

**THE HOME OF
THE PUPPET-PLAY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649015252

The Home of the Puppet-play by Richard Pischel & Mildred C. Tawney

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

RICHARD PISCHEL & MILDRED C. TAWNEY

THE HOME OF THE PUPPET-PLAY

*THE HOME OF THE
PUPPET-PLAY.*

HERTFORD:
PRINTED BY STEPHEN AUSTIN AND SONS.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

*THE HOME OF THE
PUPPET-PLAY.*

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

RICHARD PISCHEL

ON ASSUMING THE OFFICE OF RECTOR OF THE KÖNIGLICHE
VEREINIGTE FRIEDRICHS-UNIVERSITÄT, HALLE-WITTENBERG,
ON THE 12TH JULY, 1900.

Translated (with the author's permission) by

MILDRED C. TAWNEY

(MRS. R. N. VYVYAN).

LONDON :

LUZAC & CO., Publishers to the India Office.

1902.

70 1940
ANSONIA

Carpentier

THE HOME OF THE PUPPET-PLAY.

An Address delivered by Richard Pischel on assuming the office of Rector of the Königliche Vereinigte Friedrichs-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg, on the 12th July, 1900.

MOST HONOURABLE ASSEMBLY !

Among the ineffaceable impressions which we retain from earliest childhood to ripest old age, we must include the recollection of the time when we first heard from our mother's lips the immortal fairy tales of Snow-white and the Seven Dwarfs, Dame Holle and Goldilocks, and Little Red Riding Hood and the wicked wolf. Our delight in all these beings became still greater when we saw them afterwards in flesh and blood before us on the stage. Nowadays the Christmas fairy tales are produced for children with lavish splendour, and owing to the gorgeous externals the simple story is often not duly appreciated. But those of us who were children in the fifties and sixties or earlier in the nineteenth century, had to be content with plainer fare. In those days the stage consisted of a platform erected in a room only partially lighted by oil-lamps, and furnished with wooden benches, the actors being puppets. Yet

the thrill of expectancy with which we, the children of that time, sat before the homely curtain was as great as it is to-day; the eagerness with which we followed the performance was perhaps even greater.

The birthplace of fairy tales has long been recognized to be India. They wandered from India to Persia, and thence the Arabs brought them to Europe. But the original home of puppet-plays still remains quite obscure. The problem is also more difficult to solve because the sources flow but feebly. Fairy tales were early written down in Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit; no single puppet-play has been handed down to us from antiquity. A place in literature was at once readily accorded to fairy tales, and all classes of people heard and read them with equal interest. The art of the puppet-player was always more or less a 'mystery,' receiving no substantial encouragement from the cultured classes. Xenophon, in his *Symposion*, makes the puppet-player from Syracuse assert that he esteems fools above other men; they being the spectators of his puppet-plays, and consequently his means of livelihood.¹ This is hardly borne out by facts. Adults of all stations and degrees of education have at times been unable to withstand the fascination of the puppet-play. The puppet-player *Potheinos* was so much run after in Athens, that the Archons gave up to him the very stage on which the dramas of *Euripides* had excited the enthusiasm of the populace.² France, in the time of *Molière* and *Baumarchais*, England, under *Shakespeare* and *Sheridan*,³ Germany, in the days of *Goethe* and *Schiller*,

had numerously attended marionette shows, which at times proved formidable rivals to the theatrical companies.⁴ Puppet-players were also summoned to the courts of princes,⁵ and the Emperor Joseph II, in company with his guests, visited in 1876 the Kasperle theatre in the Leopoldstadt in Vienna.⁶ But these must still be regarded as exceptional cases. For the most part, the puppet-play continued to be the favourite child of the mass of the people, and only the stepchild of the cultured classes. And this is easily understood. The puppet-play appeals most strongly to the people because to them it owes its origin. Precisely for this reason, however, it is often a clearer mirror of the thoughts and feelings of the people than more finished poetry, and is in many cases the vehicle of old traditions. As a confirmation of this I need only cite the puppet-play of Dr. Faust. It is not improbable that the puppet-play is in reality everywhere the most ancient form of dramatic representation. Without doubt this is the case in India. And there, too, we must look for its home.

The words for 'puppēt' in Sanskrit are *putrikā*, *duhitṛkā*⁷, *puttālī*, *puttalikā*, all of which mean 'little daughter,' and also *pāñcālikā*, of which the meaning is doubtful.⁸ Of these the words *puttālī* and *puttalikā* have, as their form indicates, been adopted into Sanskrit from the vernaculars in which they still exist to the present day.⁹ In ancient India puppets were made out of wool,¹⁰ wood, buffalo-horn, and ivory, and these playthings were quite as popular long ago with the girls of that country as they are with our