

## Puppets, identity and politics in Taiwan

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### Introduction

In 2006, glove puppet theatre was chosen as the symbol that could best represent Taiwan in a national opinion poll by the Government Information Office. Puppet theatre gained over 130,000 votes, beating both the highest mountain (Jade Mountain) and the highest building (Taipei 101), who respectively became second and third (Epoch Times, February 17, 2006). Puppet theatre is viewed as an expression of Taiwanese grass-roots culture and the puppets symbolize far more than the characters they represent. Politicians from different parties are eager to be photographed with a puppet or puppeteer during election season. Television puppet shows have unleashed a craze among young people, which is quite unique in Asia. This paper will chart the development of puppet theatre in Taiwan from the stage performance to the television screen and its role as a symbol of a distinct Taiwanese identity.

### **Glove Puppet Theatre in Fujian and Taiwan: entertainment for the masses**

Puppets never grow old. In Asia they are symbols of a shared local or sometimes national identity. The immortality of puppets relates closely to their origins in religious rituals and ancestral worship. The need to deal with concepts of death, disease and many other natural phenomena resulted in many different belief systems. Humans started early with the visualization of these religious beliefs through the making of paintings and statues. In all cultures there was (and is) the need for deities, ancestors and demons to actually present themselves as being alive, to comfort and expel evil. This resulted in many different expressions: music, dance, mediums, trance, rituals with masked persons and of course also puppets. Puppets are the logical vehicles for expressing the eternal truths of beliefs as they are unchanging and can be handed down from generation to generation.

Apart from their role in religion, puppets were starting to be used in theatrical performances in India and China over 2000 years ago. China had the most well-documented and elaborate puppet theatre culture during the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Glove puppet theatre developed into one of the most exquisite forms of performance in southern Fujian during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Albeit less respected than its older brother the string puppet theatre, it was and still is an elaborate form of theatre just judging by the design of its puppets and stages.



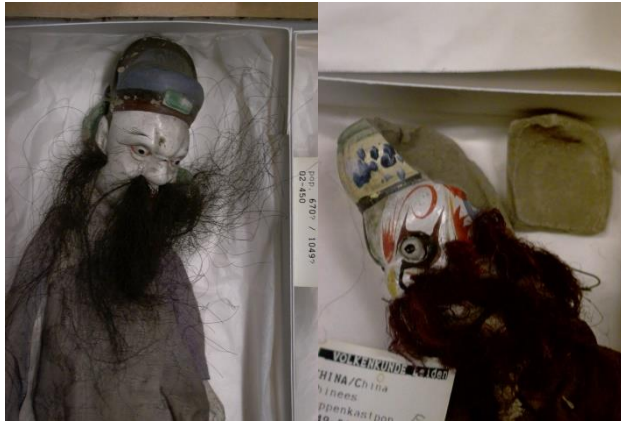
19<sup>th</sup> Century stage and puppet from Quanzhou, Fujian province, China (collection of the Taiyuan Asian Puppet Theatre Museum)

In the past, the puppet as an object was a “living doll”, a moving representation of daily life. In particular, the glove puppet theatre provided a *tableau vivant* of the all the different characters of southern Fujian society. Puppet carvers were at liberty to incorporate any type of character in the glove puppet theatre, as opposed to the more rigid code of puppet characters in the string puppet theatre. Glove puppet carvers were keen observers of society and any type of person could be incorporated in the glove puppet theatre. For instance, foreign characters were introduced after the Opium Wars.



Glove puppets representing a Portuguese (left) and an Englishman from the 1880s (collection of the Leiden Museum of Ethnography, photograph by the author)

During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the large number of companies that performed created a carving industry in Fujian that catered to local companies and to companies in Taiwan. Puppets were also produced as toys for children, so they could re-enact the plays on the stage.



Toy puppets with clay heads (collection of the Leiden Museum of Ethnography, photograph by the author)

Theatre companies were usually family based, with two performers and a number of hired musicians, ranging from two to four people. Glove puppet theatre was always viewed with suspicion by the authorities in China due to their itinerant lifestyle and bans on puppet theatre dated back as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Glove puppet theatre was and is the smallest, most portable form of local theatre in southern Fujian, apart from the aforementioned string puppets and several types of opera performed by actors. Glove puppet theatre was also considered the least respectable form of puppet theatre, its practitioners defined as belonging to the lowest classes of society, its performance content often considered inappropriate by the scholars of imperial China. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Xiamen, southern Fujian, there was even a booklet published by local gentlemen to raise the level and content of the glove puppet performance (Loon 1993, 5). There is no information on audience attendance of puppet performances before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it seems that both adults and children enjoyed the shows (Rhein, 1889).

We thus find glove puppet theatre in the Ming and Qing dynasties as a popular performing art with a limited number of performers that were easily transported and relatively little cost compared to other forms of theatre. Theatre performances accompanied every important event (always in connection with religious ceremonies) in southern Chinese society and as such the need for performances was abundant. Opera companies accompanied Chinese traders and immigrants all over Asia. Taiwan was no exception.

Taiwan had never been part of the Chinese empire, apart from the Pescadores archipelago. The latter were occupied by the Dutch in 1622. They were moved out by force by the Chinese (Manchu) army and asked to settle in Taiwan by the governor of



Fujian. In 1624, the 38-year rule of Taiwan by the Dutch started, as well as an abundance of written records on the island. Theatrical performances are mentioned and it seems that both opera by actors and puppet theatre were performed. After the removal of the Dutch in 1662, we still find scant notes on performances (Ruizendaal, 1998).



An actor in the foreground is praying for a smooth performance to the God of the Theatre in Taiwan. This is a representation of a Dutch artist on the basis of a written account; angels on stage imply the religious context of Chinese drama (in Dapper, 1670).

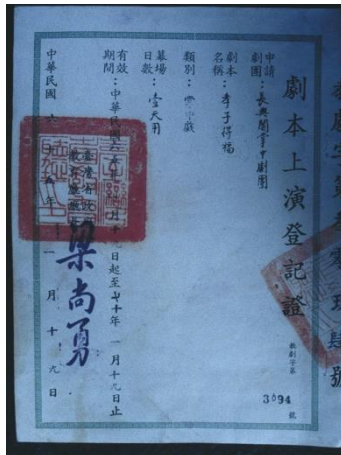
At the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, large-scale immigration of people from mainland China began and with that the growth of Taiwan from an aboriginal tribal society into a Han Chinese dominated area of the Manchu Chinese empire. There are no sources on glove puppet theatre performances during this period and we can only assume that puppet companies settled and performed on the island during this period.

Only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century we find that in the then emerging urban centre of Taipei glove puppet theatre companies are active, with puppeteers often coming from Quanzhou in mainland China.

