

Nomination form

International Memory of the World Register

1.0 Checklist

Nominees may find the following checklist useful before sending the nomination form to the International Memory of the World Secretariat. The information provided in italics on the form is there for guidance only and should be deleted once the sections have been completed.

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- Summary completed (section 1)
-
- Nomination and contact details completed (section 2)
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- Declaration of Authority signed and dated (section 2)
-
- If this is a joint nomination, section 2 appropriately modified, and **all** Declarations of Authority obtained
-
- Documentary heritage identified (sections 3.1 – 3.3)
-
- History/provenance completed (section 3.4)
-
- Bibliography completed (section 3.5)
-
- Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organizations recorded (section 3.6)
-
- Details of owner completed (section 4.1)
-
- Details of custodian – if different from owner – completed (section 4.2)
-
- Details of legal status completed (section 4.3)
-
- Details of accessibility completed (section 4.4)
-
- Details of copyright status completed (section 4.5)
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- Evidence presented to support fulfilment of the criteria? (section 5)
-
- Additional information provided (section 6)
-
- Details of consultation with stakeholders completed (section 7)
-
- Assessment of risk completed (section 8)
-
- Summary of Preservation and Access Management Plan completed. If there is no formal Plan attach details about current and/or planned access, storage and custody arrangements (section 9)
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- Any other information provided – if applicable (section 10)
-
- Suitable reproduction quality photographs identified to illustrate the documentary heritage. (300dpi, jpg format, full-colour preferred).
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- Copyright permissions forms signed and attached. Agreement to propose item(s) for inclusion on the World Digital Library if inscribed

Nomination form
International Memory of the World Register

The Archives of Suzhou Silk from Modern and Contemporary Times

ID Code [2016-78]

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

Give a brief description of the documentary heritage being nominated and the reasons for proposing it.

Silk, which originated from China, is a human treasure. China is the hometown of silk and known as "Seres." Silk was mentioned twice in the Old Testament of the Bible and called "the most beautiful fabric." Chinese silk which was exported to Eurasia as early as the Han Dynasty (the 2nd Century B. C.) was an economic and cultural bridge between the countries of East and West. The world-known Silk Road came into being. The rise of the silk trade in the world led to advances in textile technology and apparel, and also laid the historical groundwork needed for the later cotton and industrial revolutions.

Suzhou occupies an important place in China's history of silk-weaving technology. Since ancient times, it has enjoyed a reputation as "the city of silk". Suzhou was once filled with the voice of thousands of weaving machines since the 19th century and witnessed the heyday of silk industry. Its silk, as one of the most representative industrial materials in China, was well-known around the world and represented the highest level of silk production at that time in China and anywhere else.

The Archives of Suzhou Silk from Modern and Contemporary Times cover technical research, production management, trading and marketing, and the foreign exchange of many Suzhou silk enterprises and organizations from the 19th century to the end of 20th century. These archives are composed of different forms including written records and silk samples with high preservation value. These archives contain 29,592 volumes, consisting of design drawing, specification sheet, purchase order and product sample.

These archives have witnessed the historic change of Chinese silk industry from the traditional workshop to industrial production. In these archives, there are a large number of export trade certifications and pattern designs with international elements in accordance with the export target preferences, which reflect the East-West trade exchanges and culture changes of more than a century. The historical and international significance of the archives also echoes with the current exchanges between countries along the route of "Belt and Road" initiative.

*This is the "shop window" of your nomination and is best written **last!** It should contain all the essential points you want to make, so that anyone reading it can understand your case even if they do not read the rest of your nomination.*

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration is the owner and preserver of the nominated archives.

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Bu Jianmin

Director of Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration

2.4 Contact details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>
Bu Jianmin	No. 166, Qimen Road, Gusu District, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, the People's Republic of China Postcode: 215001

<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Facsimile</i>	<i>Email</i>
86-512-67530177	86-512-67530177	szbujm@163.com

3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

In this part of the form you must describe the document or collection in sufficient detail to make clear precisely what you are nominating. Any collection must be finite (with beginning and end dates) and closed.

