Yunnan Nuo Opera

Leopard Nuo opera in Chuxiong, Yunnan, differentiates itself by the fact that all dancers are painted with a leopard pattern on their nude bodies. The ferocious and agile leopard is regarded as the most qualified to drive away devils. Leopards are played by twelve Yi boys about 10 years old.

On the morning of the performance, young dancers will have the leopard pattern painted on their backs, hands, feet, and belly in black, white, red, and yellow colors. A yue-kin, a four-stringed plucked instrument with a full-moon-shaped sound box, is painted on their chests.

Their faces are covered with palm leaves, and their heads are decorated with two pheasant tails. When the make-up is finished, dancers enter the role of leopards, prohibiting further talking.

Village rooftops connected by ladders or wood panels form the stage for the "leopards." At the climax of the dance, leopards run after young girls watching the show until the girls take them home, where snacks have been prepared.

Leopards eat some snacks as well as throw away some while continuing to dance. This devil-dispelling activity is performed in the rooms, kitchens and stalls of one family after another; the leopards dispel devils for all the villagers.