In 1895, Japan took control of Taiwan and did not involve itself with curtailing glove puppet theatre performances until the advent of the Second World War when outdoor temple performances were banned and only seven companies were allowed to continue to perform, albeit in theatres. They performed with recorded Japanese music and the performances were in a mixture of Japanese and Taiwanese. This situation lasted until the end of the war (Wu 2005, 108-109).

### **1949-1987 Taiwan under martial law and rule by the Nationalist government (KMT)**

In 1945, Taiwan became part of the Republic of China and was ruled by the Guomindang (hereafter KMT), whose armed forces were involved in a bitter civil war with the armies of the Chinese Communist Part. The KMT took over Taiwan as true colonizers, imposing a foreign language (Mandarin) on its inhabitants and barring most Taiwanese from any position of power in the administration or any other official organization. The KMT also followed thousand year old traditional imperial suspicions towards the theatre and local religions. The latter had the power to organize and bring people together outside government control and thus had to be curbed. Another important factor was that the leadership of the KMT was deeply influenced by western (Christian) values and was not tolerant of Chinese religious expressions. Local religious activities and performances were curtailed. Some opportunistic puppet theatre companies started short-lived experiments performing in Peking opera style. After the retreat from mainland China in 1949, the early years of KMT rule could be defined as a government under siege, highly suspicious of any form of social disobedience, and thus imposing an iron fist rule under martial law. The culture of the mainland elite was the shining example of national culture (Wachman, 40). However, KMT rule would never reach the excesses of repression, executions and mass killings in communist China after 1949. The puppet theatre and religious festivals were controlled, curtailed and closely scrutinized, but never subject to the intense government control and bans as in mainland China. The content of puppet theatre plays was based on Chinese history and not offensive to the regime, on the contrary, they even confirmed traditional Chinese values. Scripts had to be approved, and minor corrections were made (characters named Mao were not allowed to beat characters named Chiang, after Chiang Kai-shek etc.).



Government control: Official document of the approval of one performance of a puppet play by the Chang Xing Ge Puppet Theatre Company issued by the Department of Education of Taiwan Province in 1976.

Indeed, in the early 1950s, Taiwanese puppet theatre went into a period of unprecedented growth and development, actually moving away from the southern Fujian glove puppet style into a distinct Taiwanese style of glove puppet theatre.

#### **Golden Ray Puppet Theatre: original Taiwanese glove puppet theatre**

The exact moment when Golden Ray Puppet Theatre (*Jinguang budaixi*) started is lost in time (Wu 2005, 123-154). In 1949, all contact with mainland China was cut and subsequently no more Quanzhou puppets could be imported to Taiwan. The Taiwanese puppeteers had to start making their own puppets and stages. Already during the Japanese rule, experiments were made with huge painted cloth stages.



1940s indoor performance of the Xin Xing Puppet Theatre Company on a huge painted cloth stage (photograph by Lu Sushang)



These stages would later become the standard stage of the Taiwanese glove puppet companies. At the same time, new and larger puppets were developed. Larger stages and puppets meant that more people could watch the show, as opposed to the smaller southern Fujian puppets and stages, and thus a company would be more competitive in the performing arts market. The new puppets and stages were complimented by technical innovation, such as recorded music and light and sound effects.



Typical modern painted cloth stage of the Ming Shijie Company from Ershui, Yunlin County, Taiwan

The iconography of the glove puppet theatre followed its Fujian roots regarding the liberty in creating different characters, but went completely into overdrive creating a vast array of amazingly creative types.



The process of Golden Ray transformation of the Laughing Male, *xiao sheng*, character (a lazy playboy type). (from left to right) Qing dynasty southern Fujian puppet; Taiwanese Golden Ray version of the original; Golden Ray Laughing Male with modern hairstyle; Taiwanese Laughing Male with pig nose and ears. All puppets are from the collection of the Taiyuan Asian Puppet Theatre Museum.



Characters were influenced by foreign movies, mainly from Japan, but also the sheer creativity of carvers and performers, who would often consult with each other. Puppet theatre was still mainly performed outdoors as part of religious festivals. Golden Ray puppets theatre became the most important form of Taiwanese performing arts, with over 300 companies performing to this day. Puppets became coveted toys and puppet iconography could be found on many products and toys.



Kids playing with puppets in the 1950s (photo by Huang Jiying)

The Golden Ray puppet explosion was mainly concentrated in central and southern Taiwan. In the north, the traditional southern Fujian style was supported by both government and the academics as the original and only “traditional” style. Even until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, academics dismissed the Golden Ray style of performance as an aberration of “tradition”. Such an attitude extended as far as children’s books, in which the detrimental effects of Golden Ray theatre were transmitted.



看了會兒，阿香想買涼茶，走過後台，發現有個金頭  
變的演員，感到新奇，告訴李老師。打聽的結果是法國人來  
學演布袋戲的。老師笑着說：「外國人非常欣賞我國的古  
戲，經常有洋人來台灣拜師學習。唉！也許再過幾十年，我  
們反而要向洋人學演我國的古戲了。」阿花聽了點頭想：古  
代傳下來的民間藝術，應該要重視才對呀！

Positive depiction of traditional southern Fujian style glove puppet theatre in “A-Hua Travels in Taiwan” from 1982



Negative depiction of southern Taiwanese Golden Ray glove puppet theatre in “A-Hua Travels in Taiwan” from 1982

In the 1950s and 60s, Golden Ray glove puppet theatre established itself as the major form of glove puppet theatre and the most widespread form of performing art in Taiwan. This wave of popularity would gain new heights with the introduction of televised puppet theatre.

### From the stage to the TV screen

In the early 1960s, television was introduced in Taiwan and glove puppet theatre was first introduced on television as well, at the time performing in Mandarin. Television programs broadcasted in Taiwanese were gaining extreme popularity, a phenomenon that seemed worrying to the authorities, which then limited the TV broadcasts in Taiwanese to half hour at lunch and a half hour at night. Every Taiwanese of who lived during this period vividly remembers these half hours, because these were the times when Huang Junxiong’s television puppet show was broadcast.



Early television puppet backstage view

Huang Junxiong is the son of Huang Haidai, the most famous puppeteer from southern Taiwan and often credited as the father of the Golden Ray style puppet theatre. Huang Junxiong's puppet epic of roaming martial scholar Shi Yanwen and his consort the Dragon Lady of the Bitter Sea, as well as minor characters such as Two-teeth and Liu San, captured the hearts of the Taiwanese audience.



