

Antiquities Homecoming : An Experience of Rescue Team of Cultural Relics

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Abstract

Through five thousand years of Chinese culture, there are as many ancient cultural relics as there are stars in the night sky. Much like stars, these artefacts are scattered all over the world. For this reason, we established a small antiquity public welfare organization. In this article, we will introduce some details around working in this department and explore our user experience. Some of these activities include; looking for ancient cultural relics, finding ancient cultural relics, identifying ancient cultural relics, and contacting a descendant of ancient cultural relics, and negotiating with the sellers; with the ultimate goal of sending the antiquities back to their home. We felt the sacred sense of mission by bringing antiquities home. We also began to realize the public welfare and the value of the historical relics are common to people all over the world.

At present, the problem of the antiquities coming home is emerging in the various rescue operations once again. In particular, as the nation becomes generally wealthier, there is an increase in the number of transactions to acquire ancient cultural relics to obtain profits. In addition, historically, overseas organizations and foreign funding agencies have been acquiring Chinese ancient cultural relics strategically. Because of this, bringing the ancient cultural relics back to their hometown or museum, or returning them to their descendants has become even more difficult. Therefore, our team has decided to create and manage the ancient cultural relic's rescue and homecoming project. Through which, we will advocate that the ancient cultural relic's protection and public

welfare for ancient cultural relics is paramount. We will do our best to return these ancient cultural relics back to their hometown, and let the ancient cultural relics engage and influence the public.

Key words: Cultural relics, homecoming, descendant, collections, cultural and creative industry

The experience of Germany how they dispose "gray antiquities"

1.1 Chippindall Law

British archaeologist Christopher Chippindall and Dawid Geere began an unprecedented investigation in 2000, using 7 international collections of cultural relics in the collection system to verify the reliability of their source. Officials have the collection directory with those cultural relics, which clearly record every piece of the source.

However, of the 1396 items catalogued, up to 75% of these cultural relics lack the source of written documents. They also found that there were more than 500 pieces of relics lack any historical transaction record and has been proved that no one knows why this group of cultural relics made its debut on display in the museum. That means these exhibits illegally possess potentially tomb-raided stolen goods. They have a startling discovery after compared with the same marked when the exhibits on display in different provenance. Generally, those first exhibited marked "unknown sources" cultural relics appeared again with a clear source tag, suggesting that these cultural relics may be a fake story. Their research result is called Chippindall Law.

1.2 Museum admitted "gray cultural relics"

There is a hidden rule which allows cultural relics with no transparent background in the marker. A clear experience relic which we call white

cultural relic not only can check all previous possessors and where it came out of that therefore it should be legal. On the other hand, an unclear experienced cultural relic which we call black cultural relic usually came out of the grave or was stolen out of the museum or from private collectors. Actually, most traded relics in the market are gray cultural relics which we do not know where they came out but still could pull wool over some possessors' eyes. However, archaeologists deem that gray cultural relics are equal to the black cultural relics. In the early 1960s, the British Museum with a rich collection of relic objects bought from the market. In 1970, UNESCO issued a convention against cultural products illegally traded, but Germany didn't become signatories until 2007. Although Germany signed, but there were still many excuses to reject the convention, and not to return those illegal cultural relics. Germany started to implement a legislative correction as to ensure the innocence of its collections. It stipulated that acquisitions in the museum should be white relics. Baden state museum curator Eckart Cohen said "museum curator's affection and greed of collection tend to cause them to become accessories of illegal trade." he said "It is not innocent cultural relics derived from an anonymous Swiss collector".

2 Antiquities Homecoming

People always marvel at the beauty of an ancient cultural relic when they see it. However, does everyone know where it comes from or who its owner is? Is this a clear origin of cultural relics? As we know the cases in Germany and UK. There are many cultural relics with unclear origins. So, a program came out. This is a program to return relics that belonged to certain families or estates. And there is an overwhelming feeling by the members of our organization that this is the right and just thing to do. We plan to return objects, may they be relics to certain descendants or

surviving families or organizations who manage familial assets we trust. There are many reasons as to why relic objects may be in disarray or disregarded. Our goal as a group is to preserve the legacy and spirit of the relic objects. In doing so, we have to secure adequate funding to purchase relic objects in existing markets that to offer prices to said objects. We plan to setup a process by which we will discern the appropriate prices and appraised value that we deem fair for purchase. We will employ a mechanism that is equitable for all parties involved. We will standard governing practices to regulate the process to ensure

stability. An issue that will be addressed in the future is the question of funding. We will establish a funding process for this project.

