
【Summary】

Contemporary Theatre of Malaysia as a Project of Post-1969

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Malaysia experienced a huge socio-political transition as a response to a racial riot in 1969. The arts and culture were not free from the riot's aftermath. The implementation of the National Culture Policy (NCP) in 1971, which has been the only official cultural policy of the country since then, raised questions about Malaysian culture and identity. The NCP, along with the New Economic Policy (NEP) and other Malay-centric policies, were deeply rooted in Malaysia's nation-building project after the riot. Such policies aimed to build a solid foundation of a National Culture based on the culture of Malays.

Contemporary theatre in Malaysia has been an arena where artists responded to the state-driven model of nation building and identity creation as represented in the NCP. They took extremely diverse shapes from time to time, reflecting the socio-political conditions of their respective time period. This essay divides the period after the 1969 riot into three phases, and examines the theatrical activities that took place in each phase.

The first phase is set between the mid-1970s and the mid-80s. Reflecting the traumatic impact of the riot, influential contemporary theatre artists cooperated with the government to develop a national culture as a foundation for national solidarity. They proposed a model of *Teater Rakyat* (People's Theatre), which advocated the staging of Malay-language theatre that represented the sensitivities of ordinary Malaysians.

In the second phase between the late 1980s and the early 90s, however, theatres in other languages emerged and occupied influential positions in the scene. The shift was a response to the authoritative stance of the Mahathir administration against oppositional voices, which resulted in a major crackdown in 1987. English language theatre provided a space where artists from various racial backgrounds gathered and created while Chinese language theatre introduced a theatrical vocabulary that was free from the colonial legacies. These non-Malay language theatres highlighted the diversity in the Malaysian society, and hence they sharply

confronted the conformist ideal of the NCP.

The last phase since the late 1990s saw an organic development towards a theatre that tried to overcome the divisions of language and ethnicity. Artists' exposure to the civil society enhanced their model of theme-specific approach to theatrical presentations. Freedom of expression in general and the censorship over theatre in particular became issues that connected NGOs and artists regardless of their ethnic groups. Artists started experimentations of intercultural collaboration within Malaysia, aiming to provide an alternative model of national solidarity.

In relation to the NCP, Malaysian contemporary theatre first cooperated to realize it, then it confronted the policy by underlining Malaysia's cultural diversity. Finally, it provided an alternative model to the NCP. Contemporary theatre in Malaysia has performatively created a discursive space in which practitioners have responded to and represented the complex society of Malaysia.

【Summary】

Resurrecting Forgotten “Patriots”:
How “Anti-British Elements” Became Heroes in Malaysia and Singapore

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The Nanyang Volunteers, the Chinese overseas truck drivers from Southeast Asia dispatched to support China’s war efforts between 1939 and 1942, are perhaps the most tragic “heroes” among the ordinary people of Malaysia’s history. Soon after the end of the Second World War, half of the survivors returned to their hometowns in Southeast Asia and their contributions to the defense of China had been forgotten for decades. Only recently have many people in Malaysia and Singapore begun to remember and commemorate the Nanyang Volunteers. How can we understand such a phenomenon?

First, a change in the political environment laid the groundwork for the recent commemoration of the Nanyang Volunteers. After their return, the Nanyang Volunteers could not share their heroic experiences with the public because they feared being arrested if they were labeled “anti-British” or “communists.” However, this situation changed after the conclusion of a peace agreement between the Malaysian government and the Malayan Communist Party (1989) and the end of the Cold War (1991). Another factor to consider is China’s rapid economic growth. Since Mainland Chinese have become more affluent, personal visits and interaction between the people on the Malayan Peninsula and the Nanyang Volunteers who remained in China have expanded rapidly. Through this increased interaction, Malaysian and Singaporean activists and researchers have been able to deepen their understanding about the Nanyang Volunteers; eventually, a monument and a sculpture commemorating them were erected in Kulai and Singapore.

Second, the theoretical implication of the phenomenon described above will be discussed. On one hand, the presentist approach, which emphasizes the role of the power elite’s present interest in the construction of collective memory, has more explanatory power when we consider the persecution as well as the admiration of the Nanyang Volunteers in China that took place influenced by the present interest of the power elite. On the other hand, the presentist approach cannot explain the recent

commemoration of the Nanyang Volunteers in Malaysia and Singapore, which was initiated by people at a grassroots level. Another finding of the study is that the theory of collective memory seems to overlook the influence of the international interaction among individuals on the construction of collective memory. The memory of the Nanyang Volunteers was resurrected as a result of increased interaction between the people on the Malay Peninsula and in China. The creation of a new theory to explain this phenomenon is perhaps one of the issues that needs to be addressed.

【Summary】

Regulation of Muslim Women's Hijab in Singapore

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This paper examines the recent developments in the regulation of Muslim women's hijab in Singapore, a mechanism that enables the government to maintain the regulation as well as the issues related to the recognition of identity and inclusion of minorities in nation states.

As a multiethnic and multireligious country, Singapore has been engaged in nation building on the basis of "multiracialism" that ensures ethnic and religious equality. Although special institutional arrangements have been made to cater to the needs of the Muslim community, the community has been dissatisfied with the government's strengthened management of Islam. Regulation that prohibits public school students and public hospital nurses from wearing the hijab is one of the sources of dissatisfaction.