The Archives of Suzhou Silk from Modern and Contemporary Times

3.4 History/provenance

The Archives of Suzhou's Silk from Modern and Contemporary Times come from many silk enterprises and organizations from the 19th century to the end of 20th century, among which there were the time-honored Suzhou Zhenya Silk Weaving Factory, the Suzhou Dongwu Silk Weaving Factory, the Suzhou Guangming Silk Weaving Factory, the Suzhou Textile Printing Factory, the Suzhou Silk Painting and Dyeing Factory and the Suzhou Silk Research Institute, etc.

According to the *Archives Law of the People's Republic of China*, the archives have been professionally received and protected by the Suzhou archives departments. The collecting processes were strictly in accordance with procedures to receive, register, and store. The collection and reception processes were completely recorded. The sources, authenticity and integrity of the archives are beyond doubt.

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name	Address
Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration.	No. 166, Qimen Road, Gusu District, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, the People's Republic of China Postcode: 215001

Telephone	Facsimile	Email
86-512-67530177	86-512-67530177	szbujm@163.com

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name	Address
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Telephone	Facsimile	Email
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4.3 Legal status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage

- a) Ownership Type : Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration
 - b) Accessibility: Viewing or Reading of Original Objects/Texts are limited. Pictures, Publications and Digital Discs are open to the Public.
 - c) Copyright Owner: Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration.
 - d) Administrative Authority: Suzhou Archives Administration, China
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4.4 Accessibility

Describe how the item(s) / collection may be accessed

Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration provides a documentary catalogue database of modern and contemporary silk archives so as to facilitate search and reference.

All access restrictions should be explicitly stated below:

Viewing or Reading of Original Objects/Texts are Limited. Pictures, Publications and Digital copies are Open to the Public.

4.5 Copyright status

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

Copyright is owned by Suzhou Industrial and Commercial Archives Administration.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity.

Is the documentary heritage what it appears to be? Have identity and provenance been reliably established?

The Archives of Suzhou's Silk from Modern and Contemporary Times come from the silk enterprises and organizations represented by the time-honored Suzhou Zhenya Silk Weaving Factory, the Suzhou Dongwu Silk Weaving Factory, the Suzhou Guangming Silk Weaving Factory, the Suzhou Textile Printing Factory, the Suzhou Silk Painting and Dyeing Factory and the Suzhou Silk Research Institute, among others. The archives were received by the government archives authorities in Suzhou in accordance with *Archives Law of the People's Republic of China*. The reception process has been recorded completely, the sources are clear and definite, and the authenticity is beyond doubt.

5.2 World significance

Is the heritage unique and irreplaceable? Would its disappearance constitute and harmful impoverishment of the heritage of humanity? Has it created great impact over time and/or within a particular cultural area of the world? Has it had great influence (positive or negative) on the course of history?

According to archaeological findings, Chinese silk dates back to the Neolithic period, about five to six thousand years ago. With the development of processing technology, Chinese silk has become well known across the world for its excellent quality, exquisite color, and rich culture. For nearly one hundred years, Chinese silk has further developed and witnessed its heyday for the development of industrial technology. Suzhou is known as the "City of Silk" in China, and the most developed region for the silk industry. The properties of China silk such as technological quality, structure, color, cultural significance, and history are all reflected in Suzhou's silk archives. Yoshio Kobayashi, head of the Japan Silk Association, said these archives could be used as reference for the research in silk industry globally.

There are a large number of export trade certifications and pattern designs with international elements in the archives which record the history of Suzhou silk as an important symbol of oriental civilization and a material exported around the world. They also reflect East-West trade and cultural exchanges of over a century. The historical and international significance of the archives also echoes with the current exchanges of nations along the route of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

Does the heritage meet any of the following tests? (It must meet at least one of them.)

1 Time

Is the document evocative of its time (which may have been a time of crisis, or significant social or cultural change)? Does it represent a new discovery? Or is it the “first of its kind”?

These archives were formed between the 19th and the end of the 20th centuries, which witnessed the most important historical stages in contemporary China. They provide solid information of the silk industry transforming from traditional times to the industrialized period and offer concrete materials for research in early stages of China’s national industry.

2 Place

Does the document contain crucial information about a locality important in world history and culture? For example, was the location itself an important influence on the events or phenomena represented by the document? Does it describe physical environments, cities or institutions that have since vanished?

