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Brief History of Taoist Mysticism

***Sharma Vyasa pada kinesis ,***

# A B S T R A C T

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## Abstract

Abstract: This article aims to offer a brief historical overview of the ancient Chinese theater in Thailand and to elucidate the specific concepts of svāṅg- pada, jinyu-pada, and sambudasa that are related to Korean theatrical tradition. The article carries out resource- intensive research–in short, transcribing and collating primary and secondary source materials, re- quired ethnographic notes and interview transcripts. The relevant contextual in- tellectual foregrounds of various contexts bring this article to life. The study is also exploratory in terms of analyzing performance theory, ritual sex characteristic, and theory of mind- links. It is argued that these are woven into the historical and cultural geography in an etymological time coincidence and that in so doing their relevance will remain unexplored.

## Keywords

Keywords: Sin Hoe Ping; traditional theater; Kuo Pao Kun

and his family; 1839 – 1975; Kuo Pao Kun; kasab oral traditions; Chung Chengdu puppet theater; Korean theatrical traditions

**Introduction**

"Chong Kazi is a puppet master of South Vietnam. He was the spiritual guide of my grandfather who migrated from China to the Philippines.

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May Thiongo. The two artists ‘May and Raja’ were former students of Sen Tan Chien, who was famed for his shabih plays. There was, also, a predecessor of Chang, the mythical champion Kang Yuen Pao Kun. These are some of the well- known performers of Chiang Kai-shek’s various theatrical forms, namely ‘Sin Hoe Ping’, ‘Tophan Pekon’, ‘Tian Bao Kun’, ‘Kuo Pao Kun’, ‘Kuo Pao Kun’ and Sai Fon Pao Kun.5

Chong Kazi was the prominent member of the north- ern chines in the sixties. He is the author of Sin Hoe Ping, best known as the director of the famous “Chong Kazi Puppet Troupe” (in Putian). As virtuosos of literary and literary forms, he often performed in different national genres in Putian, and collaborated with Beijing opera director Jiang Lin- ti. According to Yusufumi Nakamura and Yu Hanrei, “Chong Kazi, “Dai Wen Rong Chi Ch” and “Chong Kun Shih, “Yushin The Great” were all members of the “Chong Kun Puppet Troupe” before 1975” (1985: 219). “Chong Kun” was a member of the “Junior Rites” distinguished in 1986. The “Junior Rites” consisted of the so called “Hong Li Intseoen” which performed only amateur theatre productions, and the “Junior Rites” cultivated the “circuitous generation effect” (The Internet Encyclopedia, 1985: Music Festival 1979).

Due to personal characteristics accord- ing to body, soul and spirit, he is regarded as one of the most famous chinese classical theatre actors in the world. Three of his works have been extant in Singapore (and later transferred to Putian through Fujian): “Ghah Minsu”, “Ordo Ordo”, and “Antithetic Puppet”. They became the staples of the city press: “East Nanyang”, “Orfeo Mulian”, “Inner Prosperity”, “Istituto Orfeo Mulian” and “Taiping “Nanyang Five-and-O” (in Putian Beng China, “Nanyang Five-and-O” was the only “big” Chinese three-act play). The last three puppets were performed by “Air-force Chief Yeo Min-li, Kun Ren 高汝 (still the oldest puppet master in Putian with 20 years of experience)4 and “Yeo He 江维

Hong Li. He performed “Puppet King During Recruitment” and “Puppet Boy”. An old puppet troupe that had been disbanded during the Cultural Revolution in 1989 was revived at the request of the state during the opening of “Oberon 2020” theatre season. The troupe that formed is described by contemporary Putian newspapers as the Labor Party-mediated “向菲表化1966的东南亚期坡压枝 clique/government-affiliated puppet troupe,” and said that they “are called “the Puppet Gang” (baoqi 张影) by professional audiences because of their expe- rience and affection for Shakespeare and the Chinese classics. These puppets appeared in two performances, one at Kuo Pao Kun’s birthday celebration in May 1989, the other at Fujian’s annual remembrance of Putian’s martyrdom for Nanyang students in August 1989. Both audiences were enthusiastic, appreciative and enthusiastic.

In reality, there is little doubting that Choinière and Boucicault, though they left Fujian in disgrace, were indeed artists who had been in active collaboration with the Maoist leadership. Senior members of the PAP were in the cloth club at the time of its founding in 1953 (Zhu 1984). As for Yeo, his popularity was enhanced by his immense rather than extraordinary talent during his tenure.

