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Shadow Theaters of the World

Abstract

This paper examines the origin of the shadow theaters of the world including those of India, Indonesia, Southeast Asia, Egypt, Turkey, China, and Europe, and the relationships among the various traditions. Theories which have been advanced are discussed and analyzed, along with suggestions of other possibilities. Although all the shadow theater traditions of the world are highly distinctive, many links and influences have existed among them. This study suggests that the shadow theater may have originated in either Central Asia or India. The Euro-Asian steppe and the seas between Africa, Asia and Southeast Asia may have served as avenues that linked disparate shadow traditions, and some influences were probably not unidirectional. The paper also refutes numerous theories concerning the relationship between Chinese Shadows and those of the rest of the world.

Keywords: Shadow theater—shadow puppets—*wayang*—Karagöz—Chinese Shadows—*Ombres Chinoises*—*nang yai*—*nang sebek*—*nang talung*.

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SCHOLARS STUDYING VARIOUS shadow theater traditions of the world have advanced theories concerning origins and influences within specific regions, but a comprehensive study has never been done. The origin of the shadow theater, the relationships among the various traditions—their relationship to the Chinese shadow theater in particular—have intrigued me since I began working on traditional Chinese Shadows.[1] While a conclusive study of this topic does not seem possible, I would like to present available theories and evidence concerning the origin of the shadow theater, and discuss some possible routes of influence. This introductory discussion of the shadow theaters of the world is only an initial study of the earliest records of the various shadow traditions. Much as I would like to see Chinese provenance for this art form, I have not been able to find convincing proof As will be shown, neither consensus nor proof of direct influence among many of the oldest traditions can be authenticated. But theories have been advanced and enough evidence garnered to satisfy some of our curiosity.

Scholars generally agree that the shadow theater originated in Asia, either in India, Indonesia, Central Asia, or China. Although the most sophisticated traditions of this art form developed in China and Indonesia, there is still a lack of reliable documentary and archaeological proof to show that the shadow theater originated in these countries. Numerous scholars have proposed that the shadow theater originated in China,[2] but no concrete evidence of this performing art form existed until the tenth century, which was later than the first mention of the shadow theater in Indonesia. Many Chinese scholars also believe that the shadow theater spread to the west from China via Persia through the agency of the Mongol armies, that it spread to Southeast Asia with Chinese migrants during the fourteenth century, and that it was introduced to Western Europe by a Jesuit priest. This paper will show that these theories are unfounded. Indeed, the history of the shadow theater is replete with myths, hypotheses, and controversies. Aside from presenting and discussing them, this paper will also attempt to suggest a few more hypotheses for general consideration.

Shadowy and Not So Shadowy Origins

Many of the theories hark back to ancient sources that mention possible use of shadows. Noting the significance of caves as sacred sites for the performance of religious ceremonies using shadows, Przyluski presents as early examples Plato's allegory of the cave and a cave in India with an inscription from the second century BCE (Przyluski 1941, 84–86). An examination of the Plato's allegory of the cave in his *Republic* shows however, that this is no ordinary shadow show:

> Picture men dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern with a long entrance open to the light on its entire width. Conceive them as having their legs and necks fettered from childhood, so that they remain in the same spot, able to look forward only, and prevented by the fetters from turning their heads. Picture further the light from a fire burning higher up and at a distance behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners and above them a road along which a low wall has been built, as the exhibitors or puppet shows have partitions before the men themselves, above which they show the puppets [...]. See also, then, men carrying past the wall implements of all kinds that rise above the wall, and human shapes and shapes of animals as well, wrought in stone and wood and every material (Hamilton and Huntington 1961, 747 [*Republic* 7.514a–b]).

Puppets of humans and animals are apparently manipulated behind the audience in a cave. The fire behind the puppets casts shadows of them, which are observed as the only form of reality by the fettered audience. As an allegory for the illusory nature of all perceptions, this story, however, can hardly be considered a representation of shadow shows from ancient Greece.

The hypothesis concerning the cave in India as a site for shadow shows is also based on over-interpretation of what seems to be rather shadowy evidence. According to Przyluski, Jacob has shown that "if we combine Lüders' interpretation of the Indian word *saubhika*, with that of the compound *lenasobhika*, we obtain for the latter the sense of: '*Höhlenschattenspielerin*,' that is to say: woman who operates a shadow play in a cave." Jacob then suggests that a cave discovered at Sitabenga in the State of Sirguja "seems to have served as a shadow theater" (Przyluski 1941, 86). Richard Pischel describes in more detail that a number of holes in the ground near the entrance might have been made for props to hold a curtain. An inscription dated second century BCE mentions poets and according to Stache-Rosen, Pischel thought that poetical works, especially shadow plays, might have been performed in this cave (Stache-Rosen 1976, 276).[3]

A popular Chinese attribution to the second century BCE is just as shadowy—according to it, Chinese Shadows began with the conjuring of the apparition/shadow of a deceased consort of Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 140–86 BCE) of the Han dynasty. The use of torches and curtains, and the appearance of a shadowy figure seem to be considered adequate evidence by scholars who refer to this anecdote as the origin of Chinese shadow theater.

The historical record of this story is found in Ban Gu's 班固 dynastic history of the Han, *Hanshu* 漢書 97A-B under "Accounts of the Families Related to the Emperors by Marriage." After the death of Lady Li 李夫人, a favorite concubine of Emperor Wu:

> The emperor continued to think longingly of [her] and could not forget her. A magician from Ch'i 齊 named Shao-weng 少翁, announcing that he had the power to summon spirits, one night lit torches, placed curtains around them, and laid out offerings of wine and meat. He then had the emperor take his place behind another curtain and observe the proceedings from a distance. The emperor could see a beautiful lady who resembled Lady Li circling within the curtains, sitting down and then rising to walk again. But he could not move closer to get a good look and, stirred more than ever to thoughts of sadness, he composed this poem:
>
> Is it she?
> Is it not?
> I stand gazing from afar:
> timid steps, soft and slow,
> how long she is in coming! (translated in WATSON 1974, 249)

Anyone who has seen a shadow play would have realized that no matter how adept the Daoist magician was at "conjuring," he could not possibly have tricked the emperor using a two-dimensional shadow figure. Many have accepted the attribution[1] only because it was advanced by a Song (960–1280) dynasty scholar, Gao Cheng 高承 (ca. 1080) and frequently repeated by others. In his *Shiwu Jiyuan* 事物記源 ("The Origin of Things"), Gao repeated the Lady Li story in his own words and then added, "This was the origin of the shadow shows" (GAO 1975, vol. 9; translated in CHANG 1982, 17). Although Gao also asserts that "they [the shadow shows] have not been seen during the dynasties since" (*lidai wusuojian* 歷代無所見; not translated in CHANG), most people conveniently ignored this last phrase.

Related to the above Chinese story of the origin of its shadow theater is a similar Middle Eastern tale presented by Jacob. Calling a conjuring act or magic trick "a shadowplay not intended for entertainment," Jacob tells of

how one night in Kûfa in the eighth century, Batrûnî, a Jew, presented "a show of phantoms." This show consisted of the appearance of Qail, a famous Arabian king, who encircled the yard of the mosque, riding on a horseback. Unfortunately for Batrûnî, the "shadow show" was condemned as sorcery and he was sentenced to death (JACOB 1925, 46–67; quoted in JURKOWSKI 1996, 208).

A much less shadowy theory subscribes to origin among the nomadic tribes of Central Asia. It links the characteristics of this theater to the culture of the Turkish tribes there. The theory is compelling although the evidence is circumstantial. Bill Baird notes:

> For nomads have animals and, therefore, leather. They have tents and fire and, therefore, a lighted screen. A shadow show of fifty actors packs into a small saddlebag. It is known that the Scythians of the third and fourth centuries BCE made handsome silhouettes of leather. And in burial grounds among the Altai Mountains near Outer Mongolia, along the old trade route between China and Russia, there have been found cutout leather animals, one a moose that could well have been a shadow figure (BAIRD 1973, 84).[5]

The use of flat figures made of leather, felt, paper, cloth or bark by the nomadic tribes of Central Asia may have been related to their shamanic religious practices. A Song dynasty Chinese source quotes from a Tang source that Central Asian Turks (*tujue* 突厥) worshipped felt figures representing gods that they kept in leather bags (LI 1990; reprint, 1046–513).[6] This practice has been traced among Turkish and Mongolian peoples of Central Asia until recent times. Such figures apparently represented sacred figures, ancestors and deceased relatives (BEAZLEY 1903; quoted in BOMBACI 1963, 97).[7] The Manchus of Northeast China also use tree bark and paper figures of human beings during shamanic rituals and of animals for burials (ZHOU, HU 1996, 8–9 and 34–36).

