

Indonesia Shadow Plays Bring Back Souls of the Dead

Jakarta — (UPI) — The souls of the dead are alive again in Indonesia. But their wanderings are restricted to the oblong screens of the country's ancient shadow plays.

Weird puppets — vessels of the ancestral spirits — cast their grotesque shadows on the screen, acting out the stories of giants and knights. The haze of burning incense adds to the mysterious atmosphere.

Sitting cross-legged, tailor-fashion, a puppeteer manipulates the puppets with deft fingers. Beating rhythmically with a wooden mallet held between his toes, he also directs the music to which the shadows move.

Would Anger Gods
No one else but the puppeteer may bring the puppets to life on the screens. Other-

wise, the gods will be angered and disaster may strike. Or so goes the legend.

The origin of the shadow play is buried in the ages when people believed that a person's shadow was his soul. Invading Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and Christian cultures have not destroyed that belief.

Performances are still held regularly at weddings, births, following a bountiful harvest and on other such occasions.

They are also frequently given in the palaces of President Sukarno, an avid fan.

Made of intricately carved rawhide — preferably from the hides of albino water buffalo — the flat puppets are held against the white screen. A flickering oil lamp causes the shadows to twitch, heighten-

ing the illusion that the shadows are alive.

Depict Stories

The puppet plays generally depict stories of the eternal battle between good and evil. The puppeteer always holds "evil" puppets in his left hand and "good" puppets in his right; for, as in many countries in Asia, left is bad and right is good.

Nobody knows who wrote the scripts for the stories or the scores for the music of gongs and cymbals that accompanies the plays.

Both the scripts and the music have remained the same through the years and never will the puppeteer deviate from them. If he did, he would risk severe punishment from the gods.

To become a puppeteer requires years of preparation

and there are few of them in this vast country.

May Reveal Approval

After a long period of fasting and abstinence, the gods may reveal their approval of a would-be puppeteer. Only after such approval will he be accepted at one of the two puppet schools in the country. Both are located in central Java, the seat of Indonesia's ancient culture.

The candidate must be well versed in the classical language of Java, the traditional music and chants used throughout the plays.

He must familiarize himself with the hundreds of characters represented by separate puppets. He must know their voices, their mannerisms, their characteristics and general behavior. Even the slightest variation in the pitch of the voice of one of the characters makes for discontent from the audience.

Learning to manipulate the puppets also takes considerable time and practice, particularly where it requires not

only deft fingers but nimble toes as well.

But most important of all, the puppeteer must learn the various sacrificial rites and incantations preceding each performance.

Asks Permission

Holding the puppets over the smoke of the incense, the puppeteer asks each of them for their permission to perform. A chicken is sacrificed, flowers placed at crossroads and the proper incantations are chanted.

Paving Starts at Medford Airport

Paving at the Medford airport was started yesterday by the Rogue River Paving company, City Manager Robert Duff reported.

Being paved are the taxi ways, private hanger and tie-down areas, and the west side of the street in front of the terminal building.

Contract for the project was approved by the city council earlier this month.

Any negligence or oversight, no matter how slight, is sufficient to bring down the wrath of the gods.

Most Javanese firmly believe that angry gods and spirits may cause fires to break out, harvests to dry in the fields, floods to rampage or a beloved son to die.

The pre-performance rituals also enable the puppeteer to perform his task. Sitting cross-legged for 12 consecutive hours, he will not get cramps and won't be thirsty or hungry if he carries out the rites correctly.

This makes the puppeteer a highly respected — and highly feared — person.

A displeased puppeteer may purposely neglect a small part of the elaborate pre-performance ritual and bring trouble to the house where he is performing.

On the other hand, any puppeteer who causes misfortune to others through neglect will spend the rest of his life in disgrace.

14 MAIL TRIBUNE, Medford, Or.
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American Male's Feet Grow Bigger

Webster, Mass. — (UPI) — The foot of the American male is getting bigger all the time — growing a third of an inch every 20 years and from an average shoe size seven 75 years ago to a ten today.

These statistics were gathered by such interested parties as the American Podiatry Association, the Leather Industries of America and Richard Sears, vice president of a shoe manufacturing firm (Bates).

Sears said that nutritionists attribute the growth to the fact that diets in the United States are richer in protein and vitamins than anywhere else in the world.

Orthopedic authorities say it is because the American man is getting taller and heavier and his feet are spreading out and ahead to accommodate the additional burden.

Homecoming Plans at Southern Oregon Noted

Ashtand — Homecoming festivities at Southern Oregon college next week end are set with Coach Akins' Red Raiders meeting the Oregon College of Education Wolves in one of the highlighted events.

By paying a registration fee of \$1, graduates will be admitted to the game Oct. 24 and to all other traditional activities, Jeff Lee and Armand Olson, co-chairmen for the annual event, said.

Registration will take place in the Britt Student Center lounge prior to the all-camp-

pus Variety show beginning at 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23 in the Britt Ballroom, and Saturday morning in the Britt lounge or in the dormitories before the parade beginning at 10:30 a.m. The victory bonfire rally will follow the variety show that night.

Game time will be at 2 p.m. on the college field Saturday, Oct. 24, with a half-time show planned. Homecoming royalty, consisting of a queen and a court of attendant princesses, will be selected by popular vote to reign over the gala two day affair.

Immediately following the game, there will be an Alumni Reception Tea in the Britt lounge, after which there will be an Alumni Association business meeting.

Week end activities will formally end with the traditional Homecoming Dance in the remodeled Britt ballroom which will be decorated with a motif in keeping with the Homecoming theme, "Destination Unlimited."



WANDERINGS RESTRICTED—The soul of the dead are alive again in Indonesia. But their wanderings are restricted to the oblong screens of the country's ancient shadow plays. Here, a puppeteer performs the last ritual acts before starting a play which will last 12 hours. He places a garland of consecrated flowers around the neck of a puppet who will play a major role in the play. (UPI Telephoto)

Bus-Elevator Planned for Jet Plane Passengers

Washington — (UPI) — Chrysler corp. will develop a futuristic combination bus, waiting room and elevator to carry passengers to and from jet airliners.

The Federal Aviation Agency said Chrysler and two associated firms had until next April 30 to deliver a prototype of the "Mobile Lounge." It will be tested and eventually used at Dulles International Airport, Washington's new jet terminal near Chantilly, Va.

The FAA awarded Chrysler a \$750,000 development contract Tuesday.

Fuel Consumption High

The new vehicle will be designed to transport passengers between an airline terminal and jet planes waiting at the end of a runway. The distance could be as far as two miles in the case of Dulles International.

Because jets use tremendous amounts of fuel even while taxiing, experts feel passengers should be taken to the planes rather than the planes to the passengers. Keeping jets away from terminal buildings also would ease noise and safety problems.

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