

Gov't to increase protection of immovable cultural relics

The State Administration of Cultural Heritage plans to step up preservation of immovable cultural relics, amid rapid urbanization.

"Immovable cultural relics should be avoided as much as possible in the choosing of construction sites," according to a circular issued by the administration.

The circular clarified procedures for the removal of immovable cultural relic status, and said that if such cultural relics were destroyed by natural disasters or construction activity, authorities should review and establish whether they still had heritage value.

Authorities should also publish such information and solicit public opinion.

More efforts will be made to protect poorly-preserved immovable cultural relics through government support.

China is home to more than 760,000 registered immovable cultural relics, according a 2011 national archaeological survey.

The collapse of Labour and Conservative sister parties in the Euro area

It looks as if neither the Republicans (Conservative) nor Socialists (Labour) will have a candidate in the last two to be French President. It looks as if a third force party run by Mr Wilders will be the top performing party in the Netherlands election in March. Syriza came from nowhere to be the largest party and form the government in Greece. Pasok (Labour) have no seats in the present Greek Parliament. In Italy Grillo's 5 Star Movement is well ahead of the two old main parties in the polls. In Spain Podemos and Ciudadanos have made huge inroads into the traditional centre right and left main parties, making it impossible for either to form a stable government easily.

I find it extraordinary that these once great governing parties of the post war world in Europe have given up their pre-eminence so easily. It shows just how out of touch they have become. The main driver of their demise and of the popular discontent seems to be the bad impact of EU austerity economics and the Euro on their economies. When a country has half its young people out of

work and around a fifth of its entire workforce laid off, it is no wonder voters seek a better way. The traditional parties are either deaf to the entreaties of those who want change, or impotent to change the things that matter because they have locked themselves into the EU and Euro schemes.

Whenever a country gets into a predictable governing crisis owing to its fractured party politics the EU proposes a technocrat led coalition government following the Brussels rules. When a country votes for decisive change, as Greece did when it elected Syriza to government, the EU works to ensure there can be no positive change and redoubles its efforts to enforce the very policies that have led to the political explosion in the first place. Economic failure can lead to a cry for strict controls on the movement of people, and a sharper nationalist rhetoric, as people hit out in search of a solution to a problem which their EU loving rulers scarce admit exists.

It is one thing for the traditional parties to decline, as they are. It is another for a single strong challenger party to emerge and take over government. That so far has only happened in Greece, though it could happen elsewhere this year. It is an even more difficult thing for that challenger party to break free from the shackles of conventional EU politics and improve the outlook. So far Syriza has been unable to do that, owing to voter ambiguity about the Euro project.

Marine Le Pen is made of sterner stuff than Syriza. Were she to win she would take France out of the Euro and run an economic policy she thinks would change France for the better. The AFD in Germany want to take their country out of the single currency, and have recently defeated the two traditional parties in Land elections. They remain well behind Mrs Merkel's party in polls for a national election. Sgnr Grillo is playing on the growing unpopularity of the Euro in Italy and may want to exit were he to win.

The ruling elite of the EU, with its single currency and panoply of Brussels controls, is on trial in this years elections in the Netherlands, France, Germany and probably Italy too. The triumph of Brexit and Trump show there could be an upset for the ruling EU group in one or more of these. Meanwhile the Euro elite fasten their seatbelts and proceed with the same approach.

Chinese soldier returns home after 54 years in India

At around 6 p.m. Saturday, Wang Qi set his feet on his homeland again in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, after spending 54 years in a life drift in India.

"I'm finally home!" a sobbing Wang hugged his tearful brothers and sisters at Xi'an Xianyang International Airport.

Wang, a Chinese soldier, got lost in a forest on the China-India border in 1963. He was rescued by India's Red Cross Society and later handed over to Indian military. The military sentenced him in jail for seven years after regarding him as an "espionage."

Wang settled and married in a rural area in India after serving his sentence, but he always wanted to go home. During the past years, Wang sent many letters to his family members in Xuezhainan Village in Shaanxi's Qianxian County, expressing his homesickness and the desire to go back.

To help Wang return home, the Chinese embassy in India made every effort to get him an exit permit. In 2013, he received a Chinese passport and financial support from the government, which made it possible for him to return.

In Wang's home village, groups of people lined outside the house of Wang's younger brother Wang Shun on Saturday, which happens to be China's Lantern Festival, a day that traditionally represents reunion.

"After all these years, he is finally coming back," Wang Shun said as he prepared a quilt for Wang Qi. "We bought the furniture in this room many years ago."

"He has not changed much, I can still recognize him," said local villager Wang Ming. "All of us in the village have been waiting for his return, and we are just happy that he made it."

Copycat terracotta warriors spur discussions

Copycat terracotta warriors in east China have fueled hot discussions after pictures of the army replica recently surfaced on the Internet.

The replica, located in a theme park in Taihu County, Anhui Province, boasts up to 1,000 warriors. Pictures on the park's official website show the warriors standing in line, and on one side of the army stands a statue of China's first emperor Qinshihuang, waving his hand.

