

Fletcher—Sample Study Guide for Theatre History

Study Guide for Chapter 3: Early Asian Theatre
Due Friday, September 17

Before you read the chapter

1. Describe an image that comes to mind when you think of “Asian theatre.” Where did you get this image?

As you read the chapter

2. Briefly relate your understanding of the purpose or aims of Sanskrit drama. How do these aims/purposes relate to the definitions of *theatre* (particularly as it is opposed to *ritual* or *ceremony*) we discussed earlier this semester?
3. You knew it was coming: Draw and label a Japanese *nō* stage, populating it with representatives of the traditional performance roles (page 102).
4. Use pictures (cartoon-strip/stick figures are fine) to relate the history of Kabuki performance (particularly the gender makeup of Kabuki troupes) as related in Wilson and Goldfarb.
5. Briefly describe the two puppetry traditions (one in Japan, one in Southeast Asia) Wilson and Goldfarb discuss in this chapter. What place should puppet performance hold in a theatre history class? In undergraduate theatre education more generally? Justify your answer.

After you read the chapter

6. A recurring problem in theatre history textbooks concerns how to describe various non-Western performance forms to US/Western audiences. On the one hand, it's inaccurate simply to pretend that Asian theatre is just like Western theatre (except for a few minor differences). On the other hand, if the authors make Asian theatre *too* different, US students may wonder why they have to study these weirdo forms at all. Given this paradox, how do you think Wilson and Goldfarb do? What choices did they make in presenting Asian theatre? Could they have made better choices? Explain.