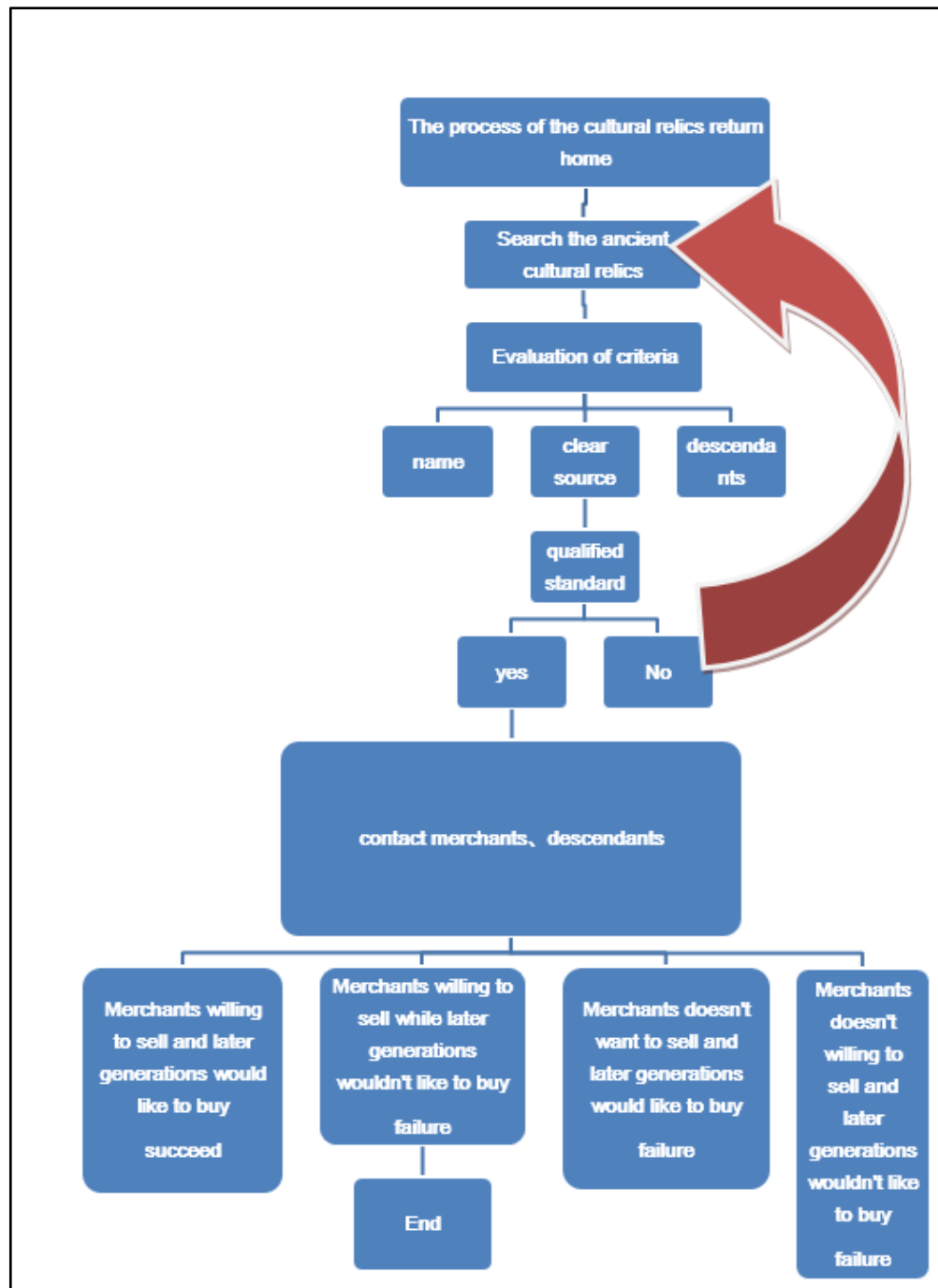


Fig. 1: Funding Process Flowchart.