Liu San, Shi Yanwen and Two-Teeth (photograph provided by carver Xu Bingheng)

The TV puppet shows were performed in brilliantly narrated Taiwanese by Huang Junxiong himself and the characters were original, funny and complex. The show started to be aired in the early 1970s and after four years they were banned for reasons of “disrupted the normal routine of agricultural and industrial work and thus shook the foundations of the nation”. The KMT was following the same line as imperial officials one thousand years ago for banning puppet theatre performance.





Article on the diminishing the broadcasting of Taiwan language programs. Minister of Information James Song in 1980: “Taiwan is not the Taiwan of the Taiwanese, but of the Chinese”

But Shi Yanwen had already become a national hero and nothing could stop the popularity of the televised puppets. Moreover, they had sown the seeds of love for puppet theatre for a generation of Taiwanese schoolchildren, as well as adults. In 1976, all television programs had to be broadcasted in Mandarin.



Huang Junxiong performing in Pingdong County, caption: “Ten thousand people trying to see Shi Yanwen.” (China Times, September 30, 1972)



Huang Junxiong continued to perform outdoors and also puppet movies were allowed to be produced. It would last until the lifting of martial law in 1987, when the Taiwanese could finally start openly express and enjoy their own culture.



Record of the Huang Junxiong's performance music and songs with his wife and singer Xi Qing

The television puppet theatre in return influenced the Golden Ray outdoor puppet shows. After the 1970s, the Golden Ray shows became even more extensive with more elaborate light and sound effects, exploding puppets, smoke cannons etc. It really became the ultimate post-modern performance in which any element could be incorporated. For example, Taiwan is also the only place in the world where there is striptease puppet theatre.



Late 1970s striptease puppet (Collection of the Taiyuan Asian Puppet Theatre Museum)

### **Holding Taiwanese identity in your hand: puppet theatre in democratic Taiwan**

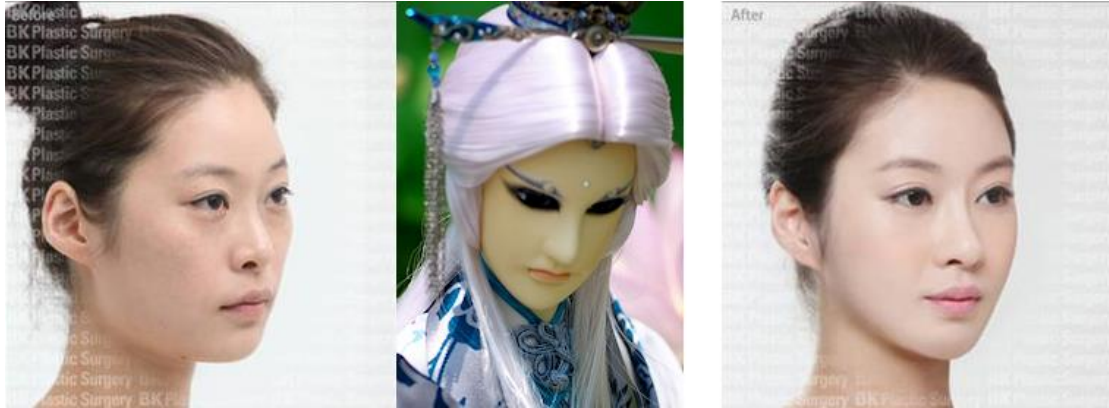
After the lifting of martial law in 1987, there was a slow but steady easing of government control of society (the last arrest for political reasons was in 1991 and the student in question was released after 10 days). It was also the beginning of local Taiwanese culture hype with puppeteers like Li Tianlu gaining a national and international cult status through the movie *The Puppetmaster* by Hou Xiaoxuan. Young academics focused on research of the local Taiwanese arts and began to conduct extensive fieldwork and organizations such as the Se-Den society were founded to promote and preserve traditional Taiwanese glove puppet theatre.



Li Tianlu (centre) at the filming of the *Puppetmaster*

On a popular level the intellectual interest in puppet theatre by researchers was overshadowed by the amazing success of the Pili International Multimedia company from Yunlin. This company, the brainchild of Huang Qianghua and Huang Wenze, sons of Huang Junxiong, started making television programs as early as 1983. They started out with a revival of the Shi Yanwen series of their father, but over the years built a puppet media empire that does not have its equal anywhere in the world. Pili built the largest puppet film studio in the world, where production work continues around the clock. Pili rode the wave of Taiwan cultural interest and built its empire with great commercial acumen, using mass media as its main vehicle, as opposed to stage performances.

The popularity of Pili could be attributed to several factors. Its language is modern Taiwanese with a traditional twist related to the language of popular martial arts novels. The puppets are original Taiwanese creations, as opposed to the small southern Fujian puppets. The iconography of the puppets follows modern Asian concepts of beauty, which we find in the pointed chins and the longer noses that are now popular in plastic surgery all over Asia.



New Asian concepts of beauty: pointed chin and larger noses. Humans have plastic surgery and puppets follow fashion (Example of before and after plastic surgery from Korea and a Pili puppet)

Unlike other cultural expression in Taiwanese culture, Pili puppets have not been heavily influenced by American, Japanese or traditional Chinese models. They are an original Taiwanese creation and are speaking Taiwanese. They are modern, yet with a link to the past and as such they form an excellent symbol of Taiwanese identity. This is also why the Pili culture is embraced by young people, who generally show very little interest in the southern Fujian puppets. Pili is Taiwanese, cool and digital. The puppets also create a link with the Japanese cosplay (costume play) culture in which kids dress up as their favorite cartoon or fantasy character. In Taiwan Pili plays an important part in cosplay and fans go to great length to dress up as their favorite characters.



Puppets and Cosplay models at the Fuse Fashion Week in Yunlin, southern Taiwan (Epochtimes, April 19, 2009)

The Pili merchandising is done with great expertise and Taiwan is the only place in the world where you can buy a puppet DVD in the 7-Eleven convenience store. The 7-Eleven convenience store chain has over 4000 franchises all around Taiwan. They are open 24-hours. Taiwan is the only place in the world where a significant part of the population is daily confronted with puppet theatre (merchandise).



Puppet commercial in 7-11 (photo by the author)



Other businesses also profit and hire the Pili characters for the promotion of their products, such as the recent promotion of the new Asus computers in Taipei in 2013.

With such a living symbol of Taiwanese identity adored by the young generation and



remembered with affection by the old generation, Pili puppets of course attracts the attention of politicians eager to associate themselves with Taiwanese culture. As a politician you can hold Taiwanese culture in your hand and it is a wonderful photo opportunity. In particular, for the non-native Taiwanese politicians it is a great chance to profile themselves and even speak a few lines of broken Taiwanese. This was the case with presidential candidates Ma Ying-jeou and James Song, who did not miss any opportunity to be photographed with puppets (Bosco 1994, 396-397 in Wu 2003)



Ma Ying-jeou and a puppet in his image



Presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou and Wu Den-yih at the Pili studios

The puppet theatre companies are happy to oblige and assist politicians and usually do not publicly express their political preference (all parties pay well for performances at election rallies).