Although the technique of the shadow theater may have indeed originated with the nomadic tribes of the steppes of Central Asia, definite proof may never be found. These tribes were illiterate and hence no written records can be obtained. The Turkish scholar, Sabri Esat Siyavusgil suggests that the Turks of Central Asia had long been familiar with the shadow theater, which they designated the name of *kavurcak* or *kabarcuk*. A Turco-Arabic dictionary of the thirteenth century, published however in 1894, gives as the definition for the word: "it is the shadow theater." Siyavusgil believes that *kavurcak* must have become transformed in the course of time into *kolkurcak* in the Turkish dialect of Central Asia, and

eventually came to be used more specifically to refer to marionettes. If one believes that more than one dialect existed in Central Asia, then *kavurcak* and *kolkurcak* could also have been the same word in different dialects.[8] In Turkestan, the shadow theater is still known as *cadir hayal*, meaning "performance given under a tent" (SIYAVUSGIL 1961, 5–6).

Another Turkish scholar, Metin And feels, however, that *cadir hayal* refers to the marionettes in Turkestan (AND 1987, 22–23) and that there is no evidence of the existence of a Turkish shadow theater until the sixteenth century. Certainly the Turkish Karagöz in Turkey did not appear until the sixteenth century, but it seems possible that the Central Asian Turks were performing shadow performances by at least the twelfth century. The earliest Egyptian shadow figures are called Mameluke figures from the Mameluke epoch (1250–1517). The shadow figures of this tradition are mostly static figures (figures 1 and 2)[9] distinctly different from those of the Karagöz Shadows (figure 3) which dominated the Arab world later. The Mamelukes were Turkish military slaves from Central Asia in Egypt. They were the dispossessed nomads of the steppes bought by the Egyptians for their toughness and superior riding skills. These slaves were converted to Islam and were so well-trained that they became a military elite who finally set themselves up as a ruling dynasty (NORTHRUP 1998, 242–53).[10] Indeed, the first authenticated mention of the Shadows in Egypt is from the twelfth century concerning the Mameluke Sultan, Salah El-Din El-Kalyouby, who made his reluctant grand vizier watch a shadow show with him in 1171 (MIKHAIL 1996, 3; KAHLE 1940, 21).

A Persian poet, Seyh Ferididdin Attar (between 1120 and 1230) also claims inspiration from a famous Turkish "exhibitor" in Khorasan (in eastern Iran where Turkish nomads resided) before he created his mystical vision of the world in the image of the shadow theater (SIYAVUSGIL 1961, 6–7). Connecting Turkish Shadows to the steppes of Central Asia and Egypt is also the fact that I was told by vendors at the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul that the shadow figures in Turkey have always been made of camel hide.

INDIAN SHADOWS

Some scholars like Richard Pischel, Otto Spies, Alessio Bombaci, Sab'n (Sabri) Esat Siyavusgil and William Ridgeway have advocated Indian origins for the shadow theater (PISCHEL 1902; MYRSIADES 1973, 27).[11] Indeed, if the interpretation of certain words in the *Mahabharata* (400 BCE—400 CE; MILLER 1993, 123) and Patañjali's *Mahabhasya* (second century BCE; WOLPERT 1982, 87) are correct, then the earliest mention of shadow plays in literature are found in India. According to Stache-Rosen, Richard Pischel notes that a commentator of the *Mahabharata*, Nilakantha (seventeenth cen-

tury),[12] explains that the word *rupopajivanam*[13] in the *Mahabharata* is referred to as *jalamandapika* in southern India during his own time. Nilakantha states that *jalamandapika* refers to the display of the reflection of leather figures cast on a thin cloth (STACHE-ROSEN 1976, 276). Although one might question the reading of a seventeenth-century scholar into a word written about two thousand years earlier, the following interpretation is based on a much older work and provides more definite proof than one person's conjecture. According to Stache-Rosen, Lüder similarly interprets the word *saubhikas*, which appears in the second-century-BCE work *Mahabhasya*, as shadow players. He confirms this opinion with the work of a tenth-century writer, Somadeva, who explains in his *Nitivakyamrta* that a *saubhika* is "a man who makes several persons visible at night on a screen made of cloth." *Sobhikas* (*saubhikas*) are also listed among other entertainers in several early Buddhist scriptures of the late first millennium BCE, such as the *Siksasamuccaya*, the *Mahavastu* and the *Jataka*[14] (STACHE-ROSEN 1976, 277). Oral tradition also claims that shadow theater was found in Andhra Pradesh as early as 200 BCE. According to Ramana Murty, the *Andhra Sarwaswamu* states that in the sixth century, the Pallava kings and the Kakatiya kings of South India introduced leather puppetry to Indonesia when they conquered the groups of Islands of Yava (Java, Indonesia; MURTY 1976, 73). Hence, one can conclude that shadow theater has most likely existed in India since the first millennium BCE, and that it had definitively been performed there by the sixth and tenth centuries. A twelfth-century Ceylonese chronicle records that King Gajabahu (r. 1137–1153) employed as spies Tamilians and others "practiced in dance and song to appear as showmen of leather puppets and the like" (STACHE-ROSEN 1976, 277; GRAY 1930, 627). The earliest extant shadow playscript seems to be *The Dutangada of Subhata*, which was produced at a *dhooly* festival in 1243 (GRAY 1912, 58–59). Possibly extinct in some locations, the following shadow traditions have been found in South India (see figures 4–6).

Place	**Shadow Tradition**
Orissa	Ravanachhaya
Andhra Pradesh	Keelu Bomme
Andhra Pradesh	Tholu Bommalatta
Karnataka	Togalu Gombe Atta
Kerala	Tholpava Koothu
Tamil Nadu	Thol Bommalatta
Maharashtra	Charma Bahuli Natya

At the 1999 Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Tom Cooper presented a paper proposing that missionary Buddhist priests took the Shadows from India to both Indonesia and China during the great period of Buddhist expansion from the sixth through the ninth centuries.[15] Intriguing though the theory is, the popularity of both the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* in Indonesia seems to suggest that a more general Hindu culture, rather than Buddhism, accompanied the shadow theater from India. In the Theravada Buddhist countries of Cambodia and Thailand, only the *Ramayana* has been performed by their shadow theaters. As for the theory of the introduction of the shadow theater to China along with Buddhism, one might note that there is no proof of its existence in China until the tenth century. Sun Kaidi has shown that picture recitation might have been performed in Buddhist temples during the Tang dynasty (618–907), but his suggestion that these tableaux story-telling events were a seminal form of the shadow theater (SUN 1982, 62–63) remains hypothetical. The influence, if any, would have been very minimal. The historical tales performed by the earliest shadow plays of the Song dynasty (960–1280) in fact bear no relationship to the contents of the Transformation Texts (*bianwen* 變文) that the pictures may have accompanied.

INDONESIAN SHADOWS

The relationship between the shadow theaters of India and Indonesia is still being debated. Although the *Andhra Sarwaswamu* states that Indian kings who invaded Java in the sixth century introduced to it the Shadows, the present Indonesian shadow theater is so much more elaborate and sophisticated than remnant traces of this art in India that many have maintained that it was an autochthonous Indonesian tradition. For example, whereas Indian shadow performances either have very few or no musical instruments at all,[16] those in Indonesia are accompanied by extensive ensembles of gamelan music. Indeed, the Indonesian Shadows (figure 7) is probably the best-known type of shadow theater in the world. Unlike the Chinese shadow theater which is considered but a minor form of opera, the Indonesian Shadows stands out as the "preeminent art form in Java" (KEELER 1987, 14). Despite the comparable sophistication of the Chinese shadow theater, the Indonesian form has been hailed as "one of the world's most complex and refined dramatic and theatrical forms" (BRANDON 1993, 1).

According to Brandon, the earliest surviving records of *wajang* (*wayang*)[17] on copper plates dated 840 and 907 may have referred to shadow performers and plays; by the eleventh century, shadow plays of a high level of complexity were definitely performed:

> The existence of shadow puppets in Java is first hinted at in two royal charters, establishing freeholds, inscribed on copper plates. The first, dated 840, mentions the names of six kinds of officials who were performers or who supervised musicians, clowns, and possibly *wajang* performers (the precise meaning of the terms cannot be determined, unfortunately). The second, from 907, describes dances, epic recitations, and *mawajang*, a performance which may have been a shadow play. *Wajang* is mentioned several times in the copious and elegant court literature written between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries at various kingdoms in east Java. A famous reference appears in *The Meditation of Ardjuna* (*Ardjuna Wiwaha*), composed by a court poet of King Airlangga (1035–1049): "There are people who weep, are sad and aroused watching the puppets, though they know they are merely carved pieces of leather manipulated and made to speak. These people are like men who, thirsting for sensuous pleasures, live in a world of illusion; they do not realize the magic hallucinations they see are not real." In 1157 the court poet Mpu Sedah wrote in the Great War (*Bratajada*): "The booming of frogs in the river sounds like xylophones [*saron*] accompanying the *wajang* play. When wind blows over empty bamboo cylinders it is like flutes playing for the performance" (BRANDON 1993, 3).