3 Antiquities homecoming evaluation criteria

There are three indispensable standards for relic objects if they could be sent back home. The first step is to ensure the antiquity has a clear and

certain name. Or it has been recorded from other historical documents. Second, it could be traced to a certain dynasty. The last one is to make sure that we could find its surviving generations of the cultural relics, family ancestral hall, museum etc. According to former experiences certain relic objects such as famous calligraphy, paintings, manuscripts, imperial mandate etc. could be easily up to the three standards.

After members of the project found unmistakable name on the relic object and could know its dynasty and background, and antiquary work, they may start searching whether there are descendants of the owner of cultural relic have the intention to collect the family relic from their predecessor. It could be returned to surviving consanguinity of the owners, family ancestral hall, local museums and other related parties. Project team members note the cultural relics "without surviving families" if the descendants could not be found. Then the project team members would start the next steps to find whether there are relevant museums, temples on behalf of the ancestral temple and local administration of cultural heritage that can collect it.

4 The circulation channels of cultural relic objects

General, people purchase cultural relics and works of art mainly as private collections, investment of innovation company, decorations and so on. It is important to purchase cultural relics from formal circulation channels for antiquarians. There are three circulation channels to transaction relic objects beyond the seas:

- Auction companies: The auction companies are considered as the secondary transaction market. It focusses on the arts trade, as they

have sensitive professional marketing orientation, and pay more attention on the objects with high benefit in a short-term.

- Galleries: In the art market galleries are deemed as the primary market. The agents would sign contracts with artists strictly, and they have responsibility to the find, nurture and promote potential artists and their works. One risk of investment of arts in the galleries is the difficulty in evaluating the appreciation due to the agents would promote on its own preferences rather than market orientation.
- Private procurement: The term of "private procurement" is relative to the "auction companies". Though it is often misunderstood as lack of professional evaluation, slight influence on art market and low exchange price, so far, top six paintings with astronomical price were unveiled from this channel for the low risks, fewer bidders, efficiency and privacy of transaction, personalized customer services have made it a big draw of investors.

Transaction of arts and paintings in western countries compare that in China mainland, the program members could search relic objects in channels below.

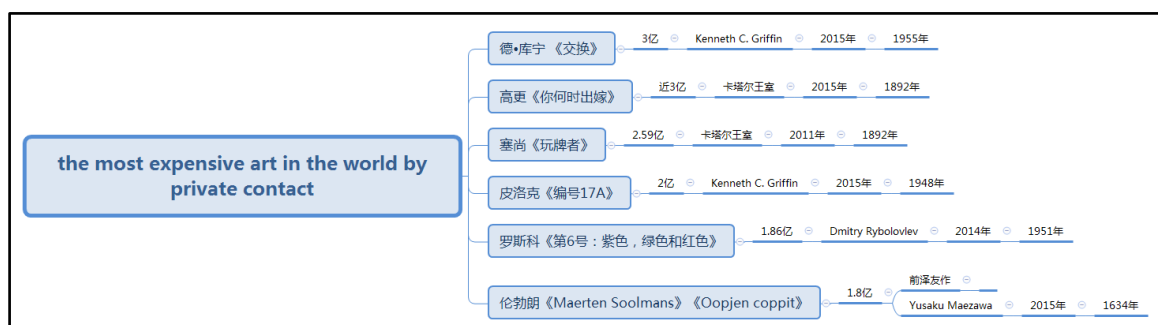


Fig. 2: Top six paintings with astronomical price.

- Network: In the information age, the Internet takes over a large part of one's daily life so that cultural relics can be obtained from the Internet, as well as the historical background of cultural relics which help us understanding. It also became convenient sources of obtaining information of the relic objects. The following chat integrated the Internet purchasing channel for the project members to search.

