the Asia-Pacific region; and to analyse the findings with a view to integrating a gender perspective into the MoW Programme and processes. To this end, the study:

- (i) Reviewed the MoW international and regional inscriptions from the Asia-Pacific region with a gender lens;
- (ii) Applied to each selected inscription the UNESCO's Gender Equality Marker (GEM) adapted to the particular context of the MoW inscriptions; and
- (iii) Assessed the degree of gender sensitivity of the inscribed documentary heritage based on the adapted GEM.

Methodology and Limitations

The research mainly utilized secondary sources of information to assess the gender sensitivity of MoW inscriptions. Secondary sources of information comprised the nomination forms, descriptions available on the UNESCO website², the Memory of the World regional Committee for Asia-Pacific (MOWCAP) website³, as well as the MoW publications⁴. When possible, the study attempted to conduct interviews through emails to the contact persons listed on the nomination forms, with a view to accessing the primary sources of information.

¹ For example, women and men belonging to ethnic minorities, women and men with different sexual orientations and/or identities, indigenous women and men, or women and men with disabilities.

² See <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register>

³ See <http://www.mowcapunesco.org/core-activities/regional-register>

⁴ See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002462/246237E.pdf> and <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/20-years-mowcap-memory-world-documentary-heritage-asia-pacific-register>



Adaptation of UNESCO's Gender Equality Marker to the Memory of the World Inscriptions

| | UNESCO's GEM description applied to an activity | | Proposed adaptation of GEM to MoW inscriptions | |
|--------------|---|--|---|---|
| GEM 0 | The activity does not contribute to gender equality | The choice of this GEM level means the activity is not expected to contribute at all or only marginally to gender equality. In this case, the implementation strategy of the activity must include a justification to explain why this would be the case. This option should be limited to (i) activities of strictly technical nature, such as scientific measurements/monitoring of physical phenomena, or (ii) activities which do not have any discernible effect on human activity/livelihood and hence on gender relations. | The documentary heritage does not contribute to gender equality | The documentary heritage inscribed does not contribute at all or only marginally to gender equality. The documentary heritage does not have any discernible effect on gender relations. |
| GEM 1 | The activity is gender-sensitive | Activities that select this GEM level must identify and acknowledge the existing differences and inequalities between women and men. However, the choice of this GEM level means that the activity does not make any attempt/effort to address the inequalities. Under this category, the implementation strategy may include some references to gender equality, and even a generic gender analysis of the context/intervention. Sex-disaggregated data may or may not have been used to inform the gender analysis. | The documentary heritage is gender-sensitive | The documentary heritage inscribed identifies and acknowledges the existing differences and inequalities between women and men. However it does not address the inequalities. The nomination form may include some references to gender equality, and even a generic analysis of the context or intervention. Sex-disaggregated data may or may not have been used to inform the gender analysis. |
| GEM 2 | The activity is gender-responsive | The choice of this GEM level requires the implementation strategy of the activity to include evidence-based gender analysis which identifies and acknowledges existing gender differences and inequalities, including inequalities in participation rates and in deriving benefits. Activities that opt for this GEM level should include in the key deliverables, specific policies and actions which would address the inequalities and result in improvements. | The documentary heritage is gender-responsive | The documentary heritage inscribed includes gender analysis which acknowledges existed gender differences and inequalities, including inequalities in participation and in deriving benefits. The records describe historical events that led to specific policies and actions which addressed the inequalities and resulted in improvements. |
| GEM 3 | The activity is gender-transformative | The choice of this GEM level means that the activity intends to address underlying causes of gender inequalities. Accordingly, the implementation strategy in the workplan must include evidence-based gender analysis that identifies and acknowledges not only the existing differences and inequalities, but also the underlying causes and factors of systemic character producing or influencing these differences and inequalities. In the key deliverables, this category of activities should formulate policies and initiatives which not only address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of women and men and girls and boys in the subject area of the activity, but also challenge existing and discriminatory policies and practices and influence radical change in social, economic and political contexts supporting or influencing such policies and practices. | The documentary heritage is gender-transformative | The documentary heritage had a transformative effect on history and society in regard to gender equality. Accordingly, the nomination form includes gender analysis that acknowledges not only the existing differences and inequalities, but also the underlying causes of those inequalities. The inscription contains records that resulted in policies and initiatives which challenged the existed discriminatory policies and practices and influenced radical change in history and society. |



Key Findings

109 inscriptions from Asia-Pacific on the international register and 56 inscriptions on the regional Asia-Pacific register were analysed for the purpose of this research. Ten inscriptions were inscribed on both international and regional registers. Out of 155 inscriptions analysed (109 + 56 – 10 inscriptions) from the Asia-Pacific, the study revealed that:

- 1 inscription is GEM 3 - Gender Transformative
- 2 inscriptions are GEM 2 - Gender Responsive
- 1 inscription is GEM 1 - Gender Sensitive

The remaining 151 inscriptions are GEM 0, meaning that either they don't have any discernible links to gender relations or they contribute only marginally to gender equality. However when the primary records themselves were accessible, it was observed that an important number of inscriptions could have qualified for a higher degree of GEM if they had been described adequately in the nomination forms if approached from a gender perspective. The following case studies provide examples of inscriptions from different GEM categories.