The most obvious influence from India to Indonesia, in fact of all the shadow theater traditions of Southeast Asia, is the adaptation of the themes of the two great Indian epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. The latter, in particular, seems to have remained the main saga for the Shadows of Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia. All the proponents of Indian origin mentioned earlier subscribe to Indian influence on Indonesian Shadows. Krom notes, too, that *wayang kulit* is found in Indonesia only in those places where Hinduism once flourished or still prevails (KROM 1926, 45; quoted in RAS 1976, 51). It is also significant that the screen of the shadow theater of Malabar in South India is marked off into two divisions; the right side is reserved for noble characters of the play, the left side for the evil characters (IYER 1968, 24), just as they are placed at the beginning of Indonesian shadow shows. The Indonesian practice of aligning all the characters on two sides of the screen before the show may also reflect a South Indian practice. In the Tolu Bommalata shadow tradition of Andhra Pradesh, a stage erection ritual is performed in which the major characters are fixed on either side of the screen while the gods whom the performers invoke dance on the screen (SARMA 1985, 36). The traditional time limit of forty-one and twenty-one days, and a fortnight and seven days for the stag-

ing of the *Ramayana* play in Malabar is also similar to that found in Java and Burma (IYER 1968, 24).

In general, while German and Indian scholars tend to adhere to the Indian genesis theory, Dutch and Indonesian scholars are more apt to advocate the shadow theater as an autochthonous phenomenon.[18] William Hubert Rassers argues that *wayang* has evolved from ancient indigenous initiation rites for men who reach their adulthood (RASSERS 1959, 95–215; quoted in SOEDARSONO 1976, 88 and RAS 1976, 52). Brandes notes that all of the *wayang*'s technical equipment is designated by indigenous rather than Indian terms (BRANDES 1889, 123–24; quoted in RAS 1976, 50). Hazeu suggests that the Indonesian shadow theater originated in ancient local ancestor worship (HAZEU 1897, 145; quoted in SOEDARSONO 1976, 88). Kats adds that the servant-clowns, who are considered to be purely Indonesian mythological divine beings, have no counterparts in the Indian epics (KATS 1923, 41; quoted in SOEDARSONO 1976, 88). Indeed, Anker Rentse is so convinced of the autochthonous nature of Indonesian Shadows that he proposes that "Indian traders may just as well have brought it back from their voyages to Java and introduced it in India at an early period." (RENTSE 1947, 12).

Most of the above theories have been refuted. Goslings published a monograph on the origin of the Javanese *wayang*, which is mainly a detailed refutation of the various arguments brought forward by Rassers (GOSLINGS 1938; RAS 1976, 53). As for Rentse's proposal, Tilakasiri considers the thesis highly untenable since the earliest known type of shadow play in Java, the *wayang purwa*, is definitely associated with the introduction of the Indian epics to Indonesia (TILAKASIRI 1968, 11). Claire Holt also notes that while the clowns, which were thought to be purely Indonesian mythological divine beings, do not appear in the epics, they do appear on the Indian ancient stage as the *vidushaka*, "a Brahman but ugly and ridiculous" (HOLT 1967, 131). After reviewing the various arguments, Ras concludes that detailed descriptions by Seltmann of the shadow theater in Mysore and Andhra Pradesh as well as Kerala leave no doubt that the Javanese *wayang kulit* is derived from South Indian forms of shadow play (RAS 1976, 54). It seems that the original, local animistic rites and ancestor worship of Java were incorporated into the shadow shows once the latter became a preferred art form. The adoption of the shadow theater to serve popular liturgical functions resembles the trajectory of the Chinese Shadows. The Chinese shadow theater also became co-opted by popular religion and preserved—via its opening ritual playlets—liturgical roots which hark back to shamanic and *nuo* 儺 exorcist practices of antiquity.

The theory that the Chinese introduced the shadow theater to the Indonesian islands via Chinese visitors and migrants during the fourteenth

century[19] can be easily refuted on the grounds that the shadow theater was already sophisticated and popular in Indonesia during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (BRANDON 1993, 3) before the supposed migration; that the shadow theaters of India and Southeast Asia share numerous similarities particularly in their preference for performing the Hindu epic, *Ramayana*, not found in the Chinese Shadows; and that the shadow theater itself was not a very popular form of performing art in China during the Yuan (1280–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties when the migration was supposed to have taken place. It was not until the Qing (1644–1911) dynasty that Chinese Shadows experienced an unprecedented revival.

It has been suggested that since the theory that the Shadows were introduced to Indonesia from China is untenable, then a reverse process might be considered. The Chinese Shadows might have originated in Indonesia since by the tenth century maritime traffic between the two regions was already fully developed (HOLT 1967, 131). More evidence is needed to prove this hypothesis. There is a form of Chinese Shadows in Jogjakarta known as *wajang titi* (SELTMAN 1980, 51–75). Although distinctly Chinese in style, the figures of this shadow theater tradition however, shows more consanguinity with the more naturalistic Malay shadow figures than with any of the traditions found in China. The head, upper body, and legs are not separated, and the rods are attached in the same way as those in Southeast Asia. It may have been a fairly recent tradition, created by the local ethnic Chinese population.

CAMBODIAN, THAI, AND MALAY SHADOWS

Now that we have established that Indonesian Shadows most likely originated from the shadow theater of South India, what about the traditions in Malaysia, Thailand (Siam), and Cambodia (Khmer)? Did they derive from India or from the Indonesian islands? The shadow theater traditions of all of these countries are related not only in the prominent role played by the Indian epic, *Ramayana*, but also in other characteristics shared among them not found in the Chinese, Turkish, and European Shadows. The routes of influence are still being contested. It seems that the routes were not unidirectional and different types of shadow traditions may have had different points of origin.

In Malaysia, four main types of shadow theater traditions have existed in various regions of the peninsula. They are the *wayang kulit Jawa*, the *wayang kulit Gedek*, the *wayang kulit Melayu* (also known as the *wayang Jawa*), and the *wayang kulit Siam*. While *wayang kulit Jawa* and *wayang kulit Melayu* trace their ancestry to Javanese Shadows, *wayang kulit Gedek* and *wayang kulit Siam* refer to the shadow theaters of southern Thailand. *Wayang kulit Gedek* is the Malay term for the *nang talung* of Thailand, while

wayang kulit Siam is in fact a product of the Malay villages and is the preeminent form performed in Peninsular Malaysia as well as among the Malay-speaking peoples of the southeastern Thai provinces (MATUSKY 1993, 8–13). Although the "Siamese" shadow play (*wayang kulit Siam*) is common all over the Kelantan region of Malaysia, it differs from Thai Shadows (RENTSE 1936, 284). The relationship of Malay Shadows to those in Thailand and Cambodia, and the link between them and those in Indonesia and India will be explored next.

Both Cambodia and Thailand sport two very different types of shadow traditions: Those performing with large, static, often composite figures, and those performing with small figures with movable arms. In Cambodia, the large figure tradition is known as the Khmer *nang sebek* (figure 8); in Thailand, it is known by the name of *nang yai* (figure 9). The small Khmer shadow play is called *nang trolung*, while the Thai type bears the very similar name of *nang talung* (figure 10). The Cambodian Shadows are known to have existed some time during the Angkor period of the Khmer Empire (802–1432 CE). The large *nang sebek* Shadows is the older of the two forms (SHEPPARD 1968, 199). The earliest mention of *nang* performances in Thailand occurs in the palace law of King Boromatrailokanath enacted in 1458.

The similarity between the large figures of *nang sebek* and *nang yai* and those of India (figure 6) makes it almost certain that this form of shadow theater originated in India. Although Thailand is closer to India than Cambodia, the shadow theater seems to have traveled from Cambodia to Thailand. Sheppard notes that the first king of Funan (name of the earliest Khmer kingdom) is believed to have been a Brahmin from India who married the Khmer Queen and founded this first great Hinduized kingdom in Southeast Asia during the first century CE (SHEPPARD 1968, 203). In his study on Thai shadow play invocations, Simmonds also states that the influence of the great civilization of the Khmer Empire cannot be discounted (SIMMONDS 1961, 542). Hence the large figured shadow figures of Southeast Asia most likely traveled from India to Cambodia to Thailand. The similarity between the large static figures of Cambodia and Thailand, and those of India also makes it unlikely that they were of Chinese provenance, as suggested by Broman (BROMAN 1995, 3).

The trajectory of the shadow theater of the small, articulated figures, the *nang trolung* and the *nang talung*, is more debatable. Sheppard says that the Cambodian term is derived from the name of a Khmer town called Trolung, where this form of Shadows is believed to have been popularized initially (SHEPPARD 1968, 199). If this is true, then the *nang talung* of Thailand probably originated in Trolung. Thai scholars, however, have long

looked towards the islands of the south as the place of origin for their southern form of articulated figures.[20] They believe that the *nang talung* reached Thailand through the Malay forms (figure 11) known in Kelantan and elsewhere (SIMMONDS 1961, 557). Based on his study of a manuscript of invocations, Simmonds suggests a probable link between "Thai, Cambodian, and, ultimately, Javanese and Balinese literature and ceremonial procedure in the context of the shadow play."(SIMMONDS 1961, 542 and 556–57). Hence Indonesian influence exists among the small, articulated Shadows of Southeast Asia. It may have reached Cambodia and Thailand via the Malay Peninsula, or it may have traveled from Cambodia to Thailand and then influenced the Malay Shadows. Given the proximity of Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia, the influence may not have been unidirectional.[21] There also seems to be more similarity among the shadow figures of these countries when compared to the shape and appearance of the Indonesian figures (SHEPPARD 1968, 204).

