rates the tale, sings many of the songs, and directs a
troupe of musicians who play the instruments of the
gamelan (Indonesian percussion instruments). Wayang
golek blends puppetry, narrative, dialogue, song, in-
strumental music, movement, and dance. Performances
are all-night affairs that play a central role in Sundanese
cultural and civic life. A wayang golek performance co-
incides with a hajat, a ritual feast in which food is
served, prayers are recited, and spirits are asked to bless
the feast’s host. The most common hajat are weddings
and circumcisions. Performances are also held for rit-
ual purification ceremonies (ruatan). Wayang golek per-
formances are opportunities for people to gather and
reflect on issues that affect their everyday lives.

Andrew Weintraub

Further Reading
Foley, Kathy. (1979) “The Sundanese Wayang Golek: The
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Weintraub, Andrew. (2001) Wayang Golek: The Sound and
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WAYANG KULIT  A wayang kulit performance features puppets made from parchment-like buffalo
skin and horn. Such performances belong to the cul-
tural tradition of various ethnic groups in the In-
donesian archipelago. The puppeteer sits behind the
cotton cloth screen, which is fixed in a wooden frame
with a banana-trunk base; he or she manipulates the
skillfully painted puppets that cast their shadows onto
the screen in the light of an oil lamp. Most famous
and sophisticated are those of the Central-Javanese
courts and those on Bali, dating back to the period of the ancient Hindu-Javanese kingdoms (ten-
sixteenth centuries). They dramatize stories from the
Old Javanese adaptations of the ancient Indian epics
Ramayana and Mahabharata and are staged mostly in
a ceremonial context (especially during life-cycle rit-
uals). In Bali, the audience sits in front of the screen; in Java, only the women watch from the front, while the men enjoy the colorful puppets and the large
gamelan (Indonesian percussion instruments) orches-
tra directed by the puppeteer from behind. The vast
aesthetic and spiritual knowledge, obtained in years of study, makes the puppeteer a highly revered member of traditional society. His advice and comments on lo-
cal affairs, which are put into the mouths of the clown-
servant puppets, are enjoyed as well as feared.

Martin Ramstedt

Further Reading
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WAYANG TOPENG  Wayang topeng is a classi-
cal Javanese dance-drama genre, in which dancers use elaborately carved and painted masks to perform stor-
ies from the romantic Panji cycle. These stories, which relate the adventures of the handsome mythical prince
Panji and his fiancée, Princess Candra, are thought to have occurred during the last Hindu-Javanese king-
dom, the Majapahit (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries).

Tradition has it that wayang topeng was created in the sixteenth century by Sunan Kaliyaga, one of the nine
Wayang Wong

Wayang wong is a classical dance-drama genre in Java and Bali, in which stories from the Old Javanese versions of the ancient Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata are performed, for entertainment as well as in ritual contexts. The earliest record of wayang wong occurs in a central Javanese inscription dating to 930. This ancient form either developed from or evolved at the same time as the wayang kulit, the shadow-puppet play, replacing the puppets with human dancers.

The contemporary Javanese wayang wong, however, was created in 1755 at the courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta in Java, with the intention of continuing an ancient Javanese tradition. Stories from both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are dramatized. The elaborate dance movements of the actors, who wear elaborate makeup, are accompanied by a large gamelan (Indonesian percussion instrument) orchestra.

Wayang Wong

The Balinese version of wayang wong was created at the end of the eighteenth century at the royal court of Klungkung on the east coast of south Bali, using ancient masks from the sacred heirlooms of the family of the Dewa Agung and drawing on the dance movements of the classical Gambuh dance drama. According to indigenous sources, the Gambuh is the oldest court dance-drama of Bali; it features stories from the Panji cycle, the adventures of the handsome mythical prince Panji and his fiancée Princess Candra, which supposedly occurred during the last Hindu-Javanese kingdom, the Majapahit (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries). Dramatizing only stories from the Ramayana, the Balinese wayang wong is accompanied by a special music ensemble, the gamelan Balét (probably “of warriors”), consisting of metallophones, gongs, cymbals, and drums.

Further Reading


Wayang Wong

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Waziri

The Waziris are a tribe living on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although they have their own tribal affiliation, the Waziris of Afghanistan are a subgroup of the larger Ghilzai (or Ghilijai in Farsi) branch of the Pashtun tribe. Their language is Pashtu, and they practice Pashtunwali or the Code of Conduct for Pashtun tribal members. The terrain in which they live is so remote that it is difficult to meet a Waziri outside of his or her home. Some Waziris live in tents along the Khyber Pass, and others live as pastoral nomads herding sheep throughout the mountains. Historically, the Waziris’ homeland was referred to as Wana. However, after the British mandate to separate Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan, this area has been referred to as South Waziristan.

Because their tribe is spread out across the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Waziris also have much in common with their Pakistani neighbors.

Further Reading


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