

Iran's carpet washing ritual registered on UNESCO representative list - Tehran Times

Culture Desk

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TEHRAN -- The UNESCO has registered the ritual of the carpet washing in Mashhad Ardehal on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Elements from many other countries including Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy, and Japan were also inscribed on the list during the seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on December 5, UNESCO announced in its website. The meeting came to an end on Friday.

The ritual of the carpet washing in Mashhad Ardehal symbolizes a funeral held for Imamzadeh Soltan Ali (AS), a descendant of Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS), in the region of Mashhad Ardehal in 732 CE.

The ritual is held annually on the second Friday of fall by the young men of the city of Fin and the village of Khaveh, located near the shrine of the imamzadeh.

Some heralds are sent to Fin and Khaveh a week before to call on people to attend the ceremony.

A large carpet, which is kept at the shrine, is wrapped in green textile and delivered to the young men whirling sticks in the air. The sticks symbolize the clubs the people of the region used as weapons centuries ago.

Reciting religious poems, they take the carpet to wash it in the Shazdeh Hossein Spring near the shrine. Afterwards, it is delivered back to the guardians of the shrine.

Thousands of people annually travel to Mashhad Ardehal to watch the ceremony.

This is first time an element from Iran was registered on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This list covers cultural expressions that are testimony to the diversity of intangible heritage. It is designed to help raise awareness of the importance of this heritage.

Noruz, the Iranian New Year celebration, and the titles and components of the radifs in traditional Iranian music were registered on UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.

The music of the Bakhshis of the Khorasan region, the Pahlevani and Zurkhaneh sports, the Iranian passion play tazieh, the traditional skills of carpet weaving in the Fars region and the traditional skills of carpet weaving in Kashan are other Iranian items that were registered on the list in November 2010.

MMS/YAW

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