NEAR EASTERN AND MIDDLE EASTERN SHADOWS

The origin of the shadow theater in the Near and Middle East is also fraught with uncertainties. The earliest records of the shadow theater in this part of the world come from Egypt. According to Mikhail, the first reference was in a poem by El Shabashty (n.d.) who wrote of an earlier poet, Debel (d. 864 CE). This poem supposedly said, "Nobody defeated me but a bisexual to whom I said 'I will call you names.' The bisexual replied, 'If you do, I would put your mother in the shadow'" (MIKHAIL 1996, 3). Mikhail is the only scholar to have alluded to this reference. He does not cite a textual source for this poem and it is not certain that the "shadow" mentioned here is in fact a shadow show. Landau feels that the shadow theater was almost unknown to the Muslims until the twelfth century, since the night life of the Khalifas has been described profusely, but no mention of the shadow theater perform ances has been recorded (LANDAU 1948, 172). An often-cited reference from the twelfth century is an anecdote concerning Salah El-Din El-Kalyouby (Sultan al-Malik an-Nasir Salahuddin in SANDERSON 1931, 387) who made his rather reluctant grand vizier watch a shadow show with him in 1171 (MIKHAIL 1996, 3; KAHLE 1940, 21). Khayal al-Zill, the Arabic name for the Shadows, is frequently mentioned during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (LANDAU 1948, 172). The earliest extant shadow playscripts from Egypt are three plays in poetry and versified prose, written by a physician by the name of Muhammad Ibn Daniyal (d. 1311).[22]

Finding similarities between Turkish Shadows, which many believe came from Egypt, and those in Indonesia, Metin And proposes that the Egyptian Shadows were brought by Arab colonizers and traders from Java.

He considers the Indonesian master shadow puppeteer, the *dalang*, comparable to the Turkish *hayalci* or *hayali*, who directs and animates the whole proceeding. Also, both the *dalang* and the *hayalci* start the show with a kind of invocation, where there are some references to animism and Sufism. Metin And also shows similarities between the composite figures of the Indonesian *kayon* or *gunungan*, the Tree of Life, and the Turkish *göstermelik* (AND 1987, 30–32). According to Siyavusgil, this *göstermelik* also adorned the screen at the beginning of the show, while the audience waited (SIYAVUSGIL 1961, 2). Early Turkish shadow theater began with dances and fighting among animals, which Metin And considers reminiscent of the Javanese "fantastic vine" with birds and monkeys on it. Another piece of evidence is his observation that each new character in Turkish Shadows is introduced by a signature tune, which is perhaps akin to the Javanese practice of identifying a new figure on his entrance by the orchestra playing a special tune (AND 1987, 30–32). Hence, the Turkish Karagöz Shadows and possibly its predecessor, the Egyptian Shadows, may have been influenced by Javanese Shadows.

Another possibility is a link between Egyptian and Indian Shadows. The style of ornamentation on the mostly static figures of these old traditions shows much similarity. Also, as discussed earlier, the Egyptian Mameluke Shadows may have been brought by the Turks of the steppes of Central Asia, a region which links the subcontinent of India to Persia and the Arab World. It may also be of significance that the earliest references to the shadow theater in India are in the literatures of Aryan invaders to the region from the northwest of the subcontinent. Evidence of the shadow theater in other parts of the medieval Arab world is scarce. Without citing his source, Mikhail states that in 1357, a nineteen-year-old Iraqi, Ihn Yousif El-Khazaie, went to Cairo. Among other activities, he performed shadow performances (MIKHAIL 1996, 3). It is not clear, however, if he performed a kind of shadow tradition he brought from Iraq, or if he performed the Egyptian Mameluke Shadows. Three Egyptian shadow plays, written by a physician, have survived.[23]

Literary allusions serve as evidence for the existence of the shadow theater in Persia during the twelfth century. A poem by a Persian poet (d. 1123) comparing human beings to "magic Shadow-shapes that come and go/ Round with the Sun-illumined lantern..." has been cited as evidence of the Shadows in Persia (SANDERSON 1931, 187). Rather than the shadow theater, this seems, however, to be an example of the zoetrope type of lantern in which shadow figures gyrate around a lamp. More convincing is a set of verses which actually mention shadow players and screens. In these twelfth century verses of Nizami's *Iskandar-Nama*, the shadow play is used as a literary metaphor (ETTINGHAUSEN 1934, 10).[24] Ettinghausen theorizes that sil-

houette figures on a set of bowls from the second half of the twelfth century are representations of the lost Persian Shadows (ETTINGHAUSEN 1934, 10–15). Another poet, Seyh Ferididdin Attar (between 1120 and 1230) says in his *Üstürname* that he met a famous Turkish "exhibitor" in his native country of Khorasan before creating his mystical vision of the world in the image of the shadow theater. This Khorasan region was populated in large part by Turkish nomadic tribes who were still performing shadow plays toward the end of the last century. The type of shadow theater performed there during the nineteenth century, however, seems to have been similar to the Turkish Karagöz (Karaghioz) Shadows (SIYAVUSGIL 1961, 6–7; LANDAU 1948, 163).

The Turkish Karagöz Shadows spread far and wide along with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. Considered by most scholars to be a descendant of the Mameluke Egyptian Shadows, this tradition was found in Greece (as Karagiozis; Karagheuz), the Arab countries (as Garagousse; Caragousse; Karakus) of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Syria,[25] Iran,[26] and Bosnia-Herzegovina (LANDAU 1958, 33–45; MARTINOVITCH 1968, 30; ANONYMOUS 1846, 301). Putting aside the possible invention of shadow shows by the nomadic Turkish tribes of Central Asia already discussed, established evidence of the theater with the nation state of Turkey itself apparently did not exist until the sixteenth century. References to the shadow theater made its appearance as early as the twelfth century, but as a literary metaphor (SIYAVUSGIL 1961, 8). There is also debate over the tombstone of a dervish by the name of Sheih Küsteri (died sometime between 1366 and 1400) who was supposed to have been a shadow performer (MYRSIADES 1973, 41–44).

In 1517 Sultan Selim I incorporated Egypt into the Turkish realm and watched a shadow play re-enact the hanging of the last Sultan of the Mamelukes. He was so delighted by the show that he took the performer with him to Istanbul (AND 1963–1964, 34; AND 1987, 25–26; MISTAKIDOU 1978, 52–55). This tale is often quoted as the beginning of the Turkish Shadows, known more popularly as the Karagöz. The use of the shadow theater as a literary metaphor during earlier centuries suggests however, that the shadow theater most likely existed in Turkey before its importation from Egypt, but it was not a popular form of entertainment until the Ottoman court popularized the well-developed Egyptian Shadows. From the beginning of the sixteenth century on, it was a main staple in the court festivities of the Ottoman Empire, and eventually became a popular performing art form in Turkey and the regions under its influence.

Almost all modern Chinese works and many Western ones on the shadow theater credit the Mongols for spreading it to the West. This theory is

important in that it leads to the conclusion that the Shadows of Persia (Iran), Turkey, Egypt, the Middle East, and North Africa all originated in China. According to this generally accepted belief, the Mongol armies took the Shadows with them during their invasions; it was performed in a Mongol court in Persia whence it spread to the Arab countries (Middle East and North Africa) and Turkey.[27]

According to this myth, a Persian court historian, Rashid Ad-din (1304–1378) recounted a tale about Chinese shadow theater puppeteers who performed for Ogetei (Ögödei; 1186–1241) in his Mongol court in Persia. Jiang's description of the shadow performance in the Mongol court is the latest among other more lengthy and similarly misinterpreted accounts of the event:

> According to Rashid Al-din [English spelling in original Chinese text], a fourteenth-century Persian politician and historian, "After the son of Genghis Khan assumed the throne, a Chinese performer came to Persia and performed a type of play behind a screen." This type of play refers to the shadow theater. The content of the play was "tales about numerous countries." It was said that before Ogatai [English spelling in original text] inherited the throne from Tamerlane, a Chinese shadow performer presented a shadow play in Persia. The play enacted the dragging of an old turbaned man from the tail of a horse. When Ogatai inquired as to its meaning, the performer said, "This was a Muslim rebel. This was the way they were transported into the cities." Instead of blaming the performer for his impudence, Ogatai bestowed upon him numerous Persian artworks, jewelry, embroidery, as well as Chinese woven materials and carvings (JIANG 1992, 51–52).[28]

John Andrew Boyle's translation of Rashid Ad-din's history indicates that the event which actually transpired was quite different from the tale perpetuated among Chinese works on the shadow theater:

> From Khitai [Northern China] there had come some players, and they displayed from behind a curtain wonderful Khitayan plays. One of these consisted of a kind of picture of every people, among which they showed an old man with a white beard and a turban wound round his head being dragging along abound to the tail of a horse. Qa'an [Khan] asked who this was meant to portray. They replied that it represented a rebellious Muslim because the soldiers dragged them out of the town in this manner. Qa'an ordered the show to be stopped and [commanded his attendants] to fetch from the treasury precious clothes and jewel-

> studded objects such as are brought from Baghdad and Bukhara, Arab horses, and other valuable things such as jewels, gold, silver, etc., which are found in these parts. They produced Khitayan wares also and laid them side by side. The difference was enormous. Qa'an said: "The poorest Tazik Muslim has several Khitayan slaves standing before him, while not one of the great emirs of Khitai has a single Muslim captive. And the reason for this can only be the wisdom of God, Who knows the rank and station of all the peoples of the world; it is also in conformity with the auspicious *yasa* of Chingiz-Khan, for he made the blood money for a Muslim 40 *balish* and that for a Khitayan a donkey. In view of such clear proofs and testimonies how can you make a laughing stock of the people of Islam? You ought to be punished for your actions, but this time I will spare your lives. Depart from my presence and do not commit such actions again (BOYLE 1971, 78).

