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Heaven Has a Face; So Does Hell: The Art of the Noh Mask

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Diego Antnio Ortega CunhaThis is a beautiful book with a lot of information about this ancient art.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. PURE BEAUTY AND BRILLIANT CRAFTSMANSHIP!By W. ChangA beautifully crafted two-volume set (comes with a slipcase) on Japanese Noh masks. Nothing quite compared to the depth and beauty of this set of books on the subject. Volume 1 contains mostly texts and chapters describing the role Noh theater and masks played in Japanese history of performance arts. Volume 2 contains the pictures (and, wow, what pictures they are!). A brief summary:Volume 1 (403 pages)Chapter 1 Origins of the Noh MaskChapter 2 The Evolution of Noh MaskChapter 3 A Brief History of Noh TheaterChapter 4 The Fundamentals of Noh TheaterChapter 5 The Art of the Noh MaskChapter 6 The Form and Function of the MaskChapter 7 Noh Masks Names and TaxonomyChapter 8 Noh Mask Types and RolesChapter 9

Master Carvers of the Noh Mask Chapter 10 Signature and Other Markings Chapter 11 Traditional Storage and Handling Glossary (very good) Bibliography (mostly Japanese publications) Index (very useful. Often paired with Japanese Kanji) Volume 2 (261 pages) Contains full page photo reproductions of Noh masks with descriptions and notes. When you open the book, the photos will be on your left and the narratives will be on your right. An excellent layout which allows you to see both the masks and the notes at the same time. More than 140 masks are shown. Each mask shown in full color reproduction and a smaller BW picture of the back of the mask showing various inscriptions and artist's signature - a very useful feature. This volume alone is worth the price. The full-color reproductions of the masks are art objects in themselves. You can see all the details of the carving - lines, colors, stains, down to the smallest imperfections. The faithful reproductions will simply take your breath away. Initial printing of only 1,200 copies. It's a true gem in Japanese art books. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Simply amazing By Coco This book is most probably the best resource on Noh masks I have ever encountered, and the collection of high-quality images of seals and signatures has proven to be absolutely invaluable.

A remarkable combination of superb artistry, sophisticated design, and a lengthy history of continuous usage sets the masks of the Noh theater of Japan apart from all others. That so little is known outside of Japan about their great beauty and brilliant craftsmanship prompted the author to undertake the two decades of study, research, and writing that has culminated in this work. The result is nearly 800 pages of text and images published in a two-volume boxed edition limited to 1200 copies. Volume 1 consists of an extended treatise on the history of Noh and the evolution of its masks, including mask forms and functions, types and roles, nomenclature and taxonomy, mask carvers and their lineages, signatures, and other markings. It includes plot and character synopses of the plays most often staged as well as others rarely performed, with particulars about the masks used by various troupes for the principal roles. Volume 2 is an album showcasing in full color over 140 of the finest masks of Noh, both ancient and more recent, with detailed information on their creation, character, and significance, as well as photos of their backs showing inscriptions and artists' signatures. An extensive bibliography, glossary, and index round out this presentation of an exquisite, centuries-old art form. No existing publication on the subject, in either English or in Japanese, remotely compares in scope and depth to the present work.