According to the website, the park was completed in 2008, and the warriors have been open to visitors ever since.

The original terracotta warriors are located in Xi'an City, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province. The relics were first discovered by farmers underneath a pomegranate orchard in Xi'an in 1974.

The images of the copycat army fueled a heated discussion on the Internet, with many questioning whether the display of the Anhui warriors is an act of

infringement.

Authorities with the Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, which manages the Xi'an terracotta warriors, apparently caught wind of the replica and have issued a statement on its website.

The museum said that any act of using the museum's name and its registered trademarks without authorization is an act of infringement.

"The museum did not permit or give authorization to the displaying of the copycat terracotta warriors in Taihu County of Anhui Province," said the statement. "We reserve the right to take legal action against any violators in accordance with law."

"The replicated warriors pose unfair competition," said Yan Yuxin, a lawyer for the museum. "We have sent a lawyer's letter to them."

Yang Ming, a law professor with Peking University, said that the key is to find out whether the Anhui organizers have advertised their replica as the genuine one. "If they did promote it as a replica, then it is a debatable issue."

On the Anhui park's official website, an introduction to the warriors said that "the replica of the terracotta warriors is intended to let the public feel the culture of the Qin Dynasty."

Liu Simin, deputy head of the tourism branch of China Society for Futures Studies, said that such copycat behavior is not worth promoting.

"Making such replicas is disrespectful to the original ones," Liu said. "Related departments should come up with ways to handle infringing behavior, which are still rampant in China."

[The hopes, concerns around Lantern Festival](#)

Are you curious about the Chinese Lantern Festival? Do you have a vague idea and would like to know more? Archeologists and craftsmen could help shine some light on this yearly event.

A 1,400-year-old fragment of silk, about the size of a piece of A4 paper, depicts lanterns hanging on trees. Surrounding the trees are rams and chickens.

This scene is all about the Lantern Festival, confirmed Adliabulizi, a research fellow with Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum.

"Chicken and rams are homophones for the Chinese characters for auspiciousness," he said. "This shows that people were celebrating Lantern Festival back then."

The fabric was found in the Astana Ancient Tombs in Turpan, Xinjiang, in the 1970s. The tombs are 2km north of the ruins of an ancient city called Gaochang, which was active from the 1st Century B.C. to the 13th Century A.D. The tombs were the final resting place of officials and ordinary people of different ethnic groups in Gaochang.

Traditionally, Chinese make lanterns and rice balls, which represent reunion, on Lantern Festival, the first full moon of a new lunar year, which falls on Feb.11 this year.

Cao Zhenrong, 73, has been making festive lanterns since he was four. This year is the Year of the Rooster, and Cao has made almost 2,000 chicken-shaped lanterns.

It used to take three days to complete all of the 30 plus steps needed to finish just one lantern, as split bamboo and paper were the usual materials. Today wire is used.

"Not many of the younger generation are interested in lantern making," said Cao. "There were more than 200 lantern workshops in Nanjing in the 1960s. Only 20 remain today."

Cao is hoping to innovate the craft so that it does not die out.

"I cannot just make lotus lanterns all the time, so I have experimented with silk and electricity," he said.

Lantern Festival marks the end of the Spring Festival celebrations. Duan Xujian insists on staying at home until Lantern Festival even though his company reopened on Feb. 3.

"This is how the Spring Festival holiday should end," said Duan, 28, from Nanyu Village, Qinyuan County in north China's Shanxi Province.

He was one of 400 villager who featured in a group photograph, taken Saturday morning. It was the first time the village has ever come together to have their photograph taken, according to 69-year-old villager Liu Guangming.

Aside from lion dances , rural folk performances, and lantern shows, villagers in Nanyu have prepared a zigzag pathway with wood sticks. All the villagers have to navigate it, in the hope that the road ahead is smooth in the new year.

Duan will return to work after this weekend. But for Chu Fengshan, the textile company that he works for in Jiangsu in east China is still struggling to fill its vacancies.

"We had 100 employment opportunities that we advertised at three separate job fairs in Henan province, but only recruited five people," said Chu.

More and more rural residents are looking for jobs closer to home, said Liu Peifeng, section chief in charge of rural workers at Henan provincial bureau of human resources and social security.

More than 28.7 million rural workers in Henan were employed within the province in 2016, more than the number of outbound migrant workers for six consecutive years, according to the bureau.

In east China's Fujian Province where the weather is much warmer, people are preparing to plough the fields. In Julin Village, Changting County, young men parade the fields holding a statue of the Guan bodhisattva on their shoulders to pray for a harvest.

On the other side of the Taiwan Strait, "Tong Liang Huo Long," a dragon dance under a shower of melted iron, debuted in Taiwan.

Named a national intangible heritage originating from Chongqing, nearly 10,000 people went to watch the performance staged in Nantou County, according to Lin Ming-chen, the county head.

"We were all thrilled by the fantastic performance," said Lin. "It was a delightful cross-Strait exchange. We look forward to more like it!"