GEM 3 – Gender Transformative Nomination

The 1893 Women's Suffrage Petition, New Zealand

Inscribed on the international register in 1997

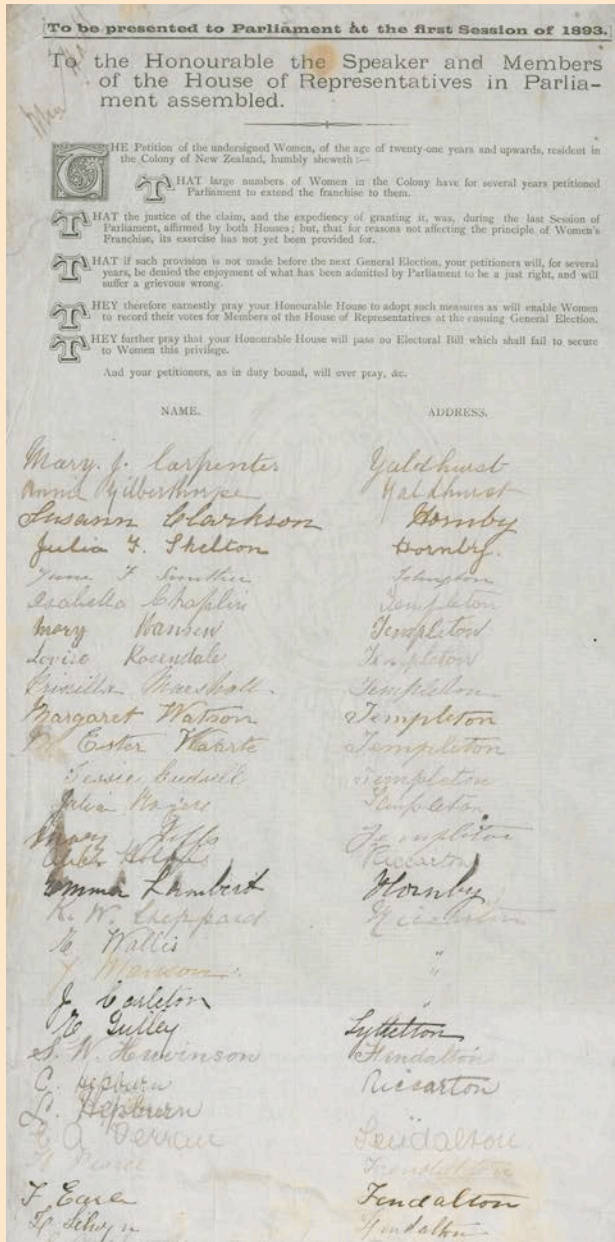
GEM 3 - The Women's Suffrage Petition of 1893 had a huge impact on western and probably other societies. The petition resulted in New Zealand being the first country in the world to give women the vote on an equal basis with men, and this success was used to work for universal franchise in other countries. There is no other Memory of the World inscribed item that has had such an impact for women.

In early colonial New Zealand, as in other European societies, women were excluded from any involvement in politics. Most people – men and women – accepted the idea that women were naturally suited for domestic affairs, such as keeping house and raising children. It was considered that only men were fitted for public life and the rough and tumble world of politics.

Until 1884, with the introduction of the Married Women's Property Act, a woman was largely invisible in the eyes of the law. When she married, anything she might have owned also belonged to her husband. She could not own her own property. Husband and wife were one financial and legal entity controlled by the husband.

Some women began to challenge this narrow view of the world in the later 19th century. New opportunities were opening up for women and girls in secondary and university education, medicine, and in church and charitable work. Attention soon turned to women's legal and political rights.

The suffrage campaign in New Zealand began as a far-flung branch of a broad late-19th century movement for women's rights that spread through Britain and its colonies, the United States and northern Europe. This movement was shaped by two main themes: equal political rights for women; and a determination to use them for the moral reform of society.



By the early 1890s opponents of women's suffrage had begun to mobilize. They warned that any disturbance of "natural" gender roles of men and women might have terrible consequences. The liquor industry, fearful that women would support growing demands for the prohibition of alcohol, lobbied sympathetic Members of Parliament and organized their own counter-petitions.

