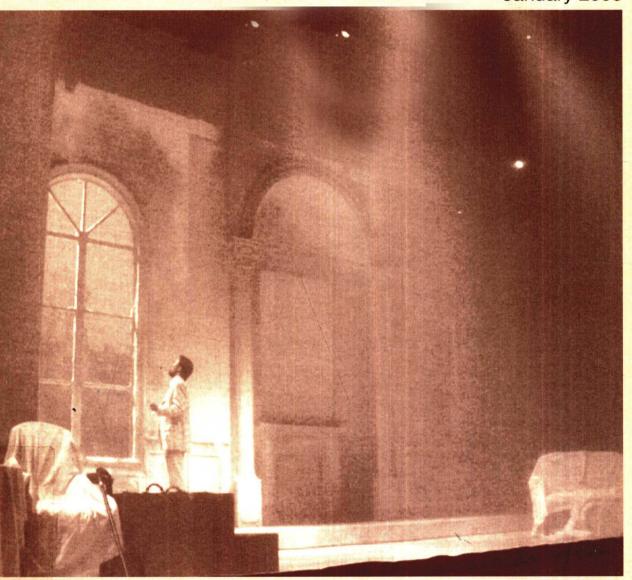
### TAIPEI THEATRE JOURNAL

# 戲劇學刊

創刊號 NO.1 二〇〇五年一月 January 2005



國立臺北藝術大學戲劇學院

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## 戲劇學刊

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發刊辭

### 風雨如晦,雞鳴不已

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# 論 文 Articles

### 地戲、柴燈祭和「民俗表演」的問題

理査・謝喜納 撰 馬奎元 譯

### 中文摘要

幾乎所有的「民俗表演」都逐漸變成「觀光表演」,所出現的問題是:在地 人民的經濟基礎動搖,以及民俗表演的概念逐漸被都會中樞、學者和媒體等殖民 化,而不再是傳統的由地區人民呈現出他們信仰以及操作的活動。

兩個表演:一個是在中國相當程度的仍然由農夫主導的地戲;另一個是在日 本已經脫離它民俗和儀式關連逐漸成爲觀光表演的柴燈祭。

學者稱地戲和類似形式是「古代形式的活化石」,結果是在那些表演中地戲 像是「即將滅絕的物種」, 值得研究和觀察。

柴燈祭仍維持著業餘的質地,但是會逐漸成爲商業追逐下的籌碼。

政府當局與學者應該考量維護所付出的代價。「活化石」是不可能的;一旦 「被發現」,就會出現物種改變。「發展」常意味著完全改變,甚至是滅絕。參與 其中的每一個人都應該質疑將被保存下來的是什麼以及爲了什麼。

對於類似地戲和柴燈祭的形式,我們最好準確研究表演操作的是什麼,表演 知識如何被傳達,表演者和觀眾間的關係如何,等問題。

關鍵詞:地戲、柴燈祭、民俗表演、觀光表演、學術殖民。

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College of Theatre, Taipei National University of Arts

<sup>「</sup>本文經國立臺北藝術大學客座教授理査・謝喜納先生同意並授權首次發表及中文翻譯。中英文摘要由 譯者馬奎元執筆。

# Dixi, Namahage, and the Question of "Folk Performance"

Richard Schechner trans. by Ma Kuei-yuan

#### Abstract

Almost everywhere in the world what was "folk performance" has become, or is becoming, "tourist performance." The question arises concerning on what economic base will the former farming communities stand? And the whole category "folk performance" is thrown into doubt even as it is revealed as a category that makes sense only within a colonial or neo-colonial context (where the "colonizers" may be from the metropolitan centers, scholars, and the media).

Two Performances: one Chinese and still relatively in the hands of farmers; the other Japanese and cut loose from its folk and ritual moorings and more and more surviving as a tourist performance.

Chinese scholar Yu Quiyu says that dixi and like forms are "ancient forms closely connected with religious ritual that have been preserved in certain remote regions as living fossils." Dixi is among those performances felt to be like "endangered species," worthy of study and observation.

Namahage maintains its amateur qualities. At the same time, advertising distributed by Oga authorities, show Namahage processions in torchlight that are, actually, staged intensifications of the actual festival.

It ought to warn officials and scholars alike concerning the price paid for preservation. "Living fossils" are not possible; once "discovered," genres change. Often enough "development" means total change, even extinction. Everyone involved ought to ask what will be preserved and for what purpose.

We might better investigate precisely what the performance practices are, how performance knowledge is transmitted, what the relationships between performers and spectators are, and so on.

Keywords: Dixi, Namahage, Folk Performance, Tourist Performance, Academic Colonization

#### Introduction

Almost everywhere in the world what was "folk performance" has become, or is becoming, "tourist performance." If an event is in any way out of the ordinary, distinctly local, colorful (that is, different); and if it has a definable schedule and reasonably limited place of performance it becomes fair game for the tourist industry. This industry does not, as some fear, simply prey on local events corrupting and transforming them forever. Often local people are involved in the tourist promotion. This is because in even the remotest areas of the world, a structural and apparently irreversible trend is occurring. Namely the drastic reduction of the number people who earn money off the land. Dwarfing the migrations across borders by boat people, refugees, or others seeking a new place to live, are the internal migrations drawing people from the countryside, from farming villages and communities, to large cities and vast urban sprawls. Much has been written about these conglomerations of humanity, but less attention is paid to those left behind. As farming becomes less and less an occupation of families and more an agro-industry (and this is true not only in the so-called industrialized nations but increasingly within the third world also), the question arises concerning on what economic base will the former farming communities stand? Tourism, for some, is the answer.