All of these archives are from Suzhou, an important silk production area of China. There are not only production information of some representative products such as Song Brocade, Zhangduan, Wu gauze which are traditional and unique weaving technology of Suzhou but also technical and trade information of representative products such as taffeta which represent the highest level of silk production in modern and contemporary times. These archives have representative meaning and extremely high value in the development of silk industry.

3 People

Does the cultural context of the document’s creation reflect significant aspects of human behaviour, or of social, industrial, artistic or political development? Or does it capture the essence of great movements, transitions, advances or regression? Does it illustrate the lives of prominent individuals in the above fields?

The archives reflect the creations of people on silk production technology and artistic quality, and demonstrate the spirit to pursue perfection of craftsmen of generations after generations. Moreover, they also show the cultural exchanges between the East and West through the silk trade. The silk patterns collected in the archives reflect the people’s aesthetic fashion and dressing system of Chinese traditional culture, Japanese kimono culture, American cartoon culture, and European Culture, and so on.

4 Subject and theme

Does the subject matter of the document represent particular historical or intellectual developments in the natural, social and human sciences? Or in politics, ideology, sport or

the arts?

The archives are precious records of Suzhou silk manufacturing technique and historical development, with plenty of pattern grids, specification sheets, and product samples. The pattern grid which is a drawing of different weave structures of fabric on a specific gridded paper plays a crucial role as a link connecting different stages of silk production. The specification sheet records some information such as the product specification, technological procedure, product character, physical and chemical indexes and technical indexes of product. Product samples are visual exhibit of silk technology.

5 Form and style

Does the document have outstanding aesthetic, stylistic or linguistic value? Or is it a typical exemplar of a type of presentation, custom or medium? Is it an example of a disappeared or disappearing carrier or format?

The prominent features of the archives are the overall preservation and mutual match of paper records and product samples. Product samples are a must for visual display of paper records. Both of them work together to convey vivid silk details and historical changes. It is more vivid, intuitive and persuasive for the archives to reflect history, inherit techniques, reflection of history, evoke people's interest and concern.

These archives contain a lot of preserved orders, contracts and samples involved in the trades between Suzhou and countries in Asia, Europe, Americas and Middle East. The samples, together with the orders, form a marketing archive, reflecting the specially designed patterns with a blend of international elements for export destinations. Hence the archives reflect socio-cultural development and changes in these countries and regions.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

Application of this criterion must reflect living significance – does documentary heritage have an emotional hold on people who are alive today? Is it venerated as holy or for its mystical qualities, or revered for its association with significant people and events?

(Once those who have revered the documentary heritage for its social/ spiritual/ community significance no longer do so, or are no longer living, it loses this specific significance and may eventually acquire historical significance.)

In these archives, the paper technology forms and silk samples matched mutually which technically preserve the technology details of product such as component materials, technology parameters and color patterns. These details provide great convenience for the technology inheritance, industry innovation, and thus have significant reference value and economic value. This is different from the way of “word of mouth” used by traditional Chinese craftsman, which leads to distortion and even disappearance after craftsman dies. For example, the silk paper pattern used by the Suzhou Weaving Administration which was the most famous official weaving agency during the late Qing Dynasty (1840-1911) was honored as the origin of the patterns used by the Suzhou Silk Factory after 1949.

Unlike the freewheeling artistic creations, the silk samples involved in these archives are indivisible and intuitive impressions of silk technology and silk culture. From the perspective of artistic expression, they are particularly rich in shape, structure, color and pattern. The meanings of happiness, wealth, good fortune and peace are represented by specific patterns to convey a universal resonance of aesthetics. The complex techniques, exquisite colors and rich content in these archives present the rich culture and long history of Chinese silk, and exhibit the amazing silk civilization created by human beings.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

There are a lot of silk samples in addition to the paper archives in these archives. Because in essence, silk is a kind of animal protein fiber. This has limited its life within a certain period of time, left it vulnerable to damage caused by contamination, and made it hard to be preserved long and sound. And it is hard to have a full collection of these silk products, due to that silks products related references in different periods of time, whichever countries they were in, were produced by different enterprises and under the administration of different authorities. Therefore, it's rare to see a collection of archives on silk this large in number, this comprehensive in content and this high in quality in China or even around the world.

6.2 Integrity

The major part of the archives are well preserved with only a small portion yellowed, damaged by worms or missed as a result of very long time.