Khitayan refers to the Chinese. Hence, the Chinese shadow performers were not appreciated by Ogetei. Their inferiority was proven and they were, in fact, soundly castigated and warned never to make fun of Muslims again.

In fact, Ogetei's court was not in Persia either. The court physician, historian and wazir, Rashid Ad-din (Fadl Allah Rashid ad-din ibn 'Imad ad-Dawla Abu 'l-Khayr; 1304–1318) was Persian but he did not write the first part of his great history, the *Jami' at-Tawarikh*, which dealt with the Turks and the Mongols, until 1300–1303 (WILBER and MINOVI 1938, 247). Indeed, the Khanate of Persia was not established until the Mongols extinguished the Caliphate in 1258.[29] Ogetei (1186–1241), however, assumed the throne as Great Khan in 1229, almost thirty years before the Mongols conquered Persia. Rashid Ad-din was obviously writing about stories based on written or oral records about the Mongol court, which had transpired almost seventy years before his own time. Hence, Chinese shadow performers did not go to a Mongol court in Persia. It was actually in Ogetei's court in Mongolia where the ruler was not pleased with their performance.[30]

TURKISH KARAGÖZ AND CHINESE SHADOWS

In connection with the nomadic ancestry of the shadow theater mentioned earlier, I would like to present a surprising similarity between Karagöz, protagonist of the Turkish Shadows, and the "guardian" figure of the Luanzhou 灤州 (Eastern Hebei 冀東) and Northeastern 東北 Shadows of China. Known commonly as Big Hand (*dabazhang* 大巴掌), but also as Big Chin (*daxiaba* 大下巴; ZHOU, HU 1996, 44) and Big Baldy (*datuzi* 大禿子; LÜ 1961, 449; see figure 12), the Big Hand of Northeastern Shadows, with its protruding chin, huge hand (it has only one hand, in contrast to all the other

figures), and nomadic style clothing, looks so much like Karagöz, who has a large movable hand (the other hand is hardly ever shown), that one wonders whether or not a connection between the Chinese Northeastern and Turkish Shadows existed.[31] Big Hand is a peculiar figure found only in the Northeastern and Luanzhou Shadows of China. Referred to reverently as "Big Brother" (*dashixiong* 大師兄) by the performers, it is placed on top of all the other figures when stored in order to guard them; and unlike all the other figures, the head of Big Hand is never separated from its body, even when it is put away.

The fact that the Manchu tribes of Northeast China were originally nomads suggests the existence of a possible common ground for the spreading of certain popular stereotypes in shows. Karagöz himself is a bald gypsy and a comical character (AND 1987, 22; see figure 3 center left). It may be of significance that Siyavusgil believes that the "performance given under a tent" referred to the shadow theater before it was used to refer to the marionette theater (SIYAVUSGIL 1961, 6) for the main marionette puppet from the Six Dynasties to the Song dynasty periods is a bald, comical character by the name of Mr. Guo (*Guolang* 郭郎 and *Guogong* 郭公; SUN 1982, 15–18). Like Big Hand, he precedes the appearance of all the other characters in marionette shows (*yuefu zalu* 樂府雜錄; quoted in LI 1982a, 4). Could it at all be possible that (Kara)göz was related to Mr. Guo and Big Hand? This possible connection between the Turkish and the Chinese Shadows unfortunately must remain in the realm of conjecture.

There is however, one more possible link between the Turkish and the Chinese Shadows which I would like to discuss. At the "Comparison of Luanchou and Chaochou Shadow Traditions" Symposium held on November 12–14, 1993 at the Taipei Theater in New York City, Helga Werle-Burger gave a presentation in which she noted a certain resemblance between the Turkish Karagöz and Taiwan (*Chaozhou*) Shadows (figure 13). In response to my letter asking Dr. Werle-Burger for details, she replies:

> The strong resemblance between the Turkish Karagöz and Taiwan shadow-play is striking: the small size (about thirty centimeters), human proportions, joints, treatment of the parchment hides and colouring, which produces coloured shadows, up to the very peculiar method of manipulation by holding the sticks horizontally. The control stick is inserted into a hole, which is just below the neck. Even trick figures like the man rowing the boat who can fall off, the horse rider who can fall from his horse, and the metamorphosis of a man who can get bigger or smaller can be found in both traditions and are handled in the same way (WERLE-BURGER 1997, 1).[32]

The Turkish Karagöz is normally considered an anomaly among the shadow traditions around it in terms of sharing with the Chinese Shadows the use of colorful translucent parchment for its figures. But translucent figures are found in some of the traditions in South India as well, hence the phenomenon may not be as strange as it may have seemed. Certainly its most distinctive similarity with the Taiwan Shadows is that of manipulation of the figures using horizontal sticks. In both traditions, sticks are stuck perpendicularly into holes in the body and the arm of the figure. Turkish Shadows place the hole in the body while Taiwan Shadows place the hole through both the upper arm and the body. The sticks on the Turkish figures are however, considerably thicker than those used by the Taiwan shadow figures. Was it a coincidence or actual influence? Does this characteristic of the Taiwan Shadows which represented a shadow theater tradition of southern coastal China suggest foreign influence through contact with traders?

In her dissertation, Lily Chang shows that Taiwanese Shadows are directly related to *Chaozhou* 潮州 Shadows (CHANG 1982, 158–66) of Guangzhou.[33] She believes that the description of a shadow show during the nineteenth century which says that the figures were manipulated by chopsticks indicate that they were the same as those in Taiwan (CHANG 1982, 158–59). Since sticks are involved in the manipulation of all shadow figures in China, the mention of chopsticks may not indicate that it is attached horizontally, the way those in Taiwan are. Indeed, one would have to examine figures from the Chaozhou area to confirm the method by which the sticks are attached to the figures.

According to performers from the Chaozhou region in Hong Kong interviewed by Werle-Burger (formerly Werle), the shadow theater has been extinct in that area since the 1920s (WERLE 1973, 30). Lily Chang examines the *yangchuang zhiying* 陽窗紙影 (Sunlit Stage Shadows) or *yuanshen zhiying* 圓身紙影 (Round Bodied Shadows), a type of puppet theater that is supposed to have evolved from the shadow theater in Chaozhou (other authors also mention the fact that this type of puppet theater evolved from the shadow theater: See XIAO 1957, 146–77; WERLE 1973, 73; TSAO 1987, 49–53; CHEN 1992, 2). Chang finds many similarities between Taiwan Shadows and this type of puppet theater from Chaozhou. But a study of pictures of these puppets (TSAO 1987, 50) indicates that the sticks which manipulate the figures are not attached in the same manner as in the Taiwan Shadows. Just like the attachments on the figures from other parts of China, thick wires or thin iron rods are fastened to the figures on one end and inserted into sticks/handles on the other end. The main difference between the method of attachment between these Chaozhou puppets and shadow figures elsewhere, is the way the central rod controlling the body is attached horizontally below

the neck (perpendicular to the body), rather than flexibly on the neck itself. Could this method of attachment be related to the shadow theater of the Chaozhou region?

Despite the generally accepted belief that the Shadows had disappeared in Chaozhou since the 1920s, fortunately for me, I was able to locate a troupe in the small village of Huanlincun 環林村 of that area with the help of Fei Shixun 費師遜 of the Guangdong Research Institute for Music (*Guangdongsheng yinyue yanjiusuo* 廣東省音樂研究所). The figures of this troupe indicate that while the three controlling rods of single human figures are attached in a similar way to those of other shadow theater traditions in China, those on the large pieces of warriors riding on horses are attached horizontally. These large pieces only have one controlling stick, which is attached to the upper part of the movable arm. However, this stick is attached to the arm by using bent wires rather than inserting the stick into a hole, like those in Taiwan. A piece of weapon is fastened to the hand and lower part of the upper arm, so that when the performer twists the controlling stick, the arm and hand move with the weapon. Thus, he can quite easily move two horse riding warriors towards each other and have them engage in combat by manipulating just one stick in each hand (figure 14). Although the controlling rod is not inserted into a hole the way it is done in the Taiwan figures, the location of the control rod—the fact that it is attached to the upper part of the arm in both shadow traditions—is significant. In both, the performer is able to move both the figure and the arm together because the articulated piece for the arm is extended to below the neck area and controlled from there.