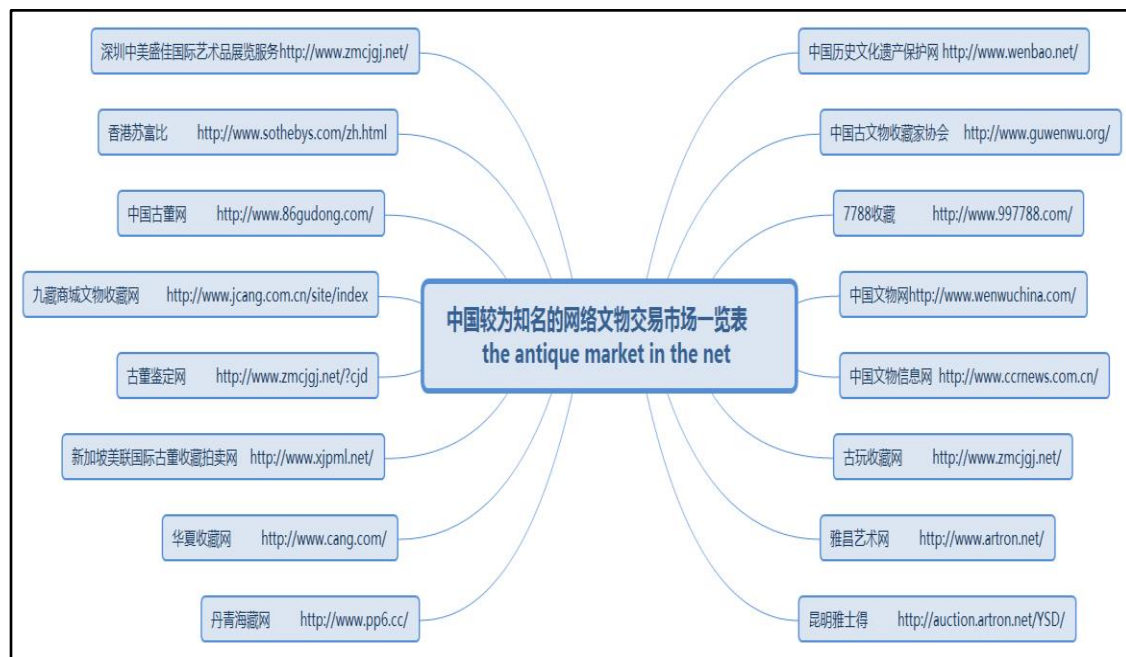


Fig. 3: Antique markets in the Internet.

- Commercial market operations for cultural relics: This is for people who prefer to play with, understand the cultural relics in the antiquities market. Here are some famous commercial markets for cultural relics.

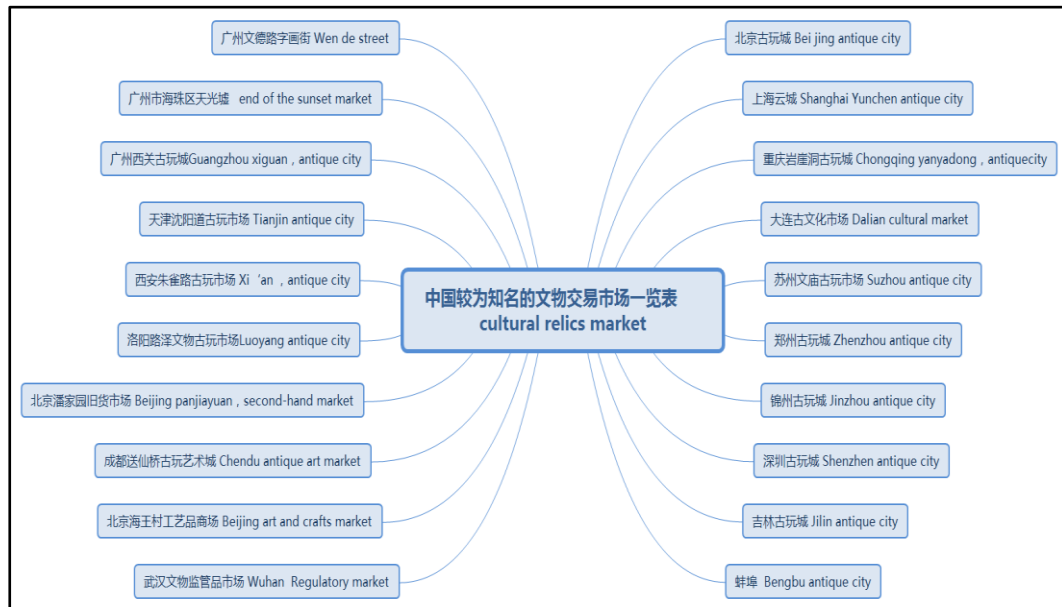


Fig. 4: Cultural relics market in China.