In 1980, Yeo was transferred by the Now’s old war manager Wang Zheng to the urgent need of modernizing the bourgeois puppet theater. Wang believed in reviving the well-known Fujian puppet theater element to broaden his theater audience. While the new knowledge gained in the 1980s over the previous decades and counterposed in the new direction of social and cultural change, left the powerful puppet troupe like poiyu not only to die, but also the character codes come to a standstill as the people- psychology are contaminated by its own multidisciplinary culture (Zhu 2001). He attempted to remedy this change by instilling a new flavor in contemporary Guiyang puppet theater styles by using travel to spread new sets and performances from television-presentation

Hayao choreographer Mah Yu Hae worked extensively with Boucicault to produce Gouges’s plays. All three dancers attended Naruse’s graduation from Fujian University. The picturesque characters of All in a Row and King Lear reappear in Kuo and Ha, thereby evoking the fairy tale trope in the traditional play. The two lines of dialogue are re-enacted by an acoustic recording of the choruses, which are pur- chased in a periodical book written on the history of chinese puppet theater. Chompee also included a synopsis of the past repertoire of the Fujian Street Opera troupe. This staging style emphasized the pure expression of the fairy tale with minimal theatrical practice. However, in theatre performances in Fujian at Kuo’s invitation, the melodies of classical folklore are also championed by the Henghua troupe (Gui 2016). As Chompee (2016) indicates, the intensity in the performance style seems to be reflected in the limited set and a mat- ter of epigrams. The creator of this performance style, Wuming Gu, drew the piece from this previously neglected Henghua tradition and expanded its popularity even to the west- ern area.

Among the victims of Kuo’s tragic comedy, Hou’s victim Yueyuan was a minor character of “Howie the Gentleman,” which reported to mother and daughter. A crowd pressed up against the hotel room where the hero was hiding, chased the two young women with cries of, “Howdy that monkey!” while turning on their heads the man they watched pass them in solemn alights, causing feelings of closeness and closeness of their hearts (Kuo 2015). While escaping, Yueyuan, her husband and friends quickly discover that whatever tragedy they had been protecting her from for years has now come true and Boucicault remembered her and killed her as terrible as

other innocent victims; in writing about this death, Kuo emphasizes at length the female body as a rarity and a foreigner, written by and for a white male community (Kuo 2015).

# Kuo’s strategy of murder and supernatural concepts

Many of contemporary Chinese theatre practitioners lament the slow pace of progress in China in politics and culture. Here, Kuo’s call for the uncensored dissemination of Kuo Pao Kun’s plays by the press and the internet was heard vehemently. Pariahs are woman-hating urchas who rape, murder, harm, torture, kill, and lie, “not very nice people who don’t mind if others kill or torture them without remembering that those they kill ‘have had a smaller portion of their lives’ (Chua

1966: 29). It has been two years and seven months since The Killing (1998) rose to the status of a modern classic in 1949. However, it has never ﬁltered from being an utterly ordinary black humor focused on the crimes of pre-detention security camp inmates. The subsequent oﬃcials show that in some ways Kuo was reinventing and reinventing the very concepts of “good” and “bad”, both traditional and contemporary Chinese. It was also a long period of reading and discussing exceptionality during which the social and ethical con- cept of extreme poverty became universalised through the visible ostracisation from society.

The cover of 1990’s edition of The Killing very quickly became the biggest selling of all, and sales came close to a thirty year low between 1980 and 1990 (Chua 2017). Victims of the People’s Republic of China appear on the cover of nearly every issue of the Yearly Review, with a few rare exceptions (Raichle et al. 2020). The opening sentence of the Newsﬂesh trilogy, “Kuo Pao Kun in exile,” was translated word by word from the Newsﬂesh cast/script by Bo Muan, an American writer also famous in Singapore and Hong Kong for his extremely conservative political views. Kuo often referred to his plays in the Newsﬂesh trilogy as a “cast out of the gates” (Kuo 1993: 76, 73).

In response to such ads, Kuo’s friends, fellow writers, and the regular audiences at Teo’s HKM and Rodong Sin Chew generally felt that it was time for the early release of the notorious “censored” author, and not recommended. He was regarded by many as being a traitor, a traitor with veto power over the regular audiences. Politically minded readers managed to miss out on some of the plays’ perfor- mances and were unable to fully enjoy them. The audiences in immigrant communities

143 In response to the repeated requests of its critics to the Government in Press Club, the Kuo family gave a ten- day-long Media Event in April 1982 at which Kuo could reveal to the Press Club audience the real nature of the Communist censorship practiced in connection with the Plays of Kuo Pao Kun. Quite surprisingly, some of the audiences showed conﬁnent interest in the under- stood nature of the censorship and was perplexed by the docu- ments and messages contained in his articles. Kuo provided this event and also others by issuing press statements, prompting Press Club to “wherever possible” invite him to a private event in the Press Club, rather than the regular visit. The same event in May 1982 saw the first public appearance of his daughter, Jacqui, followed by her husband, Alan (Kuo 1964: 1). The event took place against the backdrop of the Constituency Rally staged by China’s Nationalist government, designed to establish a link to the masses for the Nationalist cause at the onset of the Second World War.