In 1893, New Zealand became the first country in the world in which all women gained the right to vote in general elections. Kate Sheppard (1847–1934) was the person whose activism led to women being granted the right to vote in New Zealand. On 19 September 1893, when the Governor, Lord Glasgow, signed a new Electoral Act into law, New Zealand became the first self-governing country in the world to grant all women the right to vote in parliamentary elections.

Australian women began to gain the right to vote in 1894, in South Australia, and all Australian women could vote by 1902. In most other democracies – notably Britain and the United States – women did not win the right to vote until after World War I. New Zealand women still had a long way to go to achieve political equality. They would not gain the right to stand for the Parliament until 1919, and the first female Member of Parliament Elizabeth McCombs was not elected until 1933 – 40 years after the introduction of women's suffrage. The number of female Members of Parliament did not reach double figures until the mid-1980s, and with 38 percent of women, women remain under-represented in the Parliament⁵. In 1989 Helen Clark became the first female Deputy Prime Minister, and in 1999 became New Zealand's second female Prime Minister. On 26 October 2017 Jacinda Ardern became the 40th Prime Minister of New Zealand. New Zealand celebrated 125 years of women's suffrage in New Zealand in 2018, and Archives New Zealand created online content to promote the suffrage petition.

⁵ See Ministry for Women, 2017. Available on <http://women.govt.nz/about/new-zealand-women/history>

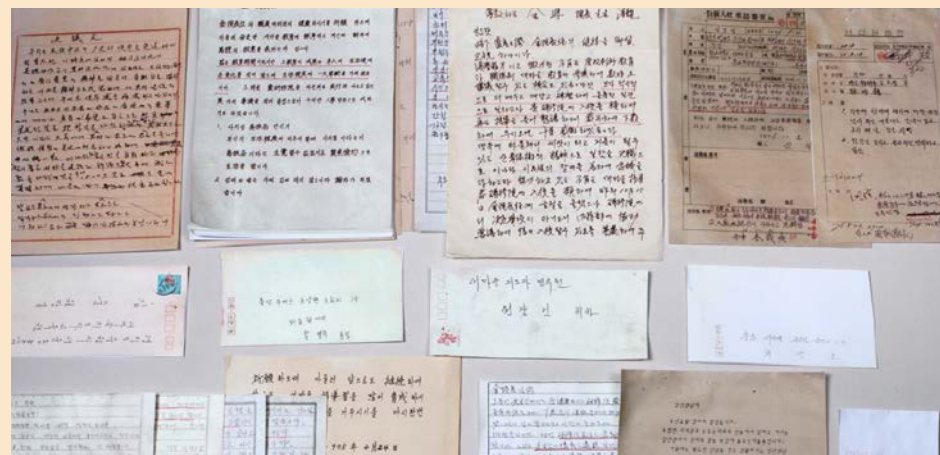
GEM 2 – Gender Responsive Nominations

Archives of Saemaul Undong (New Community Movement), Republic of Korea

Inscribed on the international register in 2013

GEM 2 - The archives illustrate the impact of Saemaul Undong on the lives of women as well as their status and political involvement in South Korea in the 1970s. The item could have qualified as GEM 3 if the nomination form had described more precisely how the movement had challenged existing discriminatory policies and practices regarding women's status and had influenced radical change.

Saemaul Undong, New Community Movement, was a community-driven development program pursued during the 1970s in the Republic of Korea. This was the key program in the country's long-term economic development initiative, implemented during the latter half of the 20th century. The movement was launched by President Park Chung Hee. It was based on three components: diligence, self-help and cooperation. The achievements of the movement included rehabilitation of village infrastructure, improvement in the overall rural living environment, and a significant increase in household income. Ultimately, the most important long-term benefits of the movement were not its outward tangible achievements, but rather those that resulted from the sweeping change in the mentality of the people. The notable example of this is that a woman leader was elected through a democratic process in each of some 34,000 villages across the country, encouraging women's social participation and contributing to the leadership development of women. Women in rural villages emerged from traditional marginalization through active participation in Saemaul Undong. They came to have a bigger voice and voted at village meetings, from which they had traditionally been excluded. Many women were elected as Saemaul leaders, contributing to the broader social participation of women and improving their status.