Hence, the horizontal attachment of the control rod and the overlapping of the upper arm over the body and placement of the control stick there, are found in both Chaozhou and Taiwan Shadows. Incidentally, although the horizontal control rod is found in Turkey, its attachment to the upper arm is not. If we assume that the Chaozhou shadow theater which has survived shares its ancestry with the Taiwan Shadows and also with the form which might have had mutual influence with the Turks through Arab traders who visited the coastal ports of southern China, then there is not enough similarity between them to warrant the assertion of direct influence. The control stick in Chaozhou is not inserted into a hole, and the horizontal position of attachment is only found in the horse-riding warrior pieces, which represent a very small part of the performer's trunk of shadow figures.

Hence, Taiwan Shadows did not have to look to Turkish influence for the perpendicular placement of its control rods; nor is it likely that the Turkish Shadows derived this method of manipulation from the southern, coastal Chinese. But one might wonder how and when Taiwan Shadows

began its distinctive way of inserting the control rods into holes? We have one lead which might be the answer. According to a member of the Donghua 東華 Shadow Theater Troupe, one of his ancestors made changes to the method of making figures and manipulation. This is the only troupe which was given a performance permit by the Japanese and hence the only one to have survived the Japanese occupation in Taiwan. The present members of the Donghua Troupe belong to the sixth generation of shadow performers. The first generation is believed to have come to Taiwan about two hundred years ago. Zhang Huichuan 張諱川 of the third generation changed the use of three control rods per figure (the human figures) to two rods to facilitate manipulation and made "many other changes to the figures and the mode of performance as well." (ZENG 1980, 97–98). Could Zhang Huichuan's innovations account for the fact that most of the Taiwan figures use two rods per figure? I leave these questions to future researchers. Suffice it to say here that the similarity in the mode of execution between Turkish and Taiwan Shadows is most likely coincidental.

THE EUROPEAN "CHINESE SHADOWS"

The shadow theater gained popularity in Europe during the eighteenth century and was known as Chinese Shadows in England, *Ombres Chinoises* in France, *Sombras Chinescas* in Spain,[34] *Chinesische Schattenspiele* in Germany, and *Ombri Cinesi* in Italy. Following Berthold LAUFER's *Oriental Theatricals*, the Chinese have come to believe that Chinese Shadows was introduced to France by a Jesuit priest, whence it spread to England and the rest of Europe; and that Goethe had Chinese Shadows performed at one of his birthday parties and at an exhibition.[35]

The French Jesuit priest, Father Du Halde, did write about Chinese lantern shows, one of which may have been a shadow performance. According to his *Description Géographique, Historique, Chronologique, Politique, et Physique de L'empire de la Chine* (translated into English under the title, *The General History of China*):

> The fifteenth of the first Month is likewise a solemn Festival....These Lanthorns[36] are very great, some are composed of fix Panes, the Frame is made of japan'd wood, adorn'd with Gilding; on every Square they spread some fine transparent Silk, on which is painted Flowers, Trees, Animals, and Human Figures; others are round, and made of transparent Horn, of a blue Color, and extremely handsome; they put in these Lanthorns several lamps, and a great number of Candles, whose Light make the Figures look very lively; the Top of this Machine is crowned

> with diverse carved Works, from whence hang several streamers of Sattin and Silk of diverse Colours.
>
> Several of them represent Spectacles very proper to amuse and divert the People; you see Horses galloping, Ships sailing, armies marching, Dancings, and several other things of the same nature; People who lie conceal'd, by means of imperceptible threads, put all these Figures in motion.
>
> At other times they cause Shadows to appear that represent Princes and Princesses, Soldiers, Buffoons, and other Characters, whose Gestures are so conformable to the Words of those who move them with so much artifice that one would think the Shadow spoke in reality (DU HALDE 1736, 2: 166–67).

Du Halde is obviously unfamiliar with the Chinese shadow theater himself. He confuses it with zoetropes and other lantern shows and could not have introduced Chinese Shadows to France. This is not surprising, since according to his preface, he derived much of the information for the book on written materials done by and interviews with other Jesuits who had lived China.

The references to Goethe's sponsoring of Chinese shadow plays at one of his birthday parties and at an exhibition are just as problematic. In fact a "Chinese Shadow" play was never performed at Goethe's birthday. The Duchess Amalia in Weimar had the piece "Minerva's Birth" enacted with the shadows of costumed people for Goethe's thirty-second birthday. Real people performed; it was not a Chinese Shadows using shadow figures (SIMON 1986, 11). Goethe did include a shadow show in one of his plays, *The Fair at Plundersweiden*, which was performed in 1778. It was not, however, at a real fair or an exhibition as it became transformed in Chinese sources. This shadow play within a play with human actors seems to have been in the tradition of Chinese Shadows, but it is not clear if the Germans called it *Chinesische Schattenspiele*. The Creation, the Fall and the history of man up to the time of the Flood were enacted (COOK 1963, 71).

Although known as Chinese Shadows during the eighteenth century, the black cardboard silhouette shadow figures of Western Europe (figure 15)[37] bore no resemblance to the colorful translucent parchment figures of China (figure 16). In fact, there was nothing Chinese about the *Ombres Chinoises*, apart from their namesake. The motifs of the European shadow figures and the contents of the plays were all non-Chinese. Indeed, the earliest performers of Chinese Shadows in Europe were all Italian showmen who may have named their Shadows "Chinese" to make them more exotic and appealing. Olive Blackham feels that the showmen were capitalizing on

the contemporary vogue for "chinoiserie" when "in reality...they show more affinity with the fashion of the time for cutting silhouette portraits" (BLACKHAM 1960, 65). Cook believes that it was Turkish influence rather than Chinese, which fostered the growth of the shadow play in the West since, during this period of the "chinoiserie" fad, "Chinese" referred vaguely to the Orient in general (COOK 1963, 67).

Indeed, some Italian shadows of the seventeenth century may have been similar to those in Turkey (LANDAU 1958, 38). Given the fact that the Turkish figures were translucent but the Western European ones were black silhouettes, it seems to me to be possible that the Italians received their influence from the Egyptian and other shadow theater traditions of the Arabs. The early Egyptian Shadows I saw in German museums are opaque, and the Garagousse (Karagöz) Shadows in Algeria during the nineteenth century also used silhouette figures (ANONYMOUS 1846, 301). The shadow theaters in the Arab world bear names resembling the Turkish Karagöz, but they seem to have developed on their own and may have received influences from Egypt, the Mameluke figures of which have always been silhouettes.

CONCLUSION

Although the shadow theater traditions of the world—the Chinese, the Indian, the Indonesian, the Thai, the medieval Egyptian, the Turkish, and the European—are all highly distinctive, more links and influences among them seem to have existed than one might have suspected. The nomadic steppe peoples of Central Asia may have been the first performers of shadow plays. They had tents, fire within the tents, and they used leather and felt figures in religious rituals. Many beautiful shadow figure-like leather figures dating to the first millennium BCE have been found in the graves of the Scythians of Mount Altai around Outer Mongolia.

Even if shadow plays did not originate in Central Asia, the constantly migrating peoples of this huge expanse of landmass across Asia and Europe seem to have served as links among various shadow traditions of the world. The Mameluke Shadows of medieval Egypt may have been brought by the nomadic Turkish military slaves from the steppes who eventually became the rulers of Egypt. This steppe connection may also account for the similar modes of decoration found in the mostly static Indian and Mameluke Egyptian shadow figures. Even the similarity between the most important figures of the Turkish Karagöz and the Chinese Shadows of the northeast (Manchuria and eastern Hebei)—Karagöz and Big Hand respectively—may have been a result of this Euro-Asian steppe connection.

The seas between Africa, Asia and Southeast Asia served as another avenue that linked shadow theater traditions. A few similarities can be found

between the Karagöz Shadows that are believed to have been descendants of the Egyptian Shadows, and the Javanese Shadows of Indonesia; in particular, the use of a Tree of Life figure at the beginning of the shows. The earliest written mention of shadow plays are found in India near the end of the first millennium BCE. Indian influence can be found in several Southeast Asian traditions. But although the Shadows of Indonesia most likely derived from India, it became such a sophisticated local form so early (earliest mention on copper plates dated 840 and 907) that Indian Shadows and Indonesian Shadows have left their imprints as totally different traditions throughout Southeast Asia. While ancestry of the large static figures of Thailand can be traced to India via Cambodia, the shadow traditions using small movable figures in Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia probably originated in Indonesia. Due to their proximity, influence among Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia of the latter tradition was probably not unidirectional.

Not all attributions of connections among the various shadow traditions of the world are verifiable. The European "Chinese Shadows" did not seem to have originated from China—the silhouette figures of the Arab Karagöz may have been its origin—the Chinese did not perform in a Mongol court in Persia, and the similarities between Karagöz Shadows and Taiwan Shadows are most likely coincidental. Indeed, aside from the distinct resemblance between Karagöz and Big Hand, assertions of interaction between Chinese Shadows and other types have all been found to be problematic. The Chinese were probably not among the first to enjoy shadow shows. No authenticated proof of the existence of the shadow theater is found in Chinese sources until the tenth century. It is quite possible that the shadow theater arrived in China either through Central Asia or via sea routes to the ports of eastern China and that mutual or unidirectional influences did occur—may be some day more useful research materials will surface. Nevertheless, however the Chinese Shadows might have originated, my research indicates that there is a surprising amount of homogeneity among the immensely disparate shadow theater traditions in China.[38] In many ways, this phenomenon was also found within all the other shadow traditions of the world. Once the shadow theater was introduced into a sedentary civilization, it would develop into a sophisticated and *indigenous* form of culture with its own distinct characteristics.