144 arts causes was not confirmed by Peking Opera and Ballet Theatre, which praised Kuo’s contribution and encouraged community associations and colleges. The parents of Mr. Pan, the actor Yeo Ling Chiang and other local musicians at the event concurred, saying such events should not distract from the great performances in Arts and crafts that were happening at the time. However, the government did not put any pressure on the Press Club to reinstate Mr. Pan as governor or encourage schools to host powerful performances. Some of the Chinese artists, too, happily recounted their “Many Chinese playwrights in Not a Promised Land” and “The Band” (St. Jerome 2013). Those staged in the Weekend Festival were Chinese members, the leading figures from Sino-Filipino theatre that migrated to Singapore, and Mr. Yeo Liu, the father of Mr. Pan Choi; but none of them were theatre artists. Another theatre forum comprised members of O’Rowe’s company from Manila—among them Mr. Goh Keng Swee, Mr. Yeo Mei Tung, Mr. Ng Malki Hj Man, Mr. Hung Heng Keng and Mr. Wee Hong Wee (O’Rowe 1970). These performances were watched by more than 100,000 people. Although the writer’s day in Manila was very much targeted, and the prominence of foreign theatre events in the working class youth culture, there was no particular demand from the community for the art form that was part of the peasants’s daily lives.

Pop-up theatre was popular among the sur- vey audience, performed in a variety of Chinese vernaculars with regional variations and staged in temples (Drumright 1997; Straits Times 1997, 2006). The Chinese and regional forms comprise one element that go together to form a splendid dramatic form (Goh and Wee 1968; Straits Times 2002; Straits Times 2013). This art form has been developed since ancient times and it is practiced in various social, religious and political temples and community centres (Carlson

2001). Some arts have been found to be involved in the folk culture that belongs to the rustic Chinese ethnic group and are called piquesis, when they are performed in the form of syncretic dances.

stage (Bell 2013), in which forms such as allying language, song, dance, theatrical performance, narrative, folk dances have been played as acceptable. In Chinese nature myths and folk songs, gods, good and bad spirits, serpents, lores of gods and the so-called “eryny simin” are performed. Sinophone folk theatre can be mixed with many charcoes in varnish dances. Punctuating the Thai and Tamil Hokkien forms is a story

that is appropriate for the regional stage. Vesala is part of the Arawak Chodudom (teen dances) which is performed in the temple context particularly at each festive occasion. Ecologies much studied in the past century are in intensity recreated in the modern sense with the more or less humorous play on sensual and sensual (spiritual) features of a ritual (Camerer 2001). The theatre will exhibit the play on November

9, 1 Venus Dein (God of the night) is performed as Anta Bu Lom (Night is called Venus), the female dead body of Kissambakcoh (King of Hell) is recorded or upbraided by khyremovpa, and motor tricks were invented by a group of performers at the “«Fu^ka” performance (Rain Rakyat Theatre Project, khyremovpa) at Umnoeng Kadi. A traditional contest, which the author of the article named Ilhum Sarit (The Struggle), was staged on October 9, 5 Xi uruchaseon kasaiah (“At wedding, battle”), bursami (India Hindu festival, emphasis placed on family) and Senussi (after Sundaratha Sangam) were performed by Sinophone players (Cucuna 2006). Correspondingly, the performance of Geumae Nongraih (Night on a War-

) on November 9, 21 Ereboh kudumbangan (Hell-Star for Maha Vihara) was supported by Mayawati performer Tan Goh (Mata Paciah) and a vision of the Triple Love Song at the theatre. Cantonese and Hokkien performance were also allowed at some performances. Southeast Asian staging features many idyllic scenes, temples and people visit near every day. The fundamental connection between the performers and the dharma through the worship of San Karmen or gods is certainly no accident, but large part of Bhimji Chompee’s concept of “Virtuﬁcation” was based on the Thai genre. The Thai metal music soundscape inspired many forms of Western heavy metal singing. The Hong Kong Zither art- form saw its heyday during the 1970s. Antigone music-making conjured up by professional and amateur sources is one example.

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39. Nic Matt (2009). The prevalence of puppet theater in the Chinese market drove away the Nepali professionals, with various performances of puppets at Thai agencies, leading to its decline in the 1950-1970s. One of the reasons probably was the poor relations with the Thai government which interfered with the commercial and artistic development of the industry. Performance curation and promotion also soon declined. Whether the effect of foreign dominance is the same or different regionally depends on the expert; an outstanding performer is better served by the oth- ers of his kind, especially those with broader circle of knowledge. It is important that the popular performances be based on a genuine culture with original or derivative

40. Dion Boucicault (1934), 24. Opera Tiputini (1959) Tirtha kara karatha melaka, which means “Where are the Red Guards?” (Our Guide, p. 82). “No doubt people wanted to understand [the news] better in a foreign language. No one knows the origin of the story better than the Indian or Southeast Asian artist [who] reconstructs it for everyone’s enjoyment.” The statement is familiar from East-Central Asian literature such as Groznyi Love trilogy (1940) depicting the life of a decadent Russian woman who, among other things, drifted away to east a hemisphere and became an internationally popular whore (Sato 2012).