And as tourist performance becomes its own genre, the whole category "folk performance" is thrown into doubt even as it is revealed as a category that makes sense only within a colonial or neo-colonial context (where the "colonizers" may be from the metropolitan centers, scholars, and the media). If by "folk performance" is meant events that originate within and are controlled by local people, expressing their beliefs and practices, then the numbers of these has diminished almost to zero. And those that continue to exist have mostly become raw material for the tourist industry, local, national, and international-as well as grist for the scholarly mill (as, indeed, this paper may be regarded). That having been said, let me get on with it.

#### Two Performances

What I am focusing on in this paper are two folk performances, one Chinese and still relatively in the hands of farmers (but, I predict, not for very long); the other Japanese and cut loose from its folk and ritual moorings and more and more surviving as a tourist performance. I am

also going to suggest a new paradigm for the study of so-called folk performance, a reasonably simple phenomenological or "thick description" approach so named by Clifford Geertz (1973). I urge this on folklorists, anthropologists, and performance theorists alike because although I do not know of any satisfactory new paradigm to theorize the dynamics of the folk-tourist dyad, I am certain that older theories of folk culture and folk performance do not fit the emerging circumstances.

Dixi of south central China and Namahage of the Oga Peninsula of Japan, two kinds of masked performance, are regarded as "folk theatre." But what does this mean? To call something "folk" is already to deny its historicity and its connection to contemporary or progressive culture. Such an approach is that of Chinese scholar Yu Quiyu who says that dixi and like forms are "ancient forms closely connected with religious ritual that have been preserved in certain remote regions as living fossils, essentially unchanged by modern civilization (1989:12). Namahage also has changed considerably during the 200 years for which historical information on Namahage exists (Yamamoto 1978:129). What does it mean to call a performance a "living fossil" or, for that matter, a "folk art"? Using such nomenclature is a way of asserting an urban or academic hegemony over the performance in question. And it is also a way of confessing ignorance about the genre's detailed historical development. "Folk" has the additional onus of meaning without a codified, closely scripted, professional, or theorized practice. A folk performance is practiced by amateurs whose sincerity and depth of belief are more in evidence than their artistic skills. Folk forms are thought to be of interest mostly as evidence of how things used to be or as precedents of classical genres (kagura to noh, for example) or as repositories of ritual practices, a kind of rural bank of where ancient beliefs and practices have been deposited and can now be withdrawn by properly trained scholars. And, as I have noted, the newest use of folk performance is as an economic resource for the tourist industry.

#### Dixi

Dixi as I saw it in 1988 is performed as part of the spring celebrations (February/March) in Guizhou province, south central China. This mountainous region is among China's least developed from the perspective of industry, transport, housing, per-capita income, and other indices of modern life. Farmers long ago stripped the trees from the hills in order to establish terraced paddies. Aside from the provincial capital, Guiyang, and a few large towns, the people live on the land, in small villages.

Dixi means "theatre performed on the ground." The dixi I saw in Qilungtun in south-central Guizhou near to the town of Anshun was played by a group of farmers who supplemented their income by performing each spring. Some of their splendidly carved, brightly painted wood masks dated from the 1920s, but most were carved recently by local mask makers. The four-hour performance, observed by more than 500 villagers, and by visiting scholars Cao Lusheng, Huangpu Chongqing, and me took place midday in the main open spot of the village. Huangpu, who has spent years studying dixi, said that usually a performance "can last 10 to 20 days or more--until a complete story is told" (1992:110). I have not been able to determine if dixi was more usually performed in the farm fields before planting, as might be appropriate for what scholars call a "fertility" performance. If indeed playing inside the village in the central open space is a recent development, then dixi has taken a decisive step towards making itself available for tourist exploitation.

Our party arrived too late to witness any preliminary religious rituals, which are supposed to be performed the day before the cycle begins and on the last day. Whether or not they were performed at all remains an open question. Communist rule since the 1940s and Cultural Revolution of the 1960s-70s have effectively stifled if not wholly eradicated visible religious practice in much of China. The style of performance is simple and direct. Surrounded by an appreciative audience of villagers, actors declaimed their speeches loudly, giving their brightly painted wooden masks different expressions by tilting or rotating their heads. The actors' mouths are hidden by black cloth attached to and descending from the masks allowing for the dialogue to be shouted with clarity. Dixi masks are worn at a 45-degree angle atop the head. Thus when two characters face off the performers actually bend their heads forward in almost a butting position. Despite the difficulty of maintaining this posture for long periods of time, the performers were able to manipulate their masks in ways that made the characters' faces extremely expressive. On the other hand, there was not much "body work" to the performance. Basically the actors faced off or circled each other. Their costumes, though colorful and effective, did not have the fine quality of detailed workmanship seen in the masks.

The *lianzi* (masks) are of mytho-historical figures who were deified after death. The masks are carefully wrapped in white cotton paper and kept in a special wood box. The masks cannot be handled casually. Opening the box lets the deities onto the stage. More research needs to be done to determine the origin and diffusion of the masks. Some of the dixi masks were similar to