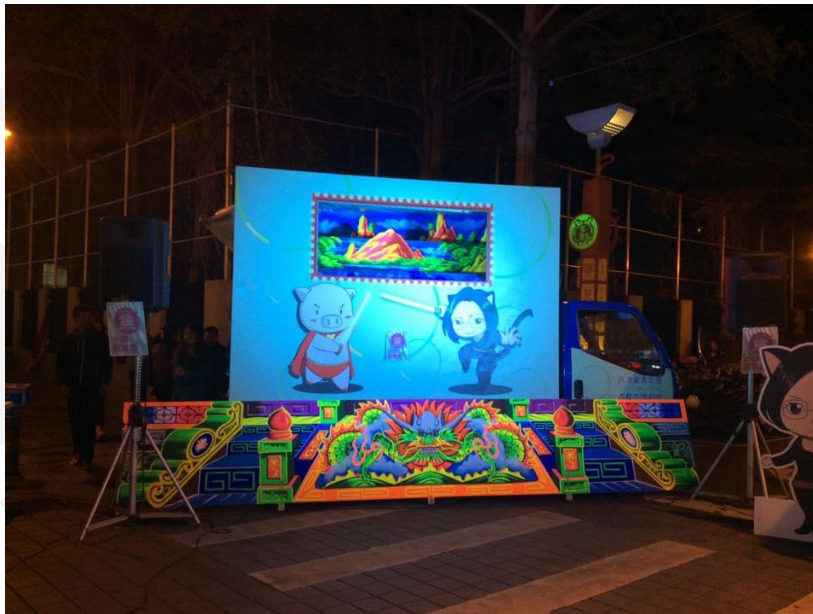
Candidates of the DDP are also eager to be associated with the puppets. Some DPP politicians, such as Frank Hsieh are actually able performers who learned how to play the puppets when they were young. DPP politicians who are not very close with the indigenous Taiwanese culture, such as DPP chairwomen Tsai Ing-wen, are nevertheless eager to be photographed with puppets. A puppet of Chen Shui-bian was actually mass produced for the elections in 2000.



Xie Changting, the only politician who can also perform the puppets, at the Pili studios (2008)



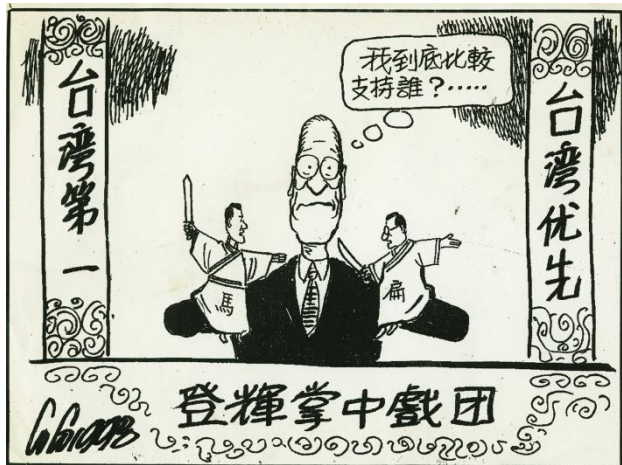
DPP presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen with puppeteer Huang Wushan in 2008



Taipei street market preparation for the performance of “Little Ying Defeats the Three Evils” (Xiao Ying chu San Hai), by the Gu Du Puppet Theatre Company from Tainan in 2015. This was organized by the office of Tsai Ing-wen as a fundraising event.

Puppet theatre is not only used in politics as a photo opportunity, but also finds its way in political cartoons and as criticism of the government. As in the cartoon below we see former president Lee Teng-hui in doubt whom to support for the next presidential election in 2000.





(below) Teng-hui Glove Puppet Theatre Company; (left/right) Taiwan Number One, Taiwan First (blurb) "Whom am I really supporting?..." (with KMT Ma Ying-jeou and the DPP Chen Shuibian puppets) China Times cartoon by CoCo (Huang Yongnan) from 1998

Sometimes puppet theatre is even used in the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's unicameral legislative body. In 2011, two DPP legislators performed the 20-minute play "Taiwan Story, the History Chapter", in which President Ma was depicted as the "Useless Horse", as well as criticizing premier Wu Den-yih, who was present at the time. The puppet of DPP Chairwomen Tsai Ing-wen also made an appearance. Wu Den-yih's reaction to the play was: "...They even take the president in their hands, they take their own chairwomen in their hands, it is a bad performance, untrue." (*Zhongwen Xinwen Pinglunwang*, October 14, 2011)



DPP legislators Guo Wencheng and Su Zhenqing criticizing Wu Den-yih





Mass produced glove puppet of presidential candidate Chen Shui-bian for the 2000 elections  
(Collection of the Lin Liu-Hsin Puppet Theatre Museum).

### **Puppets, Taiwan and Taiwanese identity**

In 2006, glove puppet theatre was chosen as the most representative symbol of Taiwan in a national opinion poll by the Government Information Office. The small traditional southern Fujian puppets, the Golden Ray puppets and the Pili media empire are representations of a unique Taiwanese cultural expression that appeals to all ages. The puppets develop in sync with social developments and popular tastes, the interaction between society and puppet theatre is in a state of constant development. While the puppet theatre panders to modern aesthetic tastes, at the same time it provides a stage for people to become puppets (cosplay) or politicians to act out their commitment to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture.

Politicians love to be photographed manipulating a puppet and paying homage to Taiwanese tradition. There is the short moment of control with the puppet in the hand of the politician and many smiles all around from the gathered crowd. Yet, in the end who is manipulating whom? As the politicians retire, the puppets will still be there, enacting the eternal stories of politics and power.

## 台灣布袋戲、政治與認同感

羅斌\*

在二〇〇六年，布袋戲(亦稱掌中戲)在一場由行政院新聞局所辦理的民調中，獲選為最能代表台灣的象徵。布袋戲勝過玉山（第二名）以及台北一〇一（第三名），獲得超過十三萬票（大紀元時報，2006年2月17日）。布袋戲被視為台灣草根文化的代表。來自不同政黨的政治人物每至選舉期間總是熱衷於和布袋戲偶或是著名的偶師合照，電視上的布袋戲節目則在年輕人之間造成風潮，這種流行在亞洲相當特殊。在此文章中將會梳理布袋戲劇在台灣的特點發展。

及至十七世紀為止，除了澎湖群島之外，台灣一直都不是任何國家的領土。澎湖群島在一六二二年被荷蘭人佔領，然而他們隨後即被中國武力驅逐，福建官方將他們遣至台灣。於是自一六二四年始，荷蘭人統治了台灣卅八年，並留下了詳盡的記錄。當時戲劇演出被稱為[荷語] *wayangen en toneelspelen*，意思相當模糊，同時可能是真人戲曲或布袋戲表演。當荷蘭人於一六六二年離開台灣之後，仍可在荷蘭的文獻中找到少許關於表演的記錄<sup>1</sup>。

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\* 台原亞洲偶戲博物館 館長

<sup>1</sup> Ruizendaal, 1998年.