© Korea Saemaul Undong Center

Women in the Republic of Korea traditionally were bound by the Confucian patriarchal tradition of giving priority to males⁶. The family roles of women had been limited to those of mothers, daughters and daughters-in-law, until the Saemaul Undong movement encouraged

⁶ See Asian Development Bank, 2012. The Saemaul Undong Movement in the Republic of Korea: Sharing Knowledge on Community-Driven Development. Available on <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29881/saemaul-undong-movement-korea.pdf>

them to participate in community activities. The movement called on women to fulfill new social roles as community members that extended beyond their traditional roles within the family. Women’s social participation included the selection and implementation of projects through their participation in village general meetings. The Saemaul Women’s Club played a key role in many villages in that it raised funds for community projects, increased savings for communal funds, and managed community assets through the Saemaul village banks. With the guidance and support of the government, the movement encouraged women in rural communities to initiate small-scale income-generating projects for their households. Many earned wages by working in Saemaul factories, generated side income from small-scale animal husbandry, or saved money in numerous ways.

Archives and Manuscripts of Macau Kong Tac Lam Temple (1645–1980), Macau, China

Inscribed on the regional Asia-Pacific register in 2016

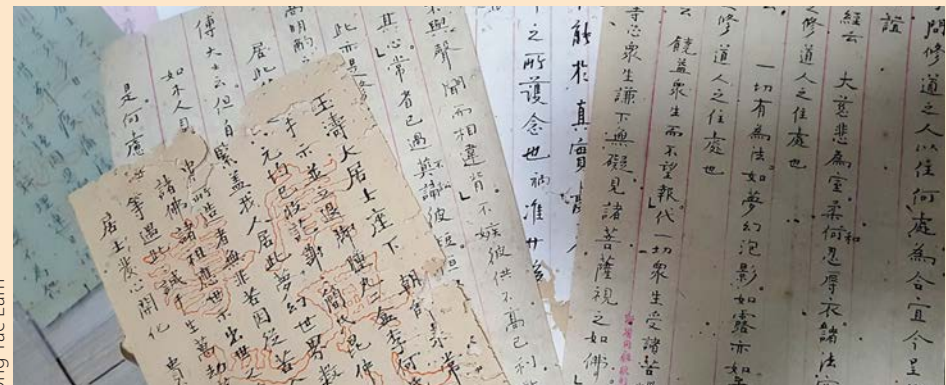
GEM 2 - The description of the item in the analysis of the nomination form is GEM 2 but it could qualify as GEM 3 if the substantive social changes and reforms relating to the liberation and raising of social status of women were described in the nomination form.

The collection comprises over 6000 volumes of rare books in 2000 titles, archives, manuscripts, and Buddhist texts on palm leaves. It began from the inception of the Kong Tac Lam Temple in 1918 as a result of its educational and cultural activities in Macau, China and in the neighboring region.

The collection is an important documentary heritage of Macau because it bears witness to the unique and extraordinary role of the temple in the dissemination of Buddhist teachings and ideology in Macao, China and in a number of other Asian countries. It also advocated social changes and reforms, especially in the improvement of the status of women in social, economic and political life.

Macau is a city in southern China’s Guangdong province, and was, until 20 December 1999, an overseas Portuguese territory, founded in 1557. It is now a Special Administrative Region (SAR) within the People’s Republic of China, which agreed to recognize the city’s special social and economic system for a period of fifty years. As a creation of the Portuguese, Macau exhibits a peculiar blend of oriental and western influences. This has given rise to a unique and hybrid urban culture, giving the city an air of romance and nostalgia. At present, it is a rich commercial and industrialized city.

More detailed studies are needed to show how the documentary heritage item has contributed to the liberation of women in Macau today. With regard to the division of labor by gender, women are more and more active in business, but are not sufficiently represented in political life.



© Association of Priety and Longevity Kong Tac Lam

GEM 1 – Gender Sensitive Nomination

Qiaopi and Yinxin Correspondence and Remittance Documents from Overseas Chinese, China

Inscribed on the international register in 2013

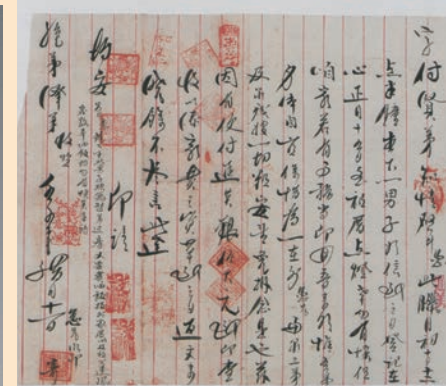
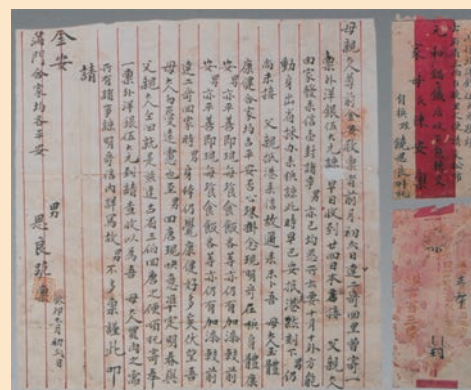
GEM 1 - The description of the item in the analysis of the nomination form contains only one reference to gender equality but the records could qualify as GEM 1 as they contain important sources of information for scholars conducting research on women’s history in Southeastern China. The concept of gender equality also emerged from the correspondence with Western society, and was reflected in local education and clan system management.

