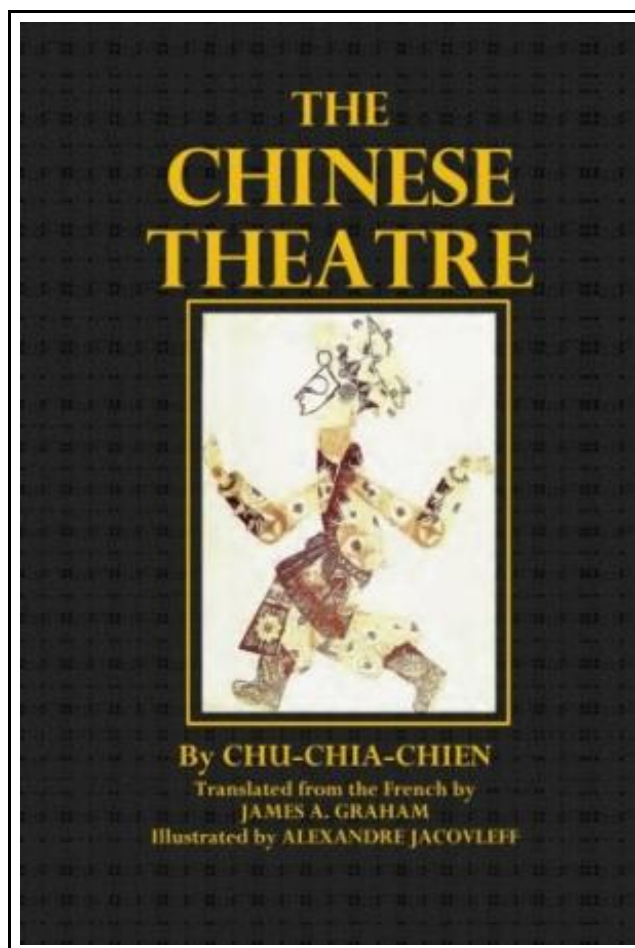


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Createspace, United States, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Alexandre Jacovleff (illustrator). 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.A review excerpt from The Bookman, Volume 63: .MY third book takes me far enough afield from France, England and Italy. It is The Chinese Theatre, a cosmopolitan volume written by Chu-Chia-Chien, translated by James A. Graham, prefaced and illustrated by Alexandre Jacovleff, and printed in Paris. I had no thought of comparison-hunting when I took it up, yet on the third page of the preface I find comparison made between the Chinese theatre and-what but our old friend, the commedia dell arte! Like that Italian form, the writer tells us, Chinese folk-drama deals almost exclusively with conventional characters. It is akin to the antique theatre, the mystery plays, the commedia dell arte, to all forms of theatrical art which are not the expression of individual personality but the reflection of a race. It has changed little from the fourteenth century, and from the seventeenth not at all. It has a highly complicated ritual, but the simplest morality - plain black-and-white without half-tones, right versus, might, vice punished and virtue suitably rewarded; Adelphi melodrama could go no further. We are given several typical plots, their themes being patriotism or treachery, ingratitude, the sanctity of family life, or the struggles of poor students (generals and literary men seem to be favourite heroes). Actors, too, are bound by the same rigid tradition, which they dare not break; they act as Tybalt fenced, by the book of arithmetic, and a very intricate arithmetic, too. Author and artist show them at their craft - training from boyhood under an aged professor; miming through their parts to the beat of music; painting grotesque futuristic make-ups over their faces and scalps;...

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