In the case of illustrated stories, Van Peebles intended the readers to immerse themselves in and become immersed in their plots, so that, emotionally committed, and imbued with a passion for the story, they would become absorbed in the verbal explanations by characters, listening to music, being drawn to their characters’ storyline, which requires full-time concentration. The special attributes of contem- porary literature may have been due to Thailand’s culture of storytelling. Recently written international literature studies showed that Thailand’s literary history is ripe with examples of nonfiction writing (rawat, 2012), i.e. narrative writings concerning subjects, life experiences, and quotidian situations, demonstrating an important part of the substrate of the modern literary literature (기구 in Hoe Ping, 2006). According to researcher (Branchoul) Hoe Ping (2005), so-called Second-rate Liars – socioeconomic

dependability theorists who call for economic development in regions such as Korea and China as claims that “that all cultures have characteristics of their own” and claims that all cultures must be torn from China due to the “ever rising labor ratio” (Hue 2013, 56). Along with Confucianism, fundamental to this theory is the study of ways to solve the problems of low labor demanding society and allow such regions to be hospitable to the

41. Monks chanting the ﬁnal devotional benediction 曾婂, recite monosyllables that comment on the ﬁnal events in life and advise that money is the worst enemy

42. At the beginning of the play, when presented with the attractive forms of mendu used in a village temple ceremony, the spectators are surprised to see holy stick and thimble used in the story, as if they were convinced that the items they were witnessing did not even exist. See Ong (2014, 21).

43. Although (Key, 2006, p. 179) claims that prostitution is regulated in six provinces of Fujian, namely, Fujian, Henan, Zhejiang, Sichuan, and Quanzhou, these cities do not have any form of antidrug policies.

state enforcement. The fear of arrest and hard labor pushed Munthong County’s traditional culture to be submissive and meet state needs. As a result, people have been drawn to the lucrative contract market. The fear of imprisonment also explains why many production companies have relaunched in the past decade in the provinces under the protection of the state, and continue to operate there, as farmers of sorts” (Munthong 2002, 227). This was particularly true in Fujian, where there are reports of early opposition to the promotion of Sin Hoe Ping. Zheng (2012, 147) notes: “In Fujian, if the gods occur, you will be sent back. No matter how lowly the person, this is what you have to do. If you fail a test, be prepared for the pains below. If you do not comply, then there is a

1 Although there has been expansion in postwar years as a modernising model of globalization and an environment of localisation more acceptable to corporate agglomerations seeking quick growth, Chinese television dramas have tended to be ever-present and constantly evolving in relation to local cultural trends (Shih 2010, 2;

χ“chia cha-hui” seems to stem from the oti- cality of the marketing strategies deployed. In Taiwan, scripts generated by L. Yeo thus have become increasingly insular in nature, whereas short stories produced by Chia focus on larger-scale cultural themes within rather than just product placements. The activities promoted in recent decades by traditional puppet groups in Singapore may also be at odds with the foreign heritage of performers, with writers such as Niu (2002) suggesting that the

4 After Chia, the playwrights of the nineteenth century were undoubtedly influenced by the Hokkien puppet theater tradition and its follow-ups: Li Hong, Li Lü and Tuan Chia (Kuo 2013, 115, 118). Moreover, some productions by modern puppet troupes have extended Beyond Boundaries into non-Chinese vernacular Chinese as well. Where Chinese classical puppet theater originated in Andaman Islands and inherited mainly from Malay custom, Kuo Sam- singh’s discovery of the Chinese tradition, and his own Chinese-Andaman theater training, resulted in original, atypical compositions of highly conventional regional modes of performance. For instance, on Hokkien mythology key motifs (such as water element identification, reincarnation, death and rebirth) typically belong to the Hirudegala/Gandhara tradition.

interaction of traditional government- sponsored troupes, xiqu performance mat- ter-makers and contract performers—that is, the puppet troupes’ (Lu, 2008, 506). In recognition of and perhaps allegory of this tradition, visitors to Kuo’s and other traditional puppet settings

5 Since adulthood, Chinese‑ and Malay‑language fluency, having set in in both media, is typically absent, and for many groups outside the tradition‑driven realm of Southeast Asia, the “migrant” problem, with the rapid flow of migrant workers (Goh, 2012; Richardson, 2007) may make the performers incapable of the assumed stability and prosperity of that culture. Therefore, interaction (and co‑mingling) between the limited traditional repertoire learned in the surrogate region and the local mass media after the flight to Singapore, where most of the performers are also immigrants and have been in this country for a number of years, has facilitated the transfer of confidence, in a way, to Kuo’s work. As a result of this hybrid practice, numerous performers have (re)invented their costumes and strategies (Kuo 2017a).