These historical documents consist of letters, reports, account books and remittance receipts resulting from communication between Chinese emigrants overseas and their families in the 19th and 20th century. Qiaopi, the remittance letters, refers to communications from overseas Chinese to their relatives left behind in China. These included letters, money and sometimes gifts, and constitute evidence of Chinese international migration history and cross-cultural contact and internationalization between East and West. Stories as told and reflected by Qiaopi cover a wide range of human activities. With their rich content, Qiaopi are valuable supplementary source materials to official historical documents. They also serve as an irreplaceable spiritual bridge linking the emigrant workers to their families at home.

There is an interesting study about Qiaopi that addresses the question of gender equality: Chinese Qiaopi and Memory of the World edited by Ding Zhirong, Xiamen, Fujian (2014). This volume discusses the important role of women in the history of regional migration, and focuses on the life stories of the women left behind in Qiaoxiang in southeastern China. Furthermore, it discusses the value and use of remittance letters for research on the women. Remittance letters contained rich information that has attracted scholars’ attention, although the women’s history has been largely ignored.

These letters, especially those that were from the women to their overseas relatives, contained information on the women’s experiences feelings during the migration process. The feelings and the issues that the women talk about in the letters reveal the cooperation and conflict between the women left behind and migrant men, and the changes in migrant families. They point to the significant position of the women in the families and the transnational networks, demonstrating the direct and profound impact of overseas migration on the women left behind. As a result, the remittance letters are significant resources for research on the women who were left behind in the Qiaoxiang area in southeastern China.

In Qiaopi, Chinese overseas workers expressed their care and love for their countries and family members, as well as their strong attachment to things in traditional China. Qiaopi also reflected the influence of western and Southeast Asian cultures and their assimilation by local cultures in the towns and countries where these Chinese emigrants originated. For example, the concept of justice and fairness was adopted in village management. The concept of gender equality also took root and was reflected in traditional local education and clan system management.



© China Guangdong Provincial Archives and Fujian Provincial Archives

Different treatment for men and women can easily be seen in many areas of society. In China, inequalities between the sexes remained, not only as regards access to education, employment and health, but also in matters of inheritance, salaries, political representation and decision-making within the family. China is considered as the home of a thoroughly entrenched patriarchal family system, and as a place where the 1949 revolution and the post-Mao reforms massively rearranged marriage, family and affective life.

GEM 0 – Selected Examples of Inscriptions Whose Descriptions are Gender Neutral but could Quality to a Higher Degree of GEM

Bayasanghori Shâhnâmeh (Prince Bayasanghor's Book of the Kings), Islamic Republic of Iran

Inscribed on the international register in 2007

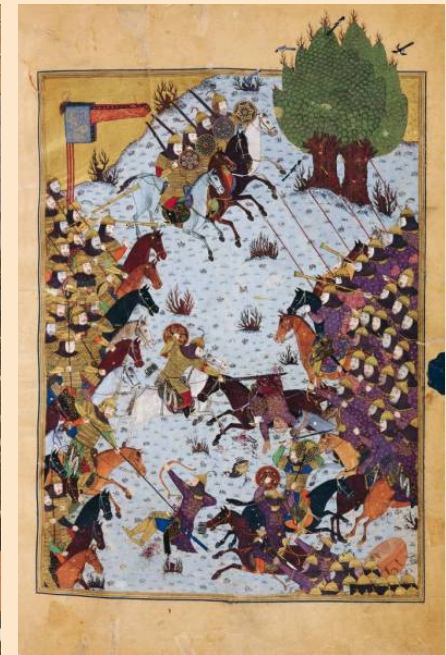
GEM 0 - The description of the item in the analysis of the nomination form is GEM 0 but could be reassigned to GEM 1 as the records contain stories depicting the situation of women in Persia from ancient times to the rise of Islam.

