



# WATER PUPPETRY

## Múa Rối Nước

Water puppetry is considered to have originated in the delta of the Red river in Vietnam in the 11th century, and the art remains highly developed today. The exact time when water puppetry began in Vietnam is not known, but an early record of this art was found on a stone stele dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

From the 14th century, the art of water puppetry expanded beyond the royal palaces to emerge in village festivals and ceremonies.

*This art form is unique to Vietnam and found its way to the world stage in recent years and gained increased international attention as a result of window dressing relations with Western people.*

*Up until recent time and under communist rule theatres were strictly controlled and all professional performers and other technical staff became employees of the state. Scripts continue to be censored. The water animates the puppets and covers the manipulating apparatuses, which are operated by puppeteers, who stand in the water, hidden behind a screen.*



*From behind the screen they manipulate the wooden puppets with bamboo rods while standing chest-deep in water to enact dramatic scenes using the water's surface as a stage floor.*

*Water puppetry is analogous to the political regime now in "open" Vietnam. On the water surface, puppets in colourful costumes dance and act, in happiness and brightness, entertaining the audience through colours, traditional music and plays.*



*On the surface life in Vietnam seems to have energy, colours, prosperity through roads and buildings, business and tourist resorts.... but like the water puppetry it is controlled by the state and most benefits line the communist party member pockets at all infrastructure levels. Corruption becomes a culture.*

*Those who dare to stand up for democracy, religious freedom and human rights suffer arrest, imprisonment, harassment, revenge, beating, and in many instances murder. These happen quietly "under cover of water" of puppetry, tourists will never believe such demoralised facts can exist. But here they are:*



Church freedom activists beaten by police

*The peaceful and joyful scenes of water puppetry are exploited by the Vietnamese communist government to polish its regime, luring the innocent westerners into believing that Vietnam is now no longer a third world country and their life is as beautiful as the water puppets, their citizens are now enjoying freedom and democracy.*

*Tourists cannot realise the truth that is well hidden below the surface of this social water puppets.*

*Good examples of Vietnam's new face:*



*In a courtroom in Huế 30.3.2007, Catholic priest Father Nguyễn Văn Lý was "enjoying" his freedom of speech and rights to defend fabricated charges.*

*This man lost his life for resisting the government order to confiscate church property. Police stomped on him following ferocious beating.*



*This Stalinist state robbed the lands of underdog farmers to transform into golf courses and tourist resorts, feeding the hungry needs of red capitalists, a conspiracy orchestrated by the Politburo members down to hamlet chiefs. Ordinary citizens have nothing left but demonstrations despite life risks.*



*Unknown to the outside world, these crimes occur just like the manipulation under the cover of water in puppetry.*

*The water puppetry is enjoyable, but keep in mind that this unique traditional art does not speak for the real life 90 millions of Vietnamese suffer at present.*



*Their misery is covered by the water of this beautiful puppetry. The mechanism of skilful suppression is below the surface by a large police apparatus ready to crush anyone who tries to emerge. Many voice of conscience are imprisoned without parole, courts become tools to warn other potential whistle blowers, how police behave and what judges say are analogous to the submerged apparatus manipulating the whole country.*

*All over the world where Vietnamese expatriates live, our moral duty is to voice these communist Vietnam crimes against humanity. Petitions, candlelight vigils, exhibitions, media, political movements.... are underway in hope of liberating Vietnam from the communism, the mission Eastern Europe has achieved. The beautiful Water Puppetry cannot suffocate the life of 90 million innocents who are now submerged under water!*

*Your assistance is vital to this sacred mission.*