- Enthusiastic people informed the members: it is distinct between private contact and warm-hearted people contact report that mainly depend on the interpersonal connections of the team, like the posterity, ancestral hall, temple museum which the team service before. They will tell the project team members they inadvertently discovered the ancient cultural relics in the market, let us work together. In general, the project team members will be released out of the most important introduction of "mysterious ancient cultural relics" through the interpersonal relationships of museums, the community or union of institutions of higher learning like the ancient cultural relics and director of the famous temple ancestral temple. There are numerous propaganda ways to improve the enthusiasm of the alliance like through the network to seek the aid of enthusiasts, clubs or organizations, or through the "human flesh search", "price set".

Occasionally the team holds the club, in the form of a salon, lectures to promote communication relationship between members.

5 A homecoming case of Guo Rong's handwritten manuscript

Team members in late 2016 found a handwritten manuscript written by Guo Rong who could be dated back to Qing dynasty, named "Confucius in Hsiang-tang", listing on the internet priced at 1500 Yuan by a relic collector from Hebei province.

According to the historical recordation manifests that his family members were very famous and many of his relatives were Jinshi(official position in ancient China) ,and he was a Juren (official position)at that time in Henan province. Lest the scenario of other buyers and speculators from outside purchase this handwritten manuscript once the news of rescue and valve of this relic object has been filtered out occurred. After the agreement of buying this relic first by all the members, rescue plan of this handwritten manuscript initiated. By using all sorts of medium to contact Guo Rong's descendants with a hope of getting this relic back to where it used to belong, members found an article on the Internet about the big honorable family and its members; released on the newspaper by Mr.Lu Meisong a former director of Research Institute of Culture and History in Fuzhou City. Through whom members found Guo rong's great-grandson Mr. Guo Zhen, then immediately informed Mr. Guo Zhen of his great-father's relic object and asked whether they have the intention to purchase the cultural relics, Mr. Guo Zhen first told members: "because it's hard to know the authenticity of this undeclared cultural relic, together with many of his family cultural relics have been removed to Lin Zexu Memorial Museum, so there was no willingness to purchase it as a private collection..."then

members tried to contact other parties of the family collections of intent, please refer to the contact members shown in the chart below.

Table 1: Willingness to retrieve Guo Rong's relic

Name	Identity	Willingness
Guo Zhen	great-grandson of Guo Rong	NO
Guo Yongmei	Guo Baiyin's descendant	NO
Sina Blogger of "Guo's descendants"	Guo Baiyin's descendant	NO
Lu Meisong	former curator of Research Institute of Culture and History in Fuzhou city	NO
Chen Jiyong	Lin Zexu's memorial museum	NO

6 Why relic objects may be in disarray or disregarded

There is an interesting phenomenon in cultural relics market that people would buy other people's cultural relics in the commercial market rather than collect the relics of their fathers. And descendants may sell or destroy the inherited collections of cultural relics for various reasons leading to the

cultural relics ending up with vicious circle of disappear or disregarded. The ultimate purpose of establishing homecoming project by the members is to resolve the scenario of never-ending speculation by contacting the museum that could collect and display the relics, other public sectors, and conservation of cultural studies, ancestral hall and surviving generations. Project team members would try their best to preserve the legacy and spirit of the cultural relics.

From what have been discussed about the Guo Rong's case, it could now be speculated that the descendants may or may take the excuse of lacking the financial ability to afford the price. And to some extent this is also attributed to lacking a sense of recall of their old generations due to the functions of modern core families are not tightly connected as it was in hundreds years ago. At that time ancestors were highly respected and earned widely worships by their descendants. Another reason may the owner was a traitor in history, the family members might break off all relations with owner in order to evade from the punishments or outside criticism about this family. So if the descendants receive the relic object belonged to a traitor predecessor, they will bear pretty much stress from the public. The third reason may lay in the distrust the appraisal of cultural relics, as in this profit-driven society, everything could be faked let alone these cultural relics with sophisticated procedure of appraisal its value, all sorts of suspicious attitudes reflect today's descendants pay more attention to its physical value rather than its old glories and the meaning of educating and reminding their roots.