圖：一位演師正在前庭中向台灣劇場的戲神祭拜，祈求演出成功。此畫由荷蘭藝術家依照書面內容所創作，在戲臺上的天使象徵中國戲劇中的宗教內涵。(Dapper, 1670).

在十八世紀初期，大量的中國移民潮開始移入，台灣由原本以原住民族為主的社會轉變為漢人的社會。然而在這段時期，並無掌中戲團的相關資料記載，因此僅能推測掌中劇團亦在島上落腳並演出。唯有到十九世紀末期才在當時台北的新興商業中心與南部地區出現掌中戲劇團的活動記錄，而這些劇團多來自中國南方的福建省。

然而可惜的是，關於那些在十九世紀來到台灣的偶戲藝師們的資料相當稀少，如童銓(1854-1932)、陳金奎(1887-1960)等人屬於很早來台的偶戲藝師，不過也必定有成立得更早的劇團存在，如黃海岱家族也是在十九世紀中在雲林縣開始發展。同時，也有台灣偶師往大陸發展，如後來建立了彰化木偶劇團的陳田。可確定的是這段期間以至廿世紀初期，大多數的掌中戲偶皆由福建製作並售出到台灣。

傳統劇團的結構包含兩名藝師（主演和助手），而樂團則包含一個鼓手、鑼手、以及唢呐(或笛子)與絃樂(吊鬼仔/胡琴等)。主要的表演者，即偶師，通常也是戲臺、戲偶、戲服、帽子以及道具和樂器的擁有者。這些全都被保管在戲箱/籠當中。劇團通常會包含家庭成員，不論是擔任表演者或是其他工作。然而，許多藝師會將他們的技藝傳授給無血緣關係的學徒。一般而言，所收到的演出費會



分給所有的團員，通常劇團和主演藝師會得到收入的百分之四十至五十<sup>2</sup>。這些布袋戲團員沒有太高的社會地位。

這些劇團祭祀兩個主要的戲神。其一是田都元帥，原本使用來自泉州的南管樂的劇團多祭祀田都元帥；另一位是西秦王爺。西秦王爺乃唐明皇的神格化，他同時也是京劇和其他中國戲曲的保護神。以北管樂曲伴奏的劇團多半奉祀西秦王爺，不過也有一些劇團和寺廟會同時供奉兩者。

傳統的劇目可以南管與北管的音樂後場型態來區分(另外還有潮調)，藝師也經常將小說改寫為劇本進行搬演。偶爾會有正式的劇本，但絕大多數的劇本都僅在藝師之間以口述方式流傳。戲劇內容都來自中國歷史上的故事，一無與台灣歷史相關的劇本<sup>3</sup>。

一八九五年，日本開始治理台灣。他們並無意管控布袋戲演出，也因此，所有目前活躍的台灣布袋戲團都是在那段時期成立的：包括小西園、亦宛然、新興閣與五洲園等等。這些布袋戲團與泉州的戲班一樣，都是由一個主演，一個助手與一班樂師所組成，樂師也同樣並不隸屬於戲班。一九三七年，中日戰爭開始，戶外的廟會演出也被嚴格控制，只有少數劇團得以獲准繼續表演，且僅能於內台(劇院)演出。這些劇團以預錄好的日本和西方音樂作為後場，而表演本身則混雜了日文與台語。為了內台演出之故，戲臺也由大型布幕上的彩繪建築所取代。這種演出模式一直持續到一九四五年戰爭結束為止。這項規定屬於日本統治台灣的皇民化時期的手段之一。然而，這個強制性的改革也成為日後布袋戲在台灣發展的一個重要轉折。

### 金光布袋戲的誕生，台灣傳統戲劇創意革命

一九四五年時，台灣成為中華民國的一部分，由國民黨所統治。當時國民黨與中國共產黨正在進行一場激烈內戰。到一九四九年國民政府敗撤退至台灣之後，統治的前幾年類似戰備狀態，統治者對社會上的任何反抗聲音皆高度戒備，並以戒嚴法對社會進行鐵腕控制。菁英的中國文化是重要的國族文化認同，台灣的當地文化則不受重視<sup>4</sup>。

在國民黨的統治下，並沒有像中國共產黨在一九四九年之後對民間戲劇的全面性改革，並建立國營劇團及建立有偶戲課程的藝術學校。台灣的偶戲團與宗教慶典雖然被控管、縮減與緊密地監控，但是從未曾如中國大陸一般的被政府強制

<sup>2</sup> 這篇文章仰賴呂理政所撰針對台灣布袋戲的絕佳研究文獻。

<sup>3</sup> 關於這些劇目的介紹可參見呂，1991年，208-215 頁。

<sup>4</sup> Wachman, 40 頁。



管控與禁止。偶戲團所演出的內容皆根據中國歷史而來，且並未冒犯統治者；相反地，這些演出甚至幫助強化了中國的傳統忠孝節義的概念。

事實上，在一九五〇年代早期，台灣的偶戲團前所未有的蓬勃發展，逐漸由傳統福建南方的掌中戲風格轉變成獨特的台灣布袋戲：金光布袋戲。金光布袋戲一詞以及這種演出風格究竟是何時出現並無法確實得知<sup>5</sup>。在一九四九國民黨由大陸撤退至台灣後，政治情勢緊張，戶外的廟會演出也暫時被全面禁止。然而內台的表演依舊被允許，兩個台灣南部的重要劇團「五洲園」與「新興閣」也因為室內演出之故而發展出全新的表演方式。由於與中國大陸的交流被阻隔，也因此無法再從泉州供應戲偶，台灣的布袋戲演師們必須開始製作自己的戲偶與戲臺。隨後也出現專門的雕刻師投入這個新興市場，為劇團製作戲偶。在日本統治期間，戲團們已開始實驗用大型的繪製布幕作為戲台，這方面的發展持續到後來將成為台灣布袋戲團的標準戲臺。同時劇團們也開始設計全新、尺寸更大的戲偶。相較於福建南方傳統的小型戲偶與戲臺，擁有大型的舞台與大型的戲偶表示可以讓更多人聚集觀看，也讓劇團在表演市場上更具有競爭力。新型的戲偶與戲臺也代表操作技術的革新，諸如預錄的音樂、燈光以及音效等等，同時並使用流行音樂以吸引觀眾。相較於戶外免費的表演，內台的演出需仰賴售票，也因此，劇團更需要隨時跟上流行的品味，以提供新鮮刺激的內容吸引觀眾。在這個時期，女性的表演者依舊很少，江賜美是最早的女性藝師之一，她後來不僅名聲響亮，也成立了「真快樂掌中劇團」。