This is one of the classics of the Persian-speaking world. This book was made in 1430 for Prince Bayasanghor (1399-1433). The Book of Kings is based on a work begun by the Persian poet Daqiqi and on popular legends of the four great pre-Islamic empires of the Persian-speaking world: the largely mythical Pishdadian and Kayanian dynasties, the semi-historical Ashkanians, including the real Seleucids and Parthians, and the Sassanians. It was written by Abolghassen Mansour-ibn-Hassan Firdausi Tousi known as Ferdowsi (941–1020) ten years before his death. The book represents the quintessence of the aesthetic and literary values of the elite rulers of the Timurid Renaissance who

dominated Central and Western Asia in the 15th century. An important feature of this work is that, although during the period of its creation Arabic was the main language of science and literature, Firdausi used only Farsi for writing the text, and therefore helped to revive and maintain this important world language.

The situation of women in the 15th century is difficult to detect in this Persian work. Women's collective efforts to seek equal rights date back to the 19th and early 20th centuries only. There is very little information available on women's rights movements prior to the Qajar dynasty (1795–1925), but more accounts are available from the Qajar and post-Qajar era.

The description of this item does not address gender equality. Women have always played fundamental, crucial and representative roles in the long history of Iran, from ancient times to the original rise of Islam. However, this description neither illustrates the crucial role played by women nor describes women's situation at that time.



The King Ram Khamhaeng Inscription, Thailand

Inscribed on the international register in 2003

GEM 0 - The description of the item in the analysis of the nomination form is GEM 0 but could qualify as GEM 1 if the records contained a gender analysis at the time of the Sukhothai State in the 13th century and how this is linked to the situation of women's rights in Thailand today.

The King Ram Khamhaeng Inscription of 1292 A.D. is considered a major documentary heritage of world significance. The reason for this is that it gives valuable information on several major themes of world history and culture. It not only records the invention of Thai language scripts that are the foundation of the modern scripts used in Thailand by 60 million people, but also provides a rare detailed description of the Thai state of Sukhothai in the 13th century. The inscription reflects values shared by many states in the world today, such as good governance, the rule of law, economic freedom, and religious morality, in this case Buddhism as one of the world's major religions. The inscription was used to support Thailand's successful inscription of the historic town of Sukhothai on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991.

The cultural and historical significance is evident in this registration. However, the item does not address the issue of gender equality properly.



© The National Museum Bangkok

Sakubei Yamamoto Collection, Japan

Inscribed on the international register in 2011

GEM 0 - This item can be upgraded to GEM1 if described with a gender perspective as the record itself is gender-sensitive.

The collection of annotated paintings and diaries of Sakubei Yamamoto is a personal testimony to developments during the late Meiji era and into the later 20th century, when the industrial revolution was still being acted out in the coal mining industry in Chikuho Coal Field. Sakubei depicted the women's working conditions in the coalmine. It was possible because Sakubei painted from ordinary people's points of view, and these are very important records on women.

In *Coal-Mining Women in Japan*, W. Donald Burton examined the women's life in the mines. Some of the women's comments describe their experiences:

"We all suffered when we worked in the coal mines. And it wasn't just minor suffering. I can laugh while talking about it now, but I can't forget the pain I felt at the time."

"It is amazing that most women could maintain an aura of cheerfulness in these circumstances. But few had the sense of satisfaction that accompanies true happiness. Although the women could joke about sexual encounters and enjoy the banter, affairs could lead to conception and pregnancy and thus even more unwanted burdens."

"At least mining companies housed their workers, however inadequately. The women often accepted the limitations of their 'restricted world' and avoided comparing their lives to those of people in other sectors of society. The miners' poverty was not the result of an unwillingness to try to better themselves or of passive acceptance of an avoidable fate. The circumstance of their lives tended to oblige them to endure penury and 'make the best' of their position at the bottom of the social scale, rather than to seek an upward mobility that was not open to them. There was, of course, a heavy psychological price to pay for their

unfortunate situation."⁷

What was the life of women like during Japan's Meiji era? The Meiji Restoration was a time for change for all people in Japan. During early industrialization, women worked in factories under poor conditions. They were deprived of any freedom. By the end of the Meiji era, such conditions were less common. In society and family situations, women still had no power. However, they were encouraged to be educated. They now received an education aimed at making them a good wife and a wise mother. Women were still under the influence of the men of the house and legally had no power. Under the Meiji Constitution of 1889 and the Law of Election, female citizens were denied the right to vote. Only in 1946 were women granted this right.



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⁷ Burton, W.D., 2014. *Coal-Mining Women in Japan: Heavy Burdens*. Routledge, p. 219.

Return to Maizuru Port - Documents Related to the Internment and Repatriation Experiences of Japanese (1945–1956), Japan

Inscribed on the international register in 2015

GEM 0 - The item could qualify as GEM 1 if described from a gender perspective, as the records contain information on the important role played by women during the internment of the Japanese military and the survivors' repatriation to Japan from 1945 to 1956.

