



The Traditional Theater of Japan

Yoshinobu Inoura

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This is the first book in English to present a comprehensive history of Japanese theater. Beginning with ritualistic Kagura, a theatrical art developed around Shinto shrines well before the 6th century, the discussion proceeds to Gigaku, which originated in China and had Buddhist associations, moves on to Gagaku and Bugaku (court music and dance), and then to Sarugaku and other prototypes of Noh. Due attention is given the several early phases of Noh, as well as its emergence as a true classical theater and its comic interludes of Kyogen. The discussion continues with the origins and history of the puppet theater Bunraku and the popular theater Kabuki. Each dramatic art is thoroughly explained and copiously illustrated with monochrome photographs of performances, costumes, masks, and implements. The result is an absorbing panorama in which the history of the Japanese theater comes to life.

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