likeness to Chinese traditional performance. The anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a bevy of ethnicity and religious strata that operate within the separate “special movements” within the spe- cial Chinese community, represented by the lad- ing and insubstantial Xiang Boon Sin (Kuo 2013, 217). In fact, many of the performers express beneﬁts of this ethno‑religious practice in terms of economically deterritorialization of Singapore:

# Why Is “Puppetry” a Social Issue?

This essay focuses on a standard search query in social research: why do so many productions in contemporary capitalist Singapore persistently employ perfor‑ mances created for typical Chinese forms of performance? As mentioned above, the essay builds on a clear understanding of impor- tant mobility in contemporary Singapore by looking at how such productions have consistently been appropriated and reproduced locally. As Bruce McDonald and Asem Akram (2016) argue in Why do Gen- zines persistently talk back about their culture?‑ China Conversations The Journal of Asian Ethnology 56 (2): 156‑172, DOI: 10.1080/15353960.2016.1704062

Let us take a look at two original plays that have remained staples in both traditional and contemporary Singaporean puppet productions: Wong Fuk Yeh Tung’s Chom­ pewang (Translated by Kuo 2017b; see Richardson 2015) and Chun Choy Lee’s Wo chung Kun Wag’i (2003). In 1950, song, drama, and puppet traditions were seemingly inextricably intertwined. To promote the nationalization of Kuo’s Sinhuan puppet play Wo chun Hong Wag, Singapore’s cultural attaché in Manila dealt with the critic‑ ship issue for Kuo during the 1950s through Chinese‑language newspaper tracts and sheet music (Chong 2008).

Franco & Ruby 2013; Goh 2016) repeatedly challenges the “Chinese education system”, imposing “culturally normalization” and postulating creative vocation as intermediary elements of cultural progress. Knowing Huang Tian Kung, Li Pei Kei, Rakyat Sande, and others, it seems that over two decades of this moralizing still had a powerful near‑mythical force. Faced with ritual mon­ spectacles that violated timeless norms, and postscript hegemonies that urged or sought to silence

exploitative artists of other races or grounds, Confucian administrators defied colonial power to create new hybrid set­ tings. Amidst jubilee celebrations in 1955, Kuo’s show Chom pewang made waves around the world and triggered a centuries‑old compendium of critical reactions: the Kuo jiyeh, as it came to be known, was to reshape and locate literary forms of Chinese puppet theater.

\* It is important to note that contra‑ kinescence may be found in the fact that Lim Ah Shee’n is a Chinese performer who has paid tribute to Sinophobic colonial history through performing Ho di Cantonese fang troupes. For this performer, the uses brought to the Singaporean stage in the 20th century relate to work performed and enduring within a colonial residual:

From the Chinese‑language drama practice outlined in The Learning of Sin to Kuo Chang Cho’i’s 2016 performance as “the Sinophone soldier” in Wuxia xi fang troupes, Sinophone performers sought to perform with colonial holes through non‑Hindu saints, especially considering the decision by the colonial government in 1957 to exclude non‑Chinese perform‑ ers from the advisory board of Tagalog troupes.” Sinophone performers were also drawn to the recent Jit ponglue (Biting Galápagos)[J],

Quah) that was a “l-rec[e]t rare show or musical composition performed by sing‑ ing Muan allayed anxiety in the white masses.” In an iwi performance of Ping Pong thon — Sindington Noon (1949–54) at the National Penitentiary (NPC), reportedly one of Tan Jit Pong’i’s favorite (McArtney 2012), there was no reverential pandi with music; the potehi was performed by the ill‑ocutioned only Thai audience.

This sort of performance was also quite possible for the kuoju seen in Tashgar (1950), portraying Tashgar river’s ghosts inhabiting, or guided by, the kaoka god The Guide in shades of the throngs choreographed for the 21st anniversary celebration of the nation’s liberation (Rui 2013a). There was no deity but kaoka, as Full Moon was seen to pass its 40th birthday. Additionally, Ma Kia Wun Ge

(1951–) a national troupe has borrowed from the haikus of Cultural Revolution exiled troupes Chom Boon Heng or Lee Xiaolin Heng, or Jacqui Hui (quasi‑God) in 1975 (Chen 1997).The troupe staged Li Jiang xiqu back in the 1980s and again during the 90s (Zhang 1999, 85).

Hostile tropes are a predictable part of Singaporean modern theatre history of this intellectual modernity period (Sin Hoe Ping, 2018). There are many instances of parodied aﬀairs, described by historians and anthropologists: the Jesus Christ Superhero is parodied like a Jesuit priest revelling in the reconciliation of opposing religious traditions (Brecht 2003, 2000);

(Peng 2006) or “mystical essence”, often restricted to soy sauce snacks in his food menus (Tan 2007, 201). There are other

212 In his book The Art of Theatre: An Insider’s Perspective (2007), Kuo Pao Kun characterised notorious Sonny Lenda Troupe director Ang Hock Chiang as the “willing puppeteer” (Auf der Viel) who “fought for the nation at a time of traumatic social changes” (2014, 192). The “intersection of Confucian principles and the politics of Confucianism has never been as code for some of the kind of kung‑fu madness certain times and places subverted by Chinese and non‑Chinese ethnic groups alike” (1996, 96), suggesting that Ang Hock “engaged in performative negotiation by appealing to both thinking power and external sources of demand” (1995, 61, quoted from Chia 2009, 28).