When the Japanese Empire collapsed in 1945 due to its defeat in World War II, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 Japanese military personnel and civilians were interned in labor camps in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum has a unique and extensive collection of materials related to the internment and the survivors' repatriation from 1945 to 1956.

In Japan, women tend to be perceived as patient housewives, obeying their husbands. Society is often considered as a male dominant chauvinist culture. The women's movement in Japan's postwar era was intended to meet the basic human needs of women based on their sense of legal liberation. In the immediate postwar period and the early 1950s, the Japanese people suffered seriously from a shortage of food, clothing and shelter. Their common focus of attention was survival. Women were still responsible for taking care of domestic affairs, as in the pre-war days. Although there was both a bottom up and top down approach to the liberalization of women, not all Japanese embraced the changes. Thus, even today, the traditional characterization of Japanese women is still manifested.

In the memory of the return of Japanese servicemen and detainees from continental Asia, the photos demonstrate that mothers were waiting for the return of their sons. The women were described as mothers who remained in Japan during World War II. Indeed, women played a major role in providing hospitality to those who returned



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home after the long journey. In a record, Hana Tabata was identified as the representative of a women's group⁸. She welcomed repatriates, serving them hot tea and steamed sweet potato⁹.

⁸ See UCDAVIS, University of California. The Day of Return, Japanese Interned in Siberia. Available on <https://japaneseinsiberia.ucdavis.edu/en/maizuru-museum/2-day-return>

⁹ Her service began with the entry of the first repatriation ship, *Unzen-maru*, on 7 October 1945, and ended with the entry of the last ship, *Hakusan-maru*, in 1958. See *ibid.*

The Convict Records of Australia, Australia

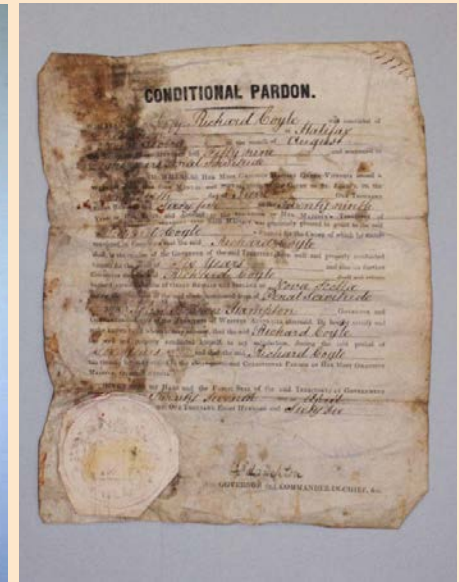
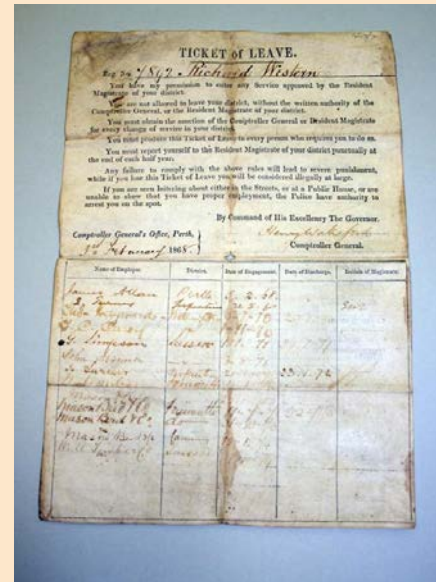
Inscribed on the international register in 2007

GEM 0 - The inscription could qualify as GEM 1 as the records contain gender disaggregated data of convicts transported to Australia.

The forced emigration to the continent of Australia of some 165,000 people in the 80 years between 1788–1868 represents the beginning of the modern age of globalization by a government agency. Transportation transformed forever the lives of these mostly British and Irish convicts, and, in turn, largely destroyed the way of life of Australia’s indigenous people. The convicts’ lives were minutely documented by a dedicated bureaucracy, generating a rare body of records of 19th century working class people, from their British roots to their Australian fates. These records contain information relating to all aspects of convicts’ lives, including physical appearance, literacy level, trade or calling, crime and sentence, behavior in incarceration, further punishment, pardon, ticket of leave and marriage. The forensic details about individual convicts have enabled historians to build a picture of the human capital which shaped the economy, demography and culture of early colonial Australia.

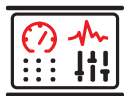
The Convict Records of Australia are indeed gender sensitive. About 12.3% of all the convicts transported to Australia were female, though the proportion varied according to time and circumstance. Some sources are cited in an important study as adding that they were predominantly young, single women who had been domestic servants or who had come from a semi-skilled background, such as training¹⁰. The majority of female convicts were first time offenders sentenced to transportation for minor theft¹¹. The convict population of both sexes was critically important to the foundation of white

Australia, and the women have received a great deal of historical and archaeological research attention, inevitably drawing on the Convict Records.



