



Japanese Plays: Classic Noh, Kyogen and Kabuki Works (Tuttle Classics)

A.L. Sadler

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Nothing reflects the beauty of life as much as Japanese theater. It is here that reality is held suspended and emptiness can fill the mind through words, music, dance, and mysticism. A.L. Sadler translates the mysteries of Noh, Kyogen, and Kabuki in his groundbreaking book, *Japanese Plays*. A seminal classic in its time, it provides a cross section of Japanese theater that gives the reader a sampler of its beauty and power.

- The power of Noh is in its ability to create an iconic world that represents the attributes that the Japanese hold in highest esteem: family, patriotism, and honor.
- Kyogen plays provide comic relief often times performed between the serious and stoic Noh plays. Similarly, Sadler's translated Kyogen pieces are layered between the Noh and the Kabuki plays.
- The Kabuki plays were the theater of the common people of Japan. The course of time has given them the patina of folk art making them precious cultural relics of Japan. Sadler selected these pieces for translation because of their lighter subject matter and relatively upbeat endings—ideal for a western readership. More linear in their telling and pedestrian in the lessons learned these plays show the difficulties of being in love when a society is bent on conformity and paternal rule.

The end result found in *Japanese Plays* is a wonderful selection of classic Japanese dramatic literature sure to enlighten and delight.

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