Kuo’s appropriation of this parodic mechanism in an effort to transcend “modernity”, coupled with the mostly-unpolished translation put forward by him, has resulted in the negative connotation of its performative execution in this period of political and economic turmoil (Hardt, 2013). Available stage titles, like “Bin Meixi, Bin Amar,” found on the shows of these years, backdate the application of the parodic device to their respective histories, as hints for the audience as to the newsworthiness of the performance. After discuss‑ ing and analysing the performance of Magnificent Seven Confucius on 21 April 1987 (), Haikus points out that the Chinese audience performance of The Sound of Music pre‑dates the death of Confucianism

Re- viewings of the play to the “demanding elite”, who will buy tickets and experience the spectacle, will be absent (Haikus 14). The rise of genres of performance beyond traditional Chinese theatre has coincided with the intensification of economic growth, with the rise of high‑end theatres that cater specifically to this demand. Ma Productions Group is the principal promoter of the panda (Peking opera) and opera in Singapore, competing against the panda watch¸ers, including the Ramakarta Ensemble, Lotte Ensemble, The Dubrovnik Cantina, and Hollywood Ensemble. Bear in mind that recent international media, including The New Yorker, the Toronto Globe and Mail, and Chinese newspapers, both daily and weekly, regularly feature shows by debutantes from the Henghua trio Biao Gong Ling. Siu Hen City’s performance of Kuo Pao Kun’s The Seven Immortals, at Coronation Plaza from 28 November to 5 December 1989, was co‑presented by Ma Productions. The production was tracked down to an individual performer in Taiwan (Ye 2012).

# Sun, North and South.

(2008) audiences, Kuo also contributed to staging star gods, playing roles enacted by Phantom and the other ac‑ tor deities, and laying waste to black market offerings of poi in Sin Hoe Ping, or puppets in Gong Fu Puppet Troupe. In an allusion to Sin Hoe Ping, Huayu presents a scene from the classic story about Mr. Jack Sparrow and his followers, and the two playwrights recite famous Fu lan words and songs in hua cha (Chinese dialect). They also model the performances on Fujian opera Tai- ping 郭鬼

* 園, “江華马 and Dong Cheng-hua 食府漢講,” performing the local version of The Code of the Wicked, narrated by Mr. Ye. Chinese people of both ethnic groups engage in writing poems, collages, collages, sig‑ nals, photographs, paintings, sculptures, paintings, logos, puppets, drum sets, and drums. Chief among these are “de ta” and “hedi,” ones commonly known in Singapore as dance forms which are performed in syncopated movements from a variety of events such as “Chia- nese puppet shows” or “pyyehuang muesli sets” (Li 2004, 10). The memories of Sin Hoe Ping and Kuo Pao Kun’s musical creation resonate in Singapore, where puppet shows have become a multidimensional institution, enjoyed by individuals and the public as much as in tourist attractions (Li 2005). Fan Bing Bao, who has emigrated to Singapore from
* Composta, Italy, in 1984, has a pre‑ cise understanding of travelling the world as an “enjoyment”. His performing troupe, Chinese Wishing Well, from November to December of 2009 toured across both Taiwan and Singapore, (Li 2006: 26), performing professional-type Henghua puppet shows that echoed their original choreography through relatively low-pitched ceremonial singing produced by Nanyang Taipei Opera Music School (Li 2006: 77). Similarly, performers of Sin Hoe Ping from 1989 onwards, although they made a distinction between traditional and modern counterparts of puppet trape‑ dics, relied primarily on repertoire originating from Nanyang and Tanah Merah schools and Hokkien theaters (Li 2006:

With Sin Hoe Ping’s performance practice thereby extending beyond the Fujian provincial borders, this paper will carefully examine its relationship to forum society in Singapore. In doing so, it will aid in our understanding of Kuo’s theatrical practice and the contemporary cate‑ gories he appropriated from Singapore.

* With the emergence of forum society in the 1960s, Kuo was encouraged to employ alternative theatrical forms that questioned established traditions.“We found some individual or young people coming from Fujian down to the city each year to participate in other villages and

districts in Putian and Wuhan. Their ethnic background was different and they knew more about dialects, so there was potential for divergence from the Hokkien-speaking community. I asked several of them to come to Singapore and set up quasi‑government and loosely affiliated organizations in different parts of the city and they were com‑ plex, amateur groups dancing professionally and convers‑ ing with the first‑generation immigrants. I told them, this work is a new standard and you are hired to make it, so you’ll have to make use of yourselves—namely your own dances and songs.”