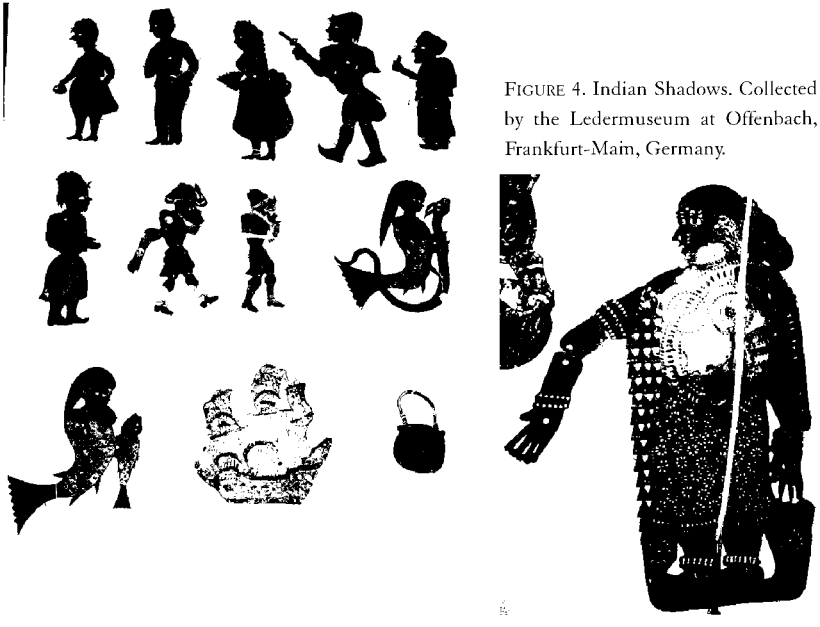

FIGURE 4. Indian Shadows. Collected by the Ledermuseum at Offenbach, Frankfurt-Main, Germany.

FIGURES 1 & 2. Egyptian Mameluke Shadows. Collected by the Ledermuseum at Offenbach, Frankfurt-Main, Germany.
All photographs taken by the author.

FIGURE 3. Karagöz Shadows. Collected by the Ledermuseum at Offenbach, Frankfurt-Main, Germany.

FIGURE 5. Indian Shadows. Collected by the Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany.

FIGURE 6. Indian Shadows. Collected by the Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany.

FIGURE 7. Indonesian (Javanese) Shadows. Collected by the Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany.

FIGURE 8. Khmer nang sebek Shadows. Collected by the Kuala Lumpur National Museum, Malaysia.

FIGURE 9. Thai *nang yai* Shadows. Collected by the Ledermuseum at Offenbach, Frankfurt-Main, Germany.

FIGURE 10. Thai *nang talung* Shadows. Collected by the Ledermuseum at Offenbach, Frankfurt-Main, Germany.

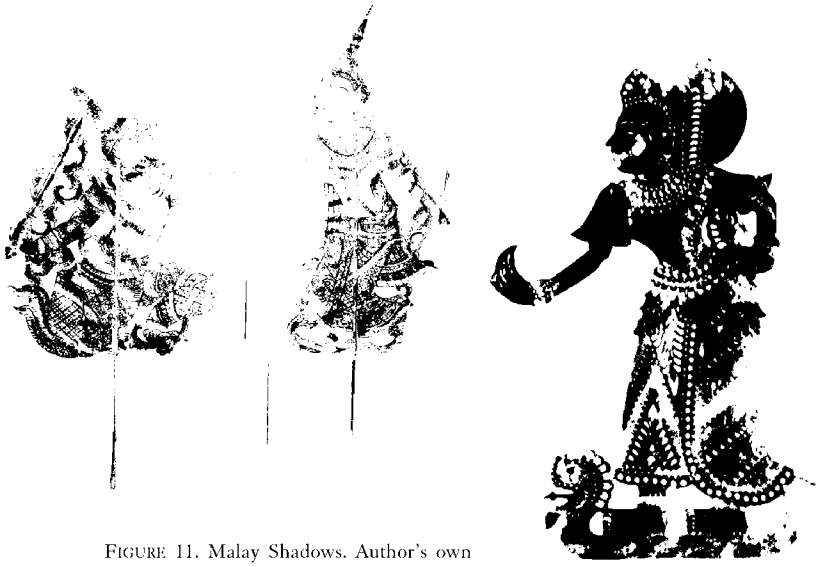

FIGURE 11. Malay Shadows. Author's own collection

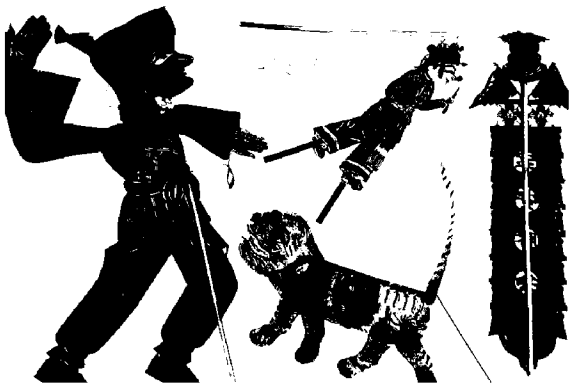

FIGURE 12. "Big Hand" (left) of the Luanzhou/Eastern Hebei/Northeastern Shadows of China. This figure is from Chengde, Hebei. Author's own collection.

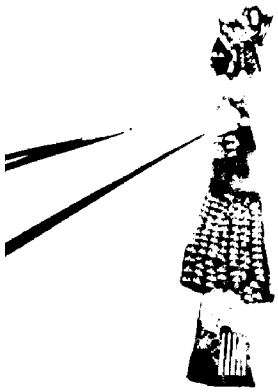

FIGURE 13. Traditional Taiwan Shadows. Collected by the Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany.

FIGURE 14. Chaozhou Shadows at Lufeng,Guangdong, China.

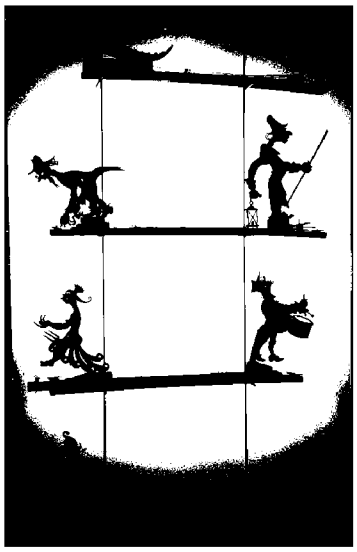

FIGURE 15. European Shadows. Collected by the Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany.

FIGURE 16. Sichuan Shadows of China. Collected by the Ledermuseum at Offenbach, Frankfurt-Main, Germany.

NOTES

1. Detailed discussions on the history of the Chinese shadow theater will be published in a book entitled, *The Chinese Shadow Theatre and Popular Religion and Women Warriors.*

2. F. Von Luschan says, "We must suppose that all the different forms have a common source, which is probably to be found in China" (*Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* 1889, II: 140, translated and quoted in WIMSATT 1936, xiv). Berthold Laufer asserts, "The shadow-play is, without a doubt, indigenous to China" (LAUFER 1923, 36) and "if we have a right to say that the home of an art is where it has developed to its highest technical perfection, then the Chinese shadow plays are proof of the origin of the idea in China" (GRUBE and KREBS 1915, xiv; translated and quoted in WIMSATT 1936, xiv). Benjamin March claims, "That the art is of Chinese invention appears to be undisputed" (MARCH 1938, 13).

3. STACHE-ROSEN refers to PISCHEL 1906 but does not cite a specific page number. I rely on and quote from more recent authors all the earlier references to articles published in German and Dutch.

4. For some of the most influential secondary sources and some strange versions of the tale, see NEEDHAM 1962, 122; QI 1962, 26; GU 1983, 110–11; LAUFER 1923, 36; WIMSATT 1936, x; MYRSIADES and MYRSIADES 1988, 32; LÜ 1961, 428; ANKERSON 1946, 46; COOK 1963, 48; PIMPANEAU 1977, 7; MINNESOTA MUSEUM OF ART 1970, "Forward"; MAIR 1983, 19; HUMPHREY 1980, 49; REINIGER 1970, 16; MARCH 1938, 12; HARDIMAN and LIU 1995, 1; ZHANG 1979, 11; LIANG 1985, 83; WENG 1985, 187; HUANG 1967, 61; SHAANXI DONGLU HUAXIAN PIYING 1991, 81; XIE 1997, 46; MEANDER 1938, 85; SIMMEN 1972, 79; BENTON 1940, 2; and WHANSLAW 1950, 17.

5. A photograph of this leather cutout can be found on BAIRD 1973, 27.

6. This is the page number on this page of this four volume photocopied reproduction of *Taiping guangji* from a lithographic copy of the Qing dynasty compendium of collected works, the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書.