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¹⁰ See National Library of Australia. Female Convicts: Research Guide. Available on <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/convicts/female-convicts>
¹¹ Oxley, D., 1996. *Convict maids: the forced migration of women to Australia* (Vol. 23). Cambridge University Press. pp. 42–48.



Analysis

The Gender Equality Baseline Study on Memory of the World in Asia-Pacific has yielded several key insights into the nature of the Memory of the World (MoW) registers and indicated possible ways of addressing the deficiencies that it has revealed.

Relative Invisibility of Women in the Records Inscribed on the Memory of the World Registers

The findings of the Gender Equality Baseline Study bring a sharp focus on the relative invisibility of women in inscribed documentary heritage from the Asia-Pacific region. The finding that only four out of 155 inscriptions from the region can be reliably assigned a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) ranking, and that only one of those four inscriptions merits the highest GEM ranking, indicates that a sensitivity to gender equality is significantly lacking when nominations are contemplated, compiled and assessed.

This lack is due to two important factors:

- Records have not generally been selected for nomination to Memory of the World registers with gender equality in mind;
- Gender equality has not been considered as a factor in the description of nominated records.

Lack of a Gender Perspective in Relevant Memory of the World Documents

The case studies outlined above demonstrate that, in some cases, if a gender equality perspective had been applied to the nominated documents, a higher GEM ranking could have been achieved. That this perspective was not applied can be attributed in a considerable measure to the fact that the nomination forms and the MoW General Guidelines do not specifically articulate a need to consider gender equality when compiling a nomination and addressing the criteria for significance. Lacking this prompt, nominators quite understandably have not singled out women for specific treatment in their description of nominated documentary heritage, instead relying on the category of 'People' to encapsulate the experience of both genders.



Recommendations

The case studies cited above provide examples of how a gender equality perspective could have been applied if the nominators had been alerted to the need to consider this aspect when developing their nominations.

A first step in bringing a gender equality perspective to the nomination process for Memory of the World registers would thus be to add a specific prompt to the General Guidelines and the nomination form, asking nominators to consider the aspects of their nomination that address gender equality, and to describe them in detail, including a generic gender analysis of the context in which the nominated records were created. This prompt can be added to the nomination form as part of the selection criteria, particularly in relation to *Historical significance and Social, spiritual and community significance*, and can also be added to the checklist that nominators should complete before submitting their nomination.

Increasing the GEM rating of inscriptions in the Memory of the World Registers also requires a proactive stance by members of National MoW Committees or other bodies responsible for selecting nominations to the registers; and in the relevant IAC Sub-Committees in the MoW Programme, the Register Sub-Committee (RSC) and the Sub-Committee on Education and Research (SCEaR).

This can involve the implementation of the following strategies:

- Actively seeking out nominations foregrounding the role of women, individually or collectively, across all fields of human endeavor, but particularly with regard to achieving gender equality;
- Interrogating selected documents for their GEM qualities and highlighting these in the description in the nomination;
- Identify gender equality as a key theme for potential joint nominations, or as a thematic category across registers, as has been done for human rights documents;

- Alerting assessors of nominations to the requirement to consider a gender equality perspective when considering documents for inscription;
- Preparing a publication or an exhibition featuring case studies of Memory of the World inscriptions that meet GEM requirements;
- Promoting gender equality perspectives through the Sub-Committee on Education and Research Newsletter.

The Australian Memory of the World Committee, recognizing in 2015 that its Register only contained four out of 50 inscribed documents with a focus on women, either as subjects or creators of the records, set out to encourage more nominations of documents that better reflected a gender equality perspective in documents relating to Australia and its history. Since that time, five more items of documentary heritage created by women have been added to the Australian Register, two in 2017 and three in 2019¹². One of the five inscriptions relates to an Indigenous Australian woman speaking an endangered Indigenous language, two are literary manuscripts, and two are works of natural history.

Much work remains to be done at national, regional and international levels to embed a gender equality perspective in the process of selecting, describing, nominating and assessing documentary heritage for inscription on Memory of the World registers. This will involve some additions to the nomination form as a first line of action, and will also involve educating nominators and assessors in how best to describe and evaluate documentary heritage from a gender equality perspective. This Gender Equality Baseline Study on Memory of the World in Asia-Pacific is both a starting point and a call to action to address this significant deficiency in the Memory of the World registers.

¹² See www.amw.org.au



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