

布袋戏学习心得

My Reflections on Hand Puppet Theater (Budaixi)



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The first experience I had related with glove puppetry or BDX 布袋戏 was when I had a few hours stop over in Taipei, Taiwan on my way home from studying abroad in Shanghai, China. It was not the traditional BDX 布袋戏, but there were information on the walls near the display of the character roles of each puppet. I did not have that much time to read through the

display but I had time to snap two or three pictures of the puppets on display. I did not realize it was puppetry until I had started the class. I had thought that they were dolls since the puppets were every detailed and the clothing was so detailed and gorgeous. Now I wish I had more time to take more pictures and perhaps taken more time to admire the display.

At first I signed up for the class because I wanted to learn more about Chinese culture. I had not realized that the few experiences I had with Chinese culture played such a large part in the history of China. When I was younger, I always had an interest in the culture and folk tales that my parents must have grown up with. My parents did not have time to tell me the stories, so I ended up borrowing books from the library to learn. Soon after I stopped due to schoolwork and other interests. However, I am glad I decided to take this class and learn more about the culture of my ancestors.

It was very interesting learning about the significance of BDX 布袋戏. The fact that it still plays such a big role in the culture in Taiwan is amazing. It was a surprise to me that the government would try to stop and prohibit the performances. It did not seem like something that would cause outrage in the people. However after seeing the performances, I can now understand the significance it had on the lives of the people in the past. Even though the traditional BDX 布袋戏 is not as popular now, there are still cultural groups that are actively promoting and preserving the art.

It is also interesting to see that there are new modern ways that BDX is being continued. It was none other than the pili budaixi 霹雳布袋戏 that I saw on display in the airport. It is so interesting that what I saw and didn't think much about is something that is very popular in Taiwan. Now it makes me wish I had taken more time to look around the display!

After hearing about the difficulty mastering the art of BDX 布袋戏 it was very interesting to watch the performances in class and hear other classmates' commentary and questions about the videos. It made me look even closer at the performances and appreciate more the effort and coordination of the puppet masters. Trying to do the movements and actions with the puppets in class further made me respect that puppet masters and the time and training they must have gone through to be able to do the movements so fluidly and very lifelike. It was very enjoyable watching the performances even though it was in Taiwanese. The puppeteer's performance allowed me to understand the story even though I did not understand the dialogue. If the BDX 布袋戏 performance troupes go again to New York, I hope to be able to see a performance in person one day.