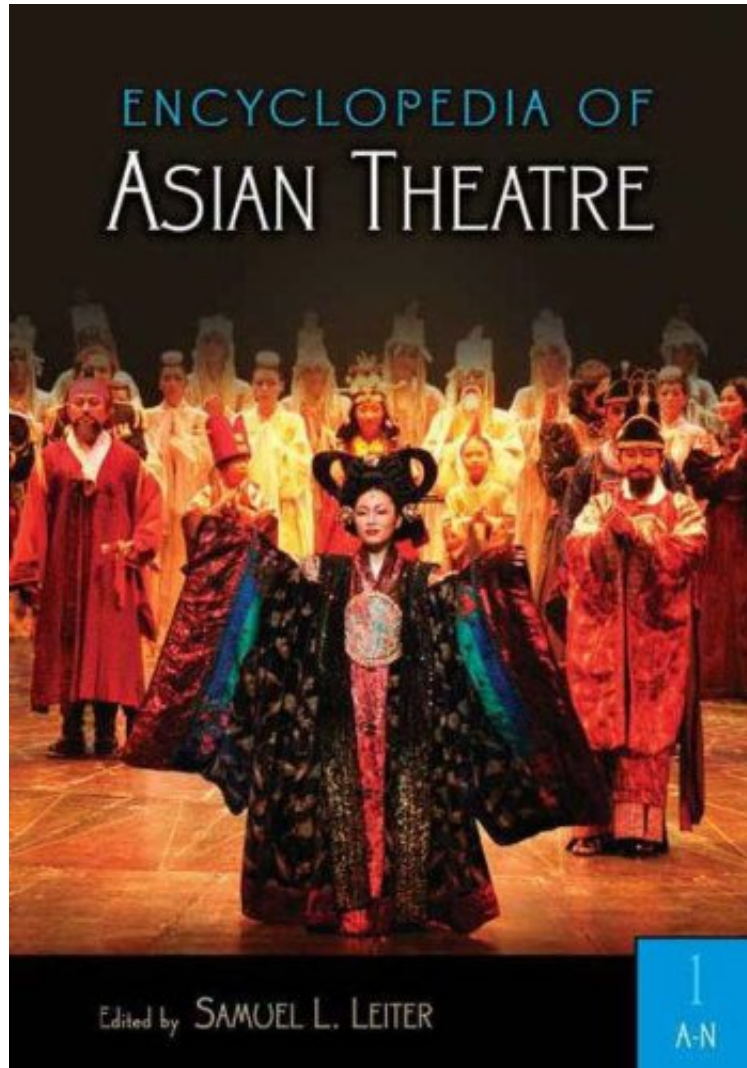


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## Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre [2 volumes]

*Samuel Leiter*

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**Samuel Leiter : Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre [2 volumes]** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre [2 volumes]:

From puppets to living players and musical speech to colloquial prose, Asian theatre is a rich world of contrasting expressions. While it has thrived for centuries and embodies the folk traditions of the Asian people, it also reflects contemporary concerns and innovative theatrical practices. At a time when Asia is of tremendous importance to the West, its theatre is a key to understanding its culture as well as the heritage of Asian Americans. This book is a

detailed and authoritative survey of traditional and contemporary Asian theatre. The Encyclopedia includes hundreds of alphabetically arranged entries written by more than 90 expert contributors. Entries on the most important topics cite works for further reading, and the Encyclopedia closes with an extensive bibliography. Social studies students will appreciate its glimpses of Asian culture, while literature and drama students will value its exploration of the Asian theatrical tradition.

