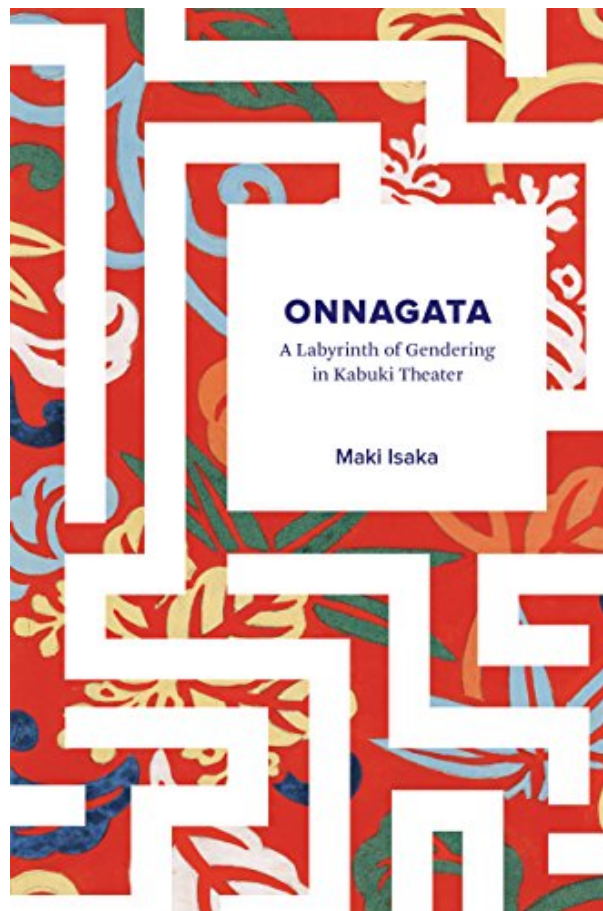
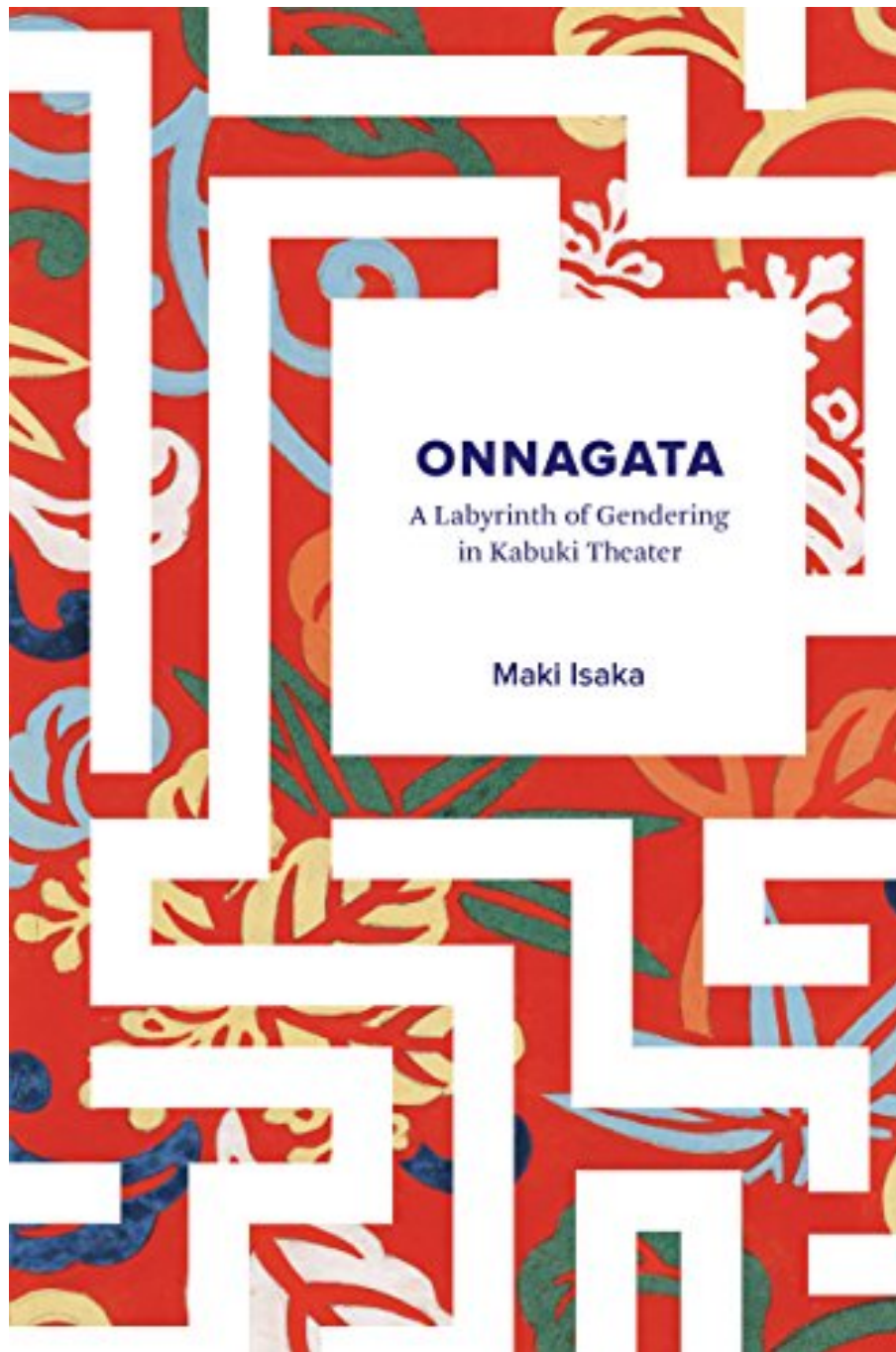


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## Review

"Isaka's study draws on extensive archival research and rigorous engagement with theory, analyzing the intersections of gender, culture, and performance on the kabuki stage. A welcome addition to Japanese studies, this book will inspire students and scholars alike to contemplate kabuki's onnagata in new and insightful ways."?Jan Bardsley, author of *Women and Democracy in Cold War Japan*

"Onnagata is a meticulously researched and documented, original and unprecedented, intellectually rigorous and bold study of the history of the kabuki onnagata, or as it signifies today, the biologically male player of female roles in kabuki."?Nina Cornyetz, author of *The Ethics of Aesthetics in Japanese Cinema and Literature: Polygraphic Desire*

## About the Author

Maki Isaka is associate professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures and affiliate faculty in the Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of *Secrecy in Japanese Arts: "Secret Transmission" as a Mode of Knowledge*.

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Kabuki is well known for its exaggerated acting, flamboyant costumes and makeup, and unnatural storylines. The onnagata, usually male actors who perform the roles of women, have been an important aspect of kabuki since its beginnings in the 17th century. In a "labyrinth" of gendering, the practice of men playing women's roles has affected the manifestations of femininity in Japanese society. In this case study of how gender has been defined and redefined through the centuries, Maki Isaka examines how the onnagata's theatrical gender "impersonation" has shaped the concept and mechanisms of femininity and gender construction in Japan. The implications of the study go well beyond disciplinary and geographic cloisters.

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