7. BOMBACI does not provide a page number reference and I have not been able to locate and check BEAZLEY's work.

8. I would like to thank Peter Knecht, editor of *Asian Folklore Studies*, for suggesting the existence of many different dialects in Central Asia.

9. The Ledermuseum in Offenbach, Frankfurt-Main, Germany, has a fine collection of them. I would like to thank Luise Thomae for accompanying me to various museums (the Ledermuseum in Offenbach and the Münchner Stadtmuseum in Munich in particular) throughout Germany to see collections of shadow figures.

10. The idea that the Mameluke Egyptian Shadows may have been brought by the nomadic Turkish military slaves who eventually became the rulers of Eygpt occurred to me while I was reading a history of the steppe peoples of Central Asia.

11. PISCHEL's entire short monograph attempts to prove that the puppet theater, including the shadow theater, originated in India. The other scholars are mentioned by MYRSIADES (1973) who cites as her sources BOMBACI (1963, 96), RIDGEWAY (1915; reprint, 166), and SIYAVUSGIL (1951, 4). Otto Spies is mentioned but not cited, whereas Bombaci is cited but not mentioned.

12. The date, seventh century, for Nilakantha in Tilakasiri's *The Puppet Theatre of Asia* (TILAKASIRI 1968, 8) is a mistake. I thank Nairvectil Mohandas for verifying the date for me.

13. The original word in the verse suggests a vocation connected with stage acting and drama. The *Therigatha*, one of the oldest texts of the Buddhist (Pali) Canon, mentions *rupparupakam* vol. 394 as a comparison for something which is ephemeral and evanescent

(TILAKASIRI 1968, 8). It seems that the word might have appropriately described any type of drama. Pischel's description is quoted in HOLT 1967, 129.

14. Without giving details, Meher Contractor says that leather figures have been mentioned in both the *Puranas* and the *Jatakas* (CONTRACTOR 1984, "Introduction").

15. Similarly, a Turkish writer has thought that the shadow theater spread from India to Central Asia with the propagation of Buddhism. But this theory only concerns the Turks of Central Asia and does not mention its travel henceforth to China (SEVIN 1968, page number not indicated; quoted in TIETZE 1977, 16).

16. The Tolpava Koothu of Kerala is accompanied by a drum and cymbals, and with conch, gong, and pipe on special occasions (VENU 1990, 19). The Olapavakuthu of Kerala and the Tolu Bommalata of Andhra Pradesh has singing/chanting but no musical accompaniment (COUSIN 1970, 212 and SARMA 1985, 41).

17. According to SOEDARSONO (1976, 17), *wayang* in its widest sense has come to mean a dramatic performance. The numerous types of *wayang* include *wayang kulit* (a flat leather-carved puppet play), *wayang klitik* (a flat wooden puppet play with leather arms), *wayang golek* (a wooden, three-dimensional, costumed puppet play), *wayang topeng* (a masked dance-drama), *wayang wong* (a dance-drama), *wayang peteng* (a Balinese shadow theater performed at night), *wayang lemah* (a Balinese shadow theater performed during the day), and many more.

18. Amongst Dutch scholars Krom is unusual in that he feels India remains the most likely source of the shadow theater (SOEDARSONO 1976, 88).

19. See GU 1983, 117; ZHOU 1953, 138; BROMAN 1995, 3; WANG, LU 1953, *xu* 序 [preface]; DONG 1983, 107; KE 1976, 24; MA 1994, 4; GAO 1985, 62; ZHANG Qi 1995, 22; QIN 1991, 21; and CHIN 1993, 21.

20. In the reign of Rama III the hero is referred to as being as ugly as *nang kaek mua reng maa*, perhaps indicating the Malay origin of the shadow play in Thailand (SMITHIES and EUAYPORN 1972, 380). The authors do not explain the meaning of this phrase or how it relates to the origins of shadow play in Thailand.

21. Economic, cultural, and religious contacts must have existed before 1000 CE between the Khmers and the rulers of the Malay kingdoms which were already established on the long narrow peninsula (now southern Thailand). In 1002 CE, these links became still closer, when a Malay prince and his Khmer consort conquered the eastern half of the Khmer kingdom and was proclaimed King Suryavarman I. He conquered the remainder of the Khmer kingdom nine years later and ruled from the vicinity of Angkor for the next forty years (SHEPPARD 1968, 204).

22. See KAHLE 1940 for translations of excerpts of the three plays.

23. The names of the three shadow plays are *El-Motayan wi El-Daie El-Yatim*, *Teef El-Khayal*, and *Agib wi Gharib*. Characters from the last play appeared in many shadow plays and survived in Egyptian film and theater (MIKHAIL 1996, 3).

24. According to ETTINGHAUSEN's translation (1934, 10–11), the verse says:

> Night and day this dusky screen swiftly produces much action;
> Because of the magic of this ancient screens,
> I have become a shadow player, even though I had not conceived it.
> I want to make this screen bare and produce a magic play on this screen here –
> I produce a shadow play, when you observe it,
> Such as no shadow player ever produces.

25. Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Jaffa, and Jerusalem all belonged to the province of Syria before World War I.

26. Landau mentions a Persian shadow play, *Sheb Baz*, in which "the relation of the Fool,

Kechel Pehlevan, towards Karagöz, is the same as that of the Persian towards the Turk" (LANDAU 1948, 163). I must confess that the precise meaning of this correlation is not clear to me. It may mean that Kechel Pehlevan in Persian Shadows is like the clownish character Karagöz in the Turkish theater named after him. In any case, this reference indicates that the shadow theater was found in Iran.

27. See BLACKHAM 1960, 42; BROMAN 1981, vii; CAI 1997, 5–6; CHANG 1982, 25–26, and 69; CHEN 1992, 8; CHIN 1993, 21–22; DING 1982; UNIVERSITY OF LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA MUSEUM OF CULTURAL HISTORY c.1976, 101; GAO 1985, 60–62; GRUBE and KREBS as translated and quoted in WIMSATT 1936, xiv; GU 1983, 115–116; GUAN 1959, 4; JACOB 1925, 108; JIANG 1992, 51–52; KE 1976, 23; LANDAU 1958, 12; LAUFER 1923, 37–38; LIU 1986, 2; LIU and SHI 1991, 4; MARTINOVITCH 1968, 30; MISTAKIDOU 1978, 48; MYRSIADES and MYRSIADES 1988, 31; RUAN 1990, 62; SHAANXI DONGLU HUAXIAN PIYING 1991, 83; SHI 1995, 47; SIYAVUSGIL 1961, 50; TONG 1934, 4; TSAO 1987, 24 and 82; WANG 1987, 1; WANG 1953, 1; WEI 1990, 10; WENG 1985, 187; XIE 1997, 47; YI 1996, 21; ZHANG Qi 1995, 22; ZHOU 1996, 10; ZHOU 1953, 138.

28. In all fairness, Jiang did find a translation of the history which he included in a footnote, and wondered whether the Chinese scholars who perpetuated the above story read a different version of the history.

29. FAIRBANK, REISCHAUER, and CRAIG 1989, 165–66.

30. This hypothesis that Chinese shadow performers went to Ogetei's court in Persia was first presented by Berthold LAUFER in *Oriental Theatricals* and subsequently perpetuated by TONG Jingxin and GU Jiegang.

31. See the drawings and pictures in ZHAO 1996, 44 and AND 1987, 49–51.

32. I took the liberty of editing this correspondence slightly.

33. Through a linguistic analysis of some shadow playscripts from Taiwan, Piet van der Loon shows that Taiwan Shadows could have originated from either Chaozhou or Zhangzhou (VAN DER LOON 1979, 86–89). Chaozhou is in Guangdong but it is close to Fujian, its dialect is similar to that of the Fujianese, and its populace is believed to have migrated from Fujian during the Ming dynasty. Zhangzhou is in Fujian.

34. Metin And quotes this Spanish term from Varey's *Historia de los titeres en Espana* (VAREY 1957, 101 in AND 1987, 40). While the renditions of "Chinese Shadows" in the other European languages are fairly common, this Spanish term is the only instance I have encountered.

35. See LAUFER 1923, 38; GU 1983, 120; TSAO 1987, 24; GAO 1985, 60; RUAN 1990, 62; LIU 1986, 2; GUAN 1959, 4; DING 1982; WENG 1985, 187; WANG ca. 1987, 1; ZHOU 1953, 138–40; LIU and SHI 1991, 4; WANG, LU 1953, "Preface"; QIN 1991, 22; CHIN 1993, 22; KE 1976, 24; TONG 1934, 4; SHI 1995, 47; YI 1996, 21; SHAANXI DONGLU HUAXIAN PIYING 1991, 83; JIANG 1999, 368–69; and ZHOU, HU 1996, 10.

36. The style and spelling of this translation is rather unusual as it was printed in 1736. Father Du Halde's original text was published in 1734.

37. These German ones used levers and strings for their operation. Judging from pictures, most of the French ones were hand-held. The style of these figures is, however, representative of European Shadows.

38. This topic will be treated in detail in my book, *The Chinese Shadow Theatre and Popular Religion and Women Warriors*.

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