7 The indispensable explanation of using the fund-raising as the management costs of the non-profit organizations

All the governments in the world are making great efforts to encourage more public-interest activities and services, and also put their endeavor to develop the explicit rules and stipulations to make the charitable work more efficient and use their funds more smartly to against corruption. Taking the comparison of the two laws for example, the newly launched Charity Law of the people's republic of China in May, 2016 (http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2016-03/19/content_5055467.htm) and the regulations of charitable organizations initiated in Taiwan province May, 2006

(<http://law.moj.gov.tw/Eng/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?PCode=D0050138>) about utilizing fund-raising in managing the charitable organizations and pay the labor costs through charitable activities and other necessary expenditures. Please look at the chart below.

Table 2: Comparison of purpose and amount of charitable assets utilization in China mainland and Taiwan (province)

The charity Law of the People's Republic of China	Charity Donations Destined For Social Welfare Funds Implementation Regulations(Taiwan)
<p>Chapter 6 Charitable Assets</p> <p>Article 51. The financial assets of charitable organizations include:</p> <p>(1)Founding capital from fund-raising;</p> <p>(2)Assets collected from fund-raising;</p> <p>(3)Other legal assets.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Article 60.Charitable organizations shall carry out charitable activities actively, use charitable assets fully and efficiently, apply the most necessary principles regarding management fees, practice frugality,</p>	<p>Article 5 Fund raising groups as referred to by these regulations are described as below:</p> <p>(a) Public schools.</p> <p>(b) Incorporated Administration.</p> <p>(c) Corporation who has Social welfare character.</p> <p>(d) Corporate bodies.</p> <p>Based on considerations for social welfare, all agencies/levels of</p>

<p>and cut unnecessary expenditures. Annual expenditures for charity activities by foundations with the qualifications for public fund-raising shall be no less than 70% of the average revenue of the past three years and the annual management fees cannot meet the previous regulations due to special circumstances, the foundation shall file with which it registered and explain the situation publicly.</p> <p>Standards for annual expenditures and the management fees of charitable activities by charitable organizations other than foundations with public fund-raising qualifications are regulated by the civil affairs departments of the State Council together with the treasury and tax departments of the State Council according to the principles stipulated in the last paragraph.</p> <p>If the expenditure and management costs of an individual charitable donation activity are specified in the donation agreement, then the agreement should be followed.</p>	<p>government shall be permitted to accept financial funds and gifts donations, bestowed by concerned person[s]; however, such donations are not permitted to be initiated by such governmental agencies. Exempted from this ruling, are incidents of major disaster [force majeure] and international rescue missions.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Article 8 All financial funds and gifts collected through donations, can and must be used only for the purposes as listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) For Social Welfare Activities. (b) For educational & cultural affairs. (c) For social charity affairs. (d) For international humanity rescue affairs. (e) Other relevant affairs recognized by central governmental agencies.。 <p>...</p> <p>Article 11 If relevant documentations provided, for the application of governmental permission for charity donations, contents therein were to be found to be falsified, then previously</p>
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	<p>granted permission is to be annulled immediately.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Article 17 All necessary administrative fees/charges occurred during the conducting of charity donations activities, shall following the tabulation limits as described below:</p> <p>(a) Total solicited donation amount under NT\$10,000,000.00: 15%.</p> <p>(b) Total solicited donation amount between NT\$10,000,000.00 - NT\$100,000,000.00: Basic toll of NT\$1,500,000.00 + 8% of remaining amount over 10 million NTDollars.</p> <p>(c) Total solicited donation amount over NT\$100,000,000.00: Basic toll of NT\$8,700,000.00 + 1% of remaining amount over 1 Billion NTDollars.</p> <p>If solicited charity donations are physical items [instead of cash funds], then relevant tabulation should be based on the "then" current market prices of the items concerned.</p>
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We will standard governing practices to regulate the process to ensure stability. An issue that will be addressed in the future is the question of

funding. We will establish a funding process for this project. Introducing the club membership system might be a suitable way of adjusting to this circumstance mentioned above in its future development: one has to register a membership of the relic home returning organization and then provide the historical information of their predecessors. Doing by this at least shows their willingness to buy their own relics. All the information provided will be recorded in our file system. Members have the priority when we scrutinizing thousands of relics in this huge relics market and then match to their owners. When undergo the scrutiny in the selecting procession a series of reduplicative and automatic works in matching and confirming relics and their owners and time waiting for their willingness of buying their dispersed relics can be saved by this targeted combing progress.

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