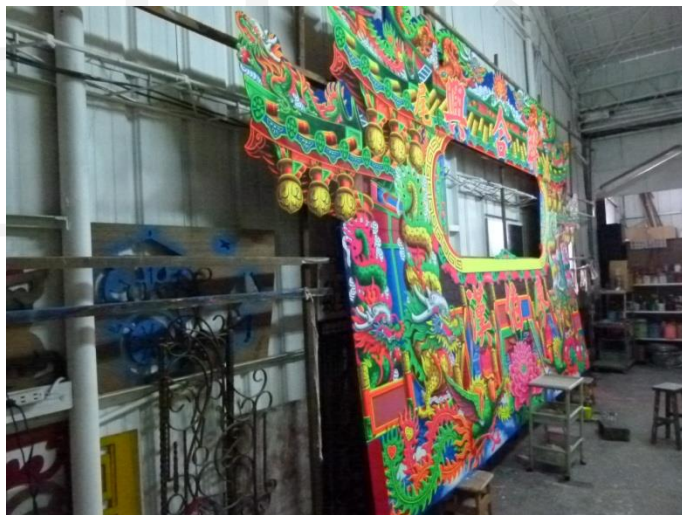
儘管北部的一些掌中劇團依舊維持傳統的風格，他們也採用了一些新的劇目，也就是後來形成的所謂「劍俠戲」，並且廣受歡迎。他們也開始採用華麗俗豔的布幕式戲台，但風格較南部的為樸素；在比較正式的場合則依舊使用傳統の木刻戲臺。

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<sup>5</sup> 吳, 2005, 123-154 頁.



圖：1970 年代的戲臺設計師陳明山的家庭相簿（照片陳明山提供）



圖：位於嘉義的陳明山工作坊當中典型的繪製布幕戲臺（照片拍攝：筆者）



圖：(陳明山所作) 舞台細部 (照片拍攝：筆者)

掌中戲偶的人物圖像與其福建的根源一樣，擁有創造角色的自由，但在台灣則彷彿是傾盡全力地發展出一系列驚人的原創角色。這些雕偶師們不受拘束的想像力，在一九五〇年代早期引領他們創造出上百個全新的角色。



圖：金光布袋戲中「笑生」(懶洋洋的花花公子角色)的轉變(由左至右)：清朝時福建南部的版本、台灣金光布袋戲版本、有著現代髮型的金光布袋戲偶版本、有著豬鼻子和耳朵的台灣笑生。所有的戲偶皆來自台原亞洲偶劇博物館藏。

布袋戲角色受到外國，主要是日本電影的影響，但大多數依舊來自雕偶師與演師的想像力，兩者也經常互相交換意見。大部分的布袋戲依舊在戶外的廟會場合演出，金光布袋戲則變成台灣最重要的表演藝術之一，至今還有超過三百個金光布袋戲團存在。戲偶成為人們渴望獲得的玩具，而戲偶的圖像也被印刷在商品上或製成玩具。這個新偶戲型態的大師如黃俊雄、鍾任壁以及鄭武雄等皆來自於家族式的劇團。然而他們雖有諸多學徒拜在門下，投身於金光布袋戲的技藝當中，卻也顯然不是都有辦法精準掌握大師們的表演技巧與絕佳的說書人腔調。這些學



徒們之後也都成立了許多新的劇團。而既然金光布袋戲的特色主要仰賴聲光效果，他們也就不再精研傳統小型布袋戲偶的操偶技巧。

許多著名演師的表演都以唱片或卡帶的形式發行，因此，很多劇團甚至只需要在後場播放一個著名演師的唱片，再在鮮豔明亮的戲臺上操縱戲偶即可。造成的結果即是數百劇團皆可生存。在北部，傳統劇團還是持續以小型偶進行表演，但有一些劇團也是改採取更鮮豔華麗的方式演出。



圖：徐柄垣，技藝出色的金光戲偶的雕刻創作者之一（照片拍攝：筆者）



圖：徐柄垣的戲偶目錄可供客人挑選



圖：徐家整理戲偶的照片（年代約在 1960 年代晚期到 1970 年代初）



圖：工作中的年輕的刻偶師徐俊文（照片拍攝：筆者）





圖：新上漆的偶頭等待晾乾（照片拍攝：筆者）

傳統福建南方的風格由中國政府以及學院雙管並進地維持，且僅以原初與傳統的方式進行表演。即使到廿世紀末期，學院派依舊排斥金光戲的風格，認為他們只是傳統掌中戲的一種簡化版。如此觀念甚至延伸到童書當中，在書中，金光戲被描述為一種對傳統掌中戲有害的分支。



圖：對傳統福建南方風格的掌中戲團的正面描述，取自「阿華遊台灣」，1982



圖：對台灣金光布袋戲的負面描述，取自「阿華遊台灣」，1982

在一九五〇與六〇年代，金光布袋戲在台灣成為掌中戲的主流，亦是最流行的表演藝術。這波流行在電視布袋戲被引進之後則達到一個新的高峰。

## 從舞台到電視螢幕

電視在一九六〇年代早期被引進台灣，布袋戲也首次由電視頻道播送。當時，布



袋戲被配上中文的口白。不過，以台語播送的布袋戲節目卻獲得了極大的歡迎。執政者由於對這樣的現象感到憂慮，因此限制電視台以台語播送的時間只能在午餐的半個小時與晚上的半個小時。幾乎每一個曾經歷過那段時期的台灣人都能鮮明地記得這些放映布袋戲的時段，這也是黃俊雄的布袋戲首次出現在電視頻道當中。



圖：早期電視布袋戲的後台

黃俊雄是黃海岱的兒子，也是南台灣最著名的布袋戲演師，經常被認為是金光布袋戲之父。黃俊雄開創的經典角色「雲州大儒俠史豔文」以及他的同伴「苦海女神龍」以及配角如「二齒」與「劉三」，皆成為台灣觀眾們熱愛的經典角色。



