



Revealed Identity: The Noh Plays of Komparu Zenchiku (Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies, 55)

By Paul S. Atkins

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This is the first comprehensive study of the noh plays of Komparu Zenchiku, an actor, playwright, and theoretician of noh drama in fifteenth-century Japan. A renowned performer in his own time, Zenchiku was rediscovered in the modern period as the author of numerous treatises on his art, which he studied under the tutelage of his father-in-law Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443). Yet, Zenchiku is also a major playwright in the Japanese dramatic tradition, and his plays have only recently begun to receive the attention they deserve. Revealed Identity begins with an introduction on the cultural, philosophical, and sociopolitical contexts in which fourteen fascinating plays that have been attributed to Zenchiku were produced. The plays are then grouped into five thematic clusters: the relationship between humans and the nonsentient world, transgression and the suppression or subjugation of the demonic, divinity and its intersection with landscape and the abject, the figuration of female characters as 'women who wait', and delusion and ambiguity in works based on the classic, Tale of Genji, which is defined as a relentless nondualism coupled with a sense of drama as an opportunity to reveal the true nature of a character, rather than illustrating a transformation of that nature. In this regard, Zenchiku's attitude toward noh diverges from that of his contemporaries and challenges the classic western view of drama that defines it in terms of conflict and action.

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