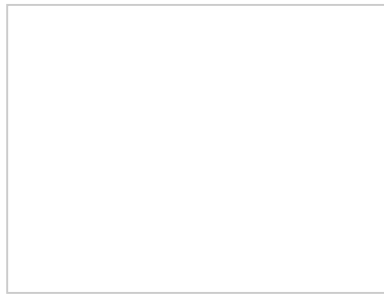


CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



(click on the image to see a sample clip)

Dixi, actually called "Dancing of the Gods" by the people of *Anshun* City in *Guizhou*, China, refers to a particular type of Chinese mask ritual, in which masks are worn and stories are acted out. In its ritual performance, the wearing of masks symbolizes the arrival of the gods, and the performed stories represent the gods in action. As the ritual proceeds and the story unfolds, the crowd swarms in to join the union of heaven and earth. Such a union echoes with the mixed purposes of the ritual performance, which are to thank the gods on the one hand, and to please the gods (as dramas please humans) on the other. Since the gods are thanked and pleased, humans are therefore blessed. The audience is simultaneously entertained.

A sample of music clip, double-click: 