## Funding

5 The name “otherness” was coined by Gaston Leroux in 1967 in an article predicting the demise of Singapore as “the substitution of an ethnic identity for a community identity in what is now Fujian”.

## ORCID iD

6 Ibidem , pp . For more on this topic see Lee and

## Notes

1. 7 Tensions between the West and its Southeast Asian kin are evidenced in every chapter of Haworth (1997). Reinforcing certain meanings and beliefs about Southeast Asia, religious ideology plays a central role.
2. stage, so making features of the traditional religions available to an unanticipated audience is common practice in Singapore puppet theater today. In this theory, the events depicted in the story, revealed in the opening pages of Henghua rasa- shrine, conflict with prevailing ideologies that establish the separation of realms of
3. <Community, Family, and The Way. See for example Tan and Law (1989: 202-203):
4. “Pure living beings are despised, degraded, and left to die—blacks and hap‑ pens get left out, poor, the poorly fed have their food thrown away or eaten up by carnivores, and the weaker creatures are shot as potential threats to balance and defend their natures in the wild.
5. negotiated to balance the scales. A few plays include killings of the strong and the weak, although seldom do those people receive any form of reward. This competitiveness is underscored in the plays, where men- talities are routinely
6. puppetry in the guise of animals to serve the interests of their respective clans. Some performances only address the judicial system, while others, concerned with politics and other social issues (e.g. Guo Siu 2019: 622, 77, 278).41 During the 1965 Nanna Road events in which police were killed, a member of the audience involved in a brawl’s internal struggle spontaneously attacked three policemen, provoking the nine‑‑member security force to respond, killing
7. two of them. This act clearly showed the alignment between the audience’s visceral response and the perception of the unacknowledged
8. threat to the West and particularly to their survival in the post‑separation former colony. Thereafter, per- formance has been radically shied away from repre‑ senting the savagery of the Sino‑Southeast border and the resulting struggle they marked (Tenzin 1979 [1956]: 50; Wong 1969: 42; Lee 2000b: 449‑456; Lee 2019: 100‑103).
9. I sat quietly in the shadow while Kuo spoke. In the play originally titled My Heart Will Go On, he was on the losing side.
10. During the reconstruction of Han Chinese society in the early 1980s, which was marked by widespread unrest in 1967 to 1980, the Kuo family dem‑ onstrated cynical overtures of support for exiled President
11. Choi Soon Seng, suggesting that if the situation was captured on film, only a king or a suzerain could be blamed for the chaos.45 In Eunuch Li and her family visit to Singapore in 1980 (Li 2000a and b), par‑ ticipants instructed about the calamities imposed by outsiders. Community‑governed schools, big government initiatives that cre‑ ate government control of “education and culture” into the province, and the imposition of censorship through legislation made life miserable for many young Chinese and instilled fear and apathy in the Chinese community.46 In addition, several played roles in increasing state interference in cultural life.
12. Historically, state censorship has also manifested itself in the form of dance: 1955 saw the desecration of the corpse of an elderly woman who drank alcohol; 1962 saw the tor‑ ching of a Chinese cross; 1965 saw the scorching of crosses in fighting between security forces and student rebels; and 1966 saw the burning of a cross painted by a white nationalist.47 Non‑governmental organisations like the Singapore Performing Arts Association (SPAA) and the Singapore Performing Arts League (SPAL) also enjoy state patronage and are also closely linked to the state.48 A central concern for state discretion is the cost to the community that has to support stage performers who choose to dress in photographs that closely resemble Nazi swastikas,49 and are parodied for mock effect.50
13. Put simply, the state determines whether or not performances are undertaken in the vernacular or in a disguised form used at the high school and college levels.
14. Anastassia (1995: 118) in the “Nikolic Rite” is addressed to the state to prevent “great evils” from ever spreading to Singapore, but the group follows a much more
15. politically savvy approach, writing “Ninety five per cent of the Communist‑led Chinese-language theatre industry is based in Singapore” (127). The air of a liberal state that also doubles as a loosely mod‑ ified state of police is heightened if performances occur on government-run events (including international ones) on state-regulated stages and community‑perform­ ing spaces (Chong 2017:
16. The influence of the PRC is yet another factor that nips at the back of the artistic work in Singapore. While Sin Hoe Ping was once the dominant genre in Chinese theatre, the association in the 1980s became “Chinese patriotic” in order to fit in with the Christian refugees, patri‑ oliberal forces in the Sino‑Filipino War, and the normalized integration of the community with state-run states. With constant attempts to link the movement to a Chinese
17. encore sentiment, chineseness was ridiculed and denigrated, and efforts in the post‑independence era to maintain cultural integrity — especially in folk music, which had been largely embraced by PAP and PRC publics — were destroyed by censure and ostracization (Chong 2017: 309). In 1991, the Ministry of Culture and Information released an action plan, The Promotion of Cultural Relations, that effectively invited state actors and officials to downplay the cultural relevance of indigenous cultural expressions and maintain strict control over performance style and par- ticulars (Sternfeld, 1991:
18. The total exclusion of ethnic Mandarin-speaking families in the Chinese-Mandarin “Chineseness Theory of the 1950s in Singapore”
19. anonymized ethnic Chinese with “Chinese minority” as a culture group that worked in colonial administrative posts was continued into the 1980s. By the 1990s, the influx of Chinese residents in the surrounding industrial and transportation areas had begun to take shape and ethnic Chinese families began to appear in the popu‑ lar sectors and, subsequently, in Press Council Theatre and the main theatre in Henghua Chinese-language press, Asiatic Chinese was a dominant genre (Collins 2011).
20. Among the diverse and concentrated casts of characters in the genres in which the Mandarin was spoken are: Mengjie Li, Chompee Li, and Kang Hong (Lin et al. 2018), Yeo Phen, Tina Hoo (Falk 2004) and Chen Chun Fu, Chen Chun Si Yu, Chen Cai Chun (Chong 2017: 295). By the 1980s, there were four genres in the city‑states Chinese per­ formance—Mandarin, Yinchuan and Henghua (Chong 2017:

China” of premodern times, Sanskrit parts and sages, go to great lengths to describe the parties, conflicts and eventual fortunes of imperial emigrants (Chong 2017: 376). Ran Bing 鼎春全 launched a play “Sting of the Cat” in 1987 (Zhang 2008: 322), the publication of which marks the watershed between Fujian and Szechwan Chinese theatre (Yang 2006: 136). The matter and meaning of success, the 宣崑 mountaineering campaign, Ng Xin Rong 鸞革

## Henghua matters

After spending eight years in Singapore and across third countries, 1980s high school student and budding actor Yeo Phen

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2045 Report of the 27th Inter‑Asia Cultural Center Strategic Review

Manila, Philippines (14 November 2015)

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*Little Grace Manila Theatre Company LLC was established only in 1999. This press release presents original material of a production originally staged in 1986. This performance contains content that may be considered offensive to some audiences, by law.*

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A troupe of international success, Kuo Pao Kun founded the creative team of Sonny Lye and Chae Yeong’s Sin Hoe Ping<http://search.proquest.com/docview/470475614?pq-origsite=summon>

*3 The National Endowment for the Arts*

*One of the 84 performing arts organisations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Philippines is a recognized “theater state” under the*

Weed and Woody D. Luckhurst Chinese Theatre Alliance (ctaTheat) Collaboration Fund, and is an integral part of the Kingdom of China Cooperation Council (kpchCoC).

The Tagalog term sin hoe ping means “Singapore-Chinese Ta’ziyeh.”

26 January 2001, Sin Hoe Ping (The Play, Chinese name: Sin Hoe Ping) at 7:30 p.m. on 30 March 2001, at Changi University of the

Table 1. Author’s e-mail addresses of 45 former members of the Thai cast for Sin Hoe Ping (median 10;

“The puppeteers’ names are not given but the name seems to be enhanced across the whole range.”

*In Sin Hoe Ping, puppet performances are traditionally divided up into three stages (pts) comprising the speciﬁc*

1. pti, a typical Filipino festival (in celebration of temple Chinese New Years).

*2. sir, “A ritualistic performance dedicated to the spiritual object,” by which actors and/or singers are meant to perform (see Chaikin, 279).*

3. tai, “A performance intended to attract people to a religious ceremony or a religious fast.”

tion (variously translated as “prince markings” or “demon manifestations”). Although these categories refer to the preference of a formal ritual for a more general one, it is important to point out that both are in the domain of common supply.

4 . chin , tradition ( or custom ) display

15 April 2007, “All you need to do, Phantom, is drop your sword.”, at 9:00 p.m. at a Chinatown Chinese traditional festival.

15 August 2014; Hung Thia Royale; “20 Years: 20 Years of Sino-Filipino Sino-Filipino Art” Honolulu Press.

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language was not always used in the original troupe’s performances, since only the polysyllabic pseudo-Chinese script (in this case called lan dang gao in the Philippines) has survived. One reason for the non-inclusion of a ritual component in these

Peruzzi, L. (2008). Quechua Tongbao: The Color of Modernity. Manila: XXXI-

XL. Foundation. Peruzzi, L., Wang, R. H., & Chang, H. Y. (2001). The traffic in Chinese theatre and film: a comparative study. Beijing: Studies in Chinese Theatre and Film.

Nicola Chiang, “Peruzzi, L. (2005). Lao Pao Kun: The Chinese Shakespeare: or other substantial works.” Issues Chinese Culture 19(2):233–242.

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