

Demon Ravana visits the captured Sita in wooden puppet performance at Yogyakarta

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The demon king Ravana visits the captured Princess Sita in a wooden puppet theater performance at Yogyakarta in July 1986. The Ravana puppet, here painted with red skin unlike his green-skinned counterpart in Thai mural art, waves a powerful sword at Princess Sita, who turns her back to the demon.

The faces of the two carved wooden puppets are carefully painted, and the bodies are dressed in cloth costumes. A single master puppeteer controls the arm and leg sticks of all the puppets and speaks all the voices during a single performance. The puppeteer is crouching behind the stage platform.

Around some ancient royal court areas of Java in Indonesia, there is still an active wooden puppet theater tradition known as wayang golek. The wooden puppet tradition is related to a more popular leather shadow puppet (wayang kulit) genre and similar masked dances called . All these theater styles were performed in the ancient Hindu and Buddhist court centers of Java, and similar theater forms emerged in other Southeast Asian kingdoms.



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