圖：劉三、史豔文與二齒（照片提供：徐柄垣）

電視布袋戲由黃俊雄本人配以獨特流暢的台語口白，故事角色皆原創、性格

複雜且饒富趣味。這個故事從一九七〇年開始播送，在四年後則被新聞局以「妨害農工商正常作息」且動搖國本為由被中斷。在一九七六年，所有的電視節目都必須以國語播音。



圖：宋楚瑜對減播台語節目的公告（1980年4月26日）

政府以千年前的封建統治方式意欲控制偶戲的演出，但是史豔文這個角色卻已經成為一個國家級的英雄，而電視布袋戲的潮流亦無可抵擋。尤有甚者，他們已經在一整代的台灣學子心中種下與成人一般對布袋戲喜好的種子。



圖：黃俊雄在屏東縣表演（中國時報，1972 年）

黃俊雄持續進行戶外演出，而布袋戲的電影也被允許製作並上映。直至一九八七年取消戒嚴之後，媒體全面被開放。



圖：黃俊雄以及他的妻子與歌手西卿所灌錄的唱片，收錄他們的表演音樂與歌曲



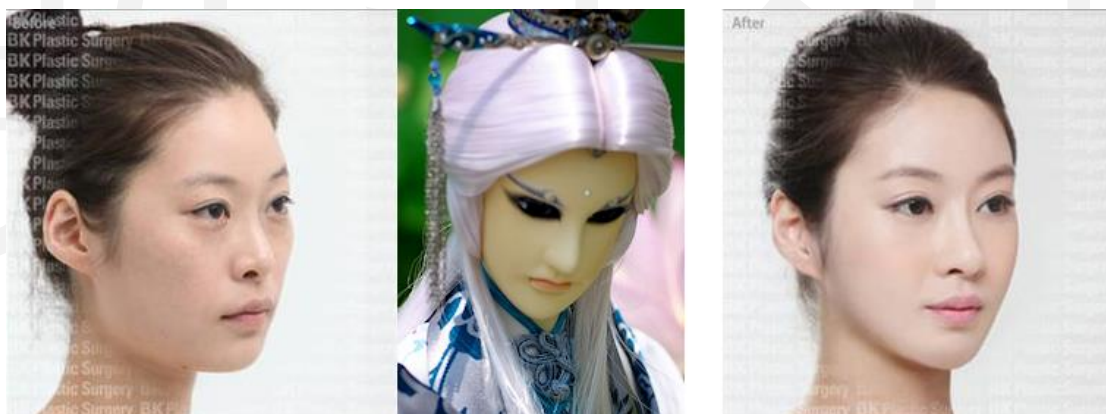
電視布袋戲後來也反過頭影響了金光布袋戲的表演。在一九七〇年代之後，金光布袋戲使用了更多精心製作的聲光表演，從會爆炸的戲偶到硝煙滿佈的加農炮效果。此劇種已然達到一種後現代的演出模式，可融入任何音樂形式與視覺元素。例如，台灣擁有世界上唯一的脫衣舞掌中戲劇場。而音樂的部份則由傳統中國音樂到貝多芬、桃莉巴頓無所不包，其中最受歡迎的配樂則是美國電視連續劇檀島警騎的主題曲。

### 「掌」握台灣認同：在民主台灣的電視布袋戲

在一九八七年取消戒嚴法之後，政府也逐漸放寬了對社會的控制。台灣本土文化自此開始更備受重視。例如由侯孝賢所導演，以李天祿為主角的電影「戲夢人生」讓李天祿獲得國內外的崇拜，年輕的學者開始研究台灣本土藝術並進行廣泛的田野調查；一些民間組織如西田社也陸續成立，致力於推廣與保存傳統台灣掌中戲。

以受歡迎的程度而言，許多對偶戲的學術研究多少被雲林的霹靂國際多媒體所獲得的巨大成功掩蓋了光芒。這間由黃俊雄的兒子們黃強華、黃文擇所創立的公司，早在一九八三年即開始製作布袋戲電視劇。他們雖然由父親所創造的史豔文系列故事開始，但經過數年的耕耘，他們已建立一個世界上無出其右的偶戲媒體帝國。霹靂建造了一間世界上最大的偶戲攝影棚，棚內廿四小時進行製作與拍攝。霹靂乘著台灣本土文化風潮的浪頭，加上敏銳的商業頭腦，以大眾媒體而非舞台演出為媒介，打造出他們的帝國。

霹靂布袋戲的成功可歸結出一些因素：運用現代的台語但融入備受歡迎的武俠小說用語；這些戲偶非同於小型的福建南方戲偶，是台灣原創的角色；此外，這些角色的樣貌是依照現代亞洲的審美觀打造，具備小巧的下巴與直挺的鼻樑，正是目前亞洲流行的整形美容標竿。



圖：韓國美容手術：尖下巴與挺直的鼻子(左/右)，戲偶則跟隨流行 (中)

與其他台灣文化的呈現不同的是，霹靂布袋戲偶並未受到美國、日本或傳統中國的過度影響，他們是台灣原創，並口說台語；他們是現代的，但也與過往歷史有清楚的鏈結。因此，他們可說是極適合成為台灣認同的一個象徵。這也是為什麼霹靂的文化深受年輕人喜愛，而同樣一批年輕人，對福建南方的戲偶則是興趣缺缺。霹靂是台灣人，很酷而且先進。這些戲偶同時也與日本的同人誌文化連結——年輕人裝扮成他們最愛的動畫中的角色。霹靂在台灣是同人誌迷們所裝扮的對象，年輕人竭盡全力將自己打扮成喜愛的霹靂角色。今年霹靂也跟日本合作新作品「東離劍遊記」。



圖：霹靂已在股市上市，並可購得戲偶的股票。

霹靂的商品以專業的方式銷售，台灣甚至是世界上唯一你能在每一間便利商店買到布袋戲 DVD 的地方。便利商店在台灣有超過五千間加盟店，且廿四小時營業。因此台灣可說是世界上唯一能夠讓這麼多人每天都看見布袋戲(商品)的地方。



圖：7-11 的布袋戲廣告（照片拍攝：筆者）

仰仗著對年輕族群的吸引力與老一輩的人們對他的感情，「霹靂」這個活生生的台灣族群認同象徵，也因此吸引許多想標誌自身本土特色的政治人物爭先恐後地和他攀關係。作為一個政客與布袋戲偶合照時，你不只可以將台灣文化拿在手上，同時也會是一張容易登上版面的照片。尤其對於非本省籍的台灣政治人物而言，則一個相當有利於展現自己的機會，甚至還可藉機開口說幾句不甚標準的台語。以當時的總統候選人馬英九以及宋楚瑜（宋即是一九七〇年代的禁播電視布袋戲的時任新聞局長）為例，兩人即從不錯過任何一個可以跟布袋戲偶合照的機會<sup>6</sup>。