From Booklist Covering both modern and traditional theater in South, Southeast, and Far East Asia, this alphabetically arranged encyclopedia offers a wealth of detailed information on a relatively underdocumented topic. The articles generally fall into 4 subject areas: country or region; biography (actors, directors, playwrights, and some designers, but not musicians or dancers); theatrical genres or forms; and general topics, such as Actors and acting or Women in Asian theatre. Focus is on "performances reliant on narrative structures, characters, and apart from forms that might be considered pantomime language," ranging from Gigaku, a now-extinct performing art brought to Japan from Korea in 612, to modern Chinese spectacles that mix Western and traditional forms and are expected to be part of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Articles range in length from half a page (a minimum of 250 words) to more than 20 pages for some of the general topic areas. These longer articles are divided into sections covering differing geographic areas, for example, Actors and acting Japan, Actors and acting Korea. Cross-referencing is extensive. Larger entries have further-reading suggestions appended, and the set as a whole contains a lengthy topical bibliography. The detailed index as well as the alphabetical and topical contents lists give numerous entry points. The writing, by a number of university-affiliated and independent scholars, is detailed and informative. The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre (1993) is a smaller treatment. The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre, Volume 5, Asia/Pacific (Routledge, 1998) covers a wider geographic area but a more limited time frame. Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre is a good addition for university collections where there is a focus on Asian history or theater. Welton, Ann "This sweeping, comprehensive guide to both traditional and contemporary Asian theater is an excellent resource, broadly expanding on any other previous reference work on the subject. Indeed, no such definitive and in-depth resource has been published on Asian theater. [t]wo volumes of detailed, meticulous entries on everything from the experimental theater of India to famous kabuki actors, arranged alphabetically for easy access and use. The entries are written by an impressive list of expert authors. Editor Leiter, a renowned researcher in the field and former editor of Asian Theatre Journal, is the author of nearly two dozen books, primarily on Asian theater. The set features an extensive bibliography. Further Reading citations accompany most important topics, and a Topical Guide to Entries is especially useful. Illustrations are scattered throughout both volumes. This reference work will obviously prove of great value to students of the performing arts, but also to those studying the history, literature, and culture of Eastern civilization. Essential. Upper-level undergraduates through faculty/researchers." - Choice "[T]he brilliantly conceived Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre, edited by Samuel L. Leiter, comprehensively covers both traditional and modern theatre from South, South-East, and Far East Asia. [i]ts organization is so intuitively logical and user friendly that it should become a model for all future reference works. Beyond the alphabetical listings of countries, artists, or genres, there are long entries (called headwords) that cover major areas of interest. Although one can use the book like a dictionary, it is not necessary to know in advance the name of a specific artist or genre or even what country they are from. Rather, you may begin with large ideas and find cross-references to more specific ones. Many articles include references for further reading, as well as photographs. The use of headwords fosters comparative and cross-cultural thinking fruitful browsing, and unimagined discoveries. No library should be without this extraordinary resource." - Text Presentation "The most comprehensive resource on Asian theater ever published." - American Libraries "[T]he Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre is not only a welcome addition to the literature in the field but is also timely. This set is recommended for Asian studies and theater studies programs." - American Reference Books Annual "This is a work of considerable scholarship and covers a rich selection of people, genres, and knowledge from the exotic world of Asian theatre, much of it little known outside their local regions. It will be of great value to libraries covering the performing arts and Asian studies." - Reference s "Covering both modern and traditional theater in South, Southeast, and Far East Asia, this alphabetically arranged encyclopedia offers a wealth of detailed information on a relatively underdocumented topic. Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre is a good addition for university collections where there is a focus on Asian history or theater." - Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin "In this encyclopedia for both the theater novice and the international expert, Leiter and his extensive posse of highly qualified theater professionals provide quickly digestible capsules arranged in easy-to-find alphabetical entries." - The Bloomsbury In two volumes, this encyclopedia provides information relating to Asian theater, presented alphabetically and including ancient traditions for each country as well as contemporary and avant-garde ones. Leiter focuses on theater work rather than dance. Subjects consist of countries and regions (from Bangladesh to Vietnam), biographies of figures (the bulk of the entries), genres and forms such as kabuki and no, and general topics such as acting, women, directing, religion, costumes, censorship, and masks, with separate discussions of pertinent countries within these entries. Dancers and musicians are generally omitted in favor of actors, directors, playwrights, and designers. - Reference Research Book News "This work is indeed the very first Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre and as such it will be very useful for the many students in Asian theatre. Because

Asian performance is so expansive in time and space we can be significantly helped by a comprehensive work such as this." - Asian Theatre Journal

About the Author Samuel L. Leiter is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Theatre at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center. A specialist in Japanese theatre, he is the former editor of Asian Theatre Journal. His many books include *New Kabuki Encyclopedia* (Greenwood, 1997).