

Illusion of Life



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In the 18th and 19th centuries, Burmese marionettes enjoyed a rare and powerful privilege as speakers for both kings and subjects. Never merely for entertainment, puppetry was a high art held in much esteem. Marionettes were means of making people aware of current events; a medium for educating the masses in literature, history and religion; a display of lifestyle and customs. These yoke-thei, 'small dolls', enjoyed greater freedom of speech, dress and movement than live performers. They therefore played a significant role in the development of dance and dramatic arts. The author is a well known Burmese painter, and this lively book is liberally spiced with information about Burma and Burmese ways. It contains a systematic presentation of the Burmese marionette tradition, a tradition in the danger of extinction

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