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Autore	Morinaga Maki Isaka
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Sommario/riassunto	Exploring the Japanese tradition of hidden (or the secret transmission of) knowledge within a closed and often hereditary group, the author investigates how esoteric practices function, how people make meaning of