Hijab-clad Muslim women have increased their presence in Singapore in accordance with the Islamic revival since the 1970s. The government has enforced strict regulation on the hijab for fear of radicalization and segregation of Muslims from the larger society as a response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US and the detention of Jemaah Islamiyah members in Singapore in 2001 and 2002.

The declining support of the ruling People's Action Party in the 2011 general election resulted in an increased expression of political views. It was under this political environment that the 2013 debate on the hijab took place. Debates on other ethnic, religious, and sexual identity-related issues, such as the expansion of the Special Assistance Plan schools for Chinese students, lifting of the ban on musical instruments in the Hindu festival of Thaipusam, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movement, have also become active.

This paper reveals that the government rejects various such requests, including opposition for the hijab ban by strategically constructing a scenario of "competing identity politics." This paper also reveals that this version of multiracialism is not a form of multiculturalism that encourages diversity but is a

version of multiculturalism in Singapore that wants citizens to endure the status quo by suppressing ethnic and religious identity as threats to social stability.

This paper also suggests that the hijab regulation could be reviewed along with the efforts made to eliminate the prejudice and fear of Islam. This paper argues that, however, recent global trends in Islamic extremism have been exacerbating such prejudice and fear and have an adverse effect on the movement to review the hijab regulation.

【Summary】

Ethnicity and Nationality Regarding Indian Dance in Malaysia

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Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society composed of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others. Even though the Indian is the third citizen, their culture like religion, language, and media is kept among the community.

The Indian dance is the traditional culture related to Hinduism, and popular among the Indian community. On the one hand, the Indian dance is used as ethnic identity. Indian parents are willing to push their kids to dance classes because kids could learn traditional culture through it. The Indian dance is used for an advertisement of the company and a function of the political party because it is the symbol of the ethnic identity.

But on the other hand, the Indian dance is used to show the national integrity. Tourism department presents events which show the harmony using each ethnic dance and music under the “One Malaysia” policy. The song “Malaysia Truly Asia” has often been used for dance and music shows since 1999. The National Arts Academy (later it became ASWARA) was founded in 1994, and it introduced Indian dance into the syllabus of the Dance department in 2005. In ASWARA, Malay and Chinese students are learning Indian dance from Indian teachers. The Indian dance is not only the ethnic dance for the Indian community, but also one of the Malaysian dances for all ethnic people.

For an Indian who was born in Malaysia, the Indian culture mixed with Malaysian culture is the symbol of Malaysian Indian culture. A classical Indian dancer, Kamini Manikan used the costume mixed with Malay, Chinese, and Indian items for her dance performance. Her works present many aspects like the social problem as women problem, religious harmony, and ethnic harmony.

Malay dancer, Ramili Ibrahim evaluates the Indian dance aesthetically. Keeping Islam, he continues to dance the Hindu mythology. Indian dance is accepted by non-Indian as the aesthetic dance not a religious dance, and it was involved in the tourism. As a result, the Indian dance became the icon of one of the Malaysian cultures.

【Summary】

Expansion of Higher Education and Societal Perception:
Exploring Discourse over Opportunities

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Using articles from *Aliran Monthly* and Chinese newspapers published in Malaysia between 1980 and 2010s, this paper explores Malaysian society's perception concerning the opportunity of higher education.

It is known that higher education in Malaysia expanded rapidly during and after the 1990s. Previous studies have explained legislative changes and the structure of higher education development; however, few studies have explored the situation and conditions of students receiving higher education.

In Malaysia, the provision of higher education was limited until the 1980s under the New Economic Policy. From the analysis of articles, it seems that the momentum of seeking higher education was not really large until the early 1980s. However, in 1985, numerous articles expressed grievance against the limited opportunities of university education and demand to establish more universities. This indicates that higher education became an earnest desire for more people around this time. In the 1990s, reflecting the policy shift toward emphasizing economic development, opportunities for higher education increased considerably. Nevertheless, some people were still restricted from obtaining higher education because of the quota system and the matriculation course. Even after the official use of the quota system was abolished in 2002, discourse over opportunity for higher education has not faded away. Rather, the inequality of admission process of public universities under "meritocracy" creates discontent among people.

The findings of this study are as follows. First, although the opportunity for higher education has increased and higher education has become a common experience for an increasing number of people, discourse over opportunity for higher education continuously involves criticism against inequality because some people are still struggling to get the opportunity. Expansion of higher education caused by the developmentalist policy surely had an aspect of opening up the opportunity for higher education. Nevertheless, the difference between ethnic groups persists to a certain

extent, and the channels of attaining opportunity are divided along the socioeconomic stratum more clearly compared with the past. The higher the number of people acquiring higher education, the easier it becomes to find the differences in given conditions, leading to the manifestation of their discontent.

In addition, it can be said that general trust in the social selection of people based on a person's ability has not grown much in Malaysia. Besides the structural characteristics of higher education development, the existence of people's recognition that one ethnic group has a high(er) ability and motivation cannot be denied. Despite that situation, conditions that benefit one group regarding higher education opportunity have consistently existed. Thus the social perception has risen that attaining higher education does not necessarily indicate one's original ability, and moreover, discourse questioning "meritocracy" has appeared frequently; this situation has possibly strengthened the mistrust of merit-based selection system in Malaysia.