圖：布袋戲團總是樂於幫忙政治人物，但多半不會公開表達其政治立場

<sup>6</sup> Bosco 1994, pp. 396-397



來自民進黨的候選人們亦同樣樂於和布袋戲攀上關係。一些民進黨的政治人物如謝長廷，甚至也在年輕時學過如何操演布袋戲。民進黨當中一些本土性比較淡的政治人物如黨主席蔡英文，也同樣喜歡把握機會與戲偶合照。陳水扁的戲偶甚至曾經在二〇〇〇年的總統選舉時被大量生產作為商品。

有時候，掌中戲甚至被運用在台灣の議會—立法院當中。在二〇一一年，兩位民進黨の立委表演了一齣廿分鐘の布袋戲「台灣演義：政治篇」。在戲中，馬英九總統被描述為一匹無用の馬，時任行政院長の吳敦義同在現場，也同時被批評了一番；而代表民進黨主席蔡英文の戲偶也有上場。吳敦義對這場表演的評語是「……連‘總統’也拿在手中，他們の主席也拿在手中，我覺得戲演不好，不實在。」（中國評論新聞網，10月14日，2011）



圖：大量生產の布袋戲偶：西元 2000 年時の總統候選人陳水扁（台原亞洲偶戲博物館藏）

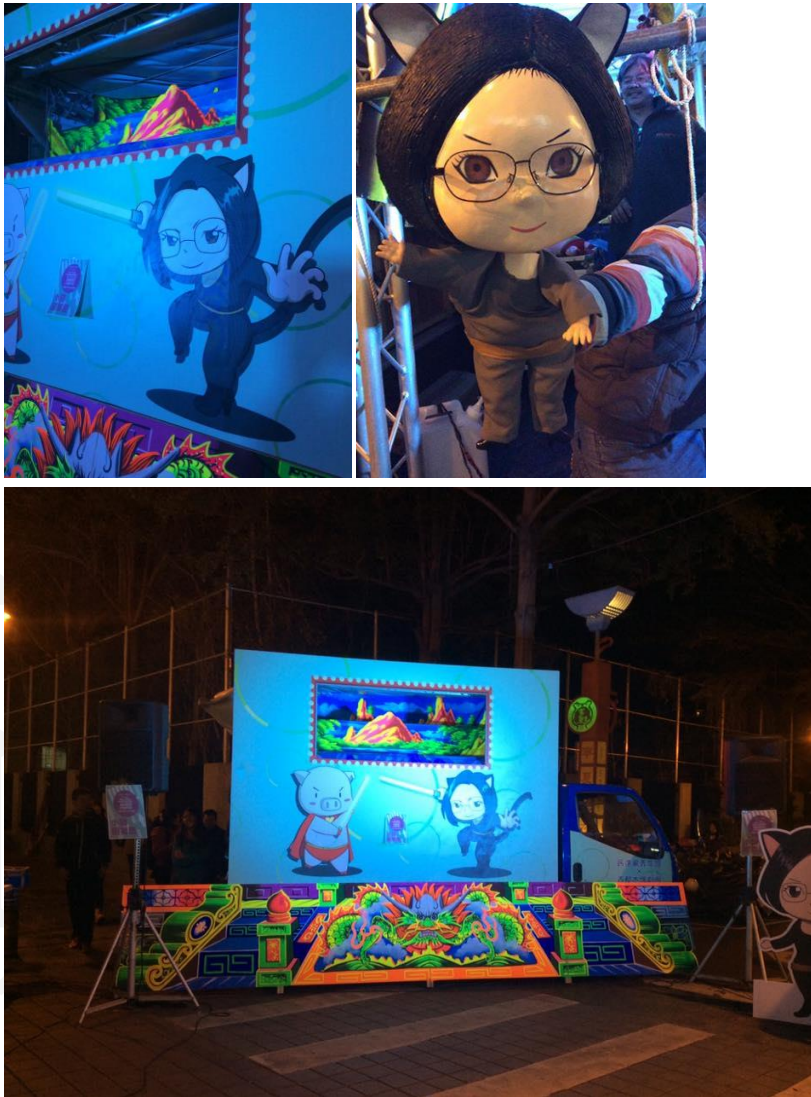


前駐法國代表呂慶龍推廣台灣文化 (yahoo 奇摩新聞)

## 展望與結論

在過去數十年當中，政府主動地支持布袋戲在台灣的發展。傳統與新興的劇團皆可向文化部申請補助金，而文化部與外交部也都會固定贊助布袋戲劇場的海外演出。布袋戲大師如陳錫煌（八十六歲）現在被尊為國寶並獲得國家津貼以感謝他們對於藝術的貢獻。政府同時也設置「藝生」的計畫讓年輕學子得以跟隨大師學藝並獲得政府的補助。在台北市，「育藝深遠-偶戲初體驗」讓每個國小二年級的學童得以參觀台北三個布袋戲中心或博物館其中之一（台北偶戲館、台原亞洲偶戲博物館與大稻埕戲苑），去了解布袋戲偶並觀賞一場傳統的布袋戲表演。同時還有位於新北市三芝的李天祿布袋戲文物館以及虎尾的雲林布袋戲館。國立台灣藝術教育館每年也舉辦「全國學生創意戲劇比賽」，每次都有超過百間國中小學校參賽，表演包括傳統或創新的戲偶與內容。這不但是世界上規模最大的學生偶戲比賽，更是一個讓創意靈感互相激盪的泉源。

在一九八七年，兩岸之間重新恢復聯繫之後，中國大陸與台灣之間便持續進行偶戲交流。傳統戲偶現在又如同一九四九年之前的景況一樣，主要由中國製造產出；兩岸學習布袋戲的學生也會互相交流。同時，許多躲過文化大革命的破壞的傳統戲偶與戲臺也被台灣的收藏家與古董商收購，也因此，許多福建閩南的古老布袋戲偶都成為台灣博物館的館藏。台灣不只將傳統雕刻精美的戲臺保留下來，也同時將傳統的掌中戲表演推往一個全新的方向。



2015 年，台北寧夏夜市台南的京都偶戲劇團演“小英出三害”。

當電視布袋戲這門戲路持續保有廣大戲迷支持的同時，政府也持續在教育上讓學子有機會培養對偶戲的興趣。這些因素的綜合，使得台灣獨成為亞洲一個唯一偶戲不至於受限於表演藝術邊緣的地方。希望這樣的台灣可以讓其他國家起而效尤，一起推動其傳統偶戲藝術的保存。唯一較可惜的，就是在高等教育系統當中還沒有掌中戲的體制—儘管布袋戲還是台灣最廣為人知的一種偶戲。然而儘管有這些正面發展，掌中劇團在學術圈內依舊被視為是一種較其他種類的傳統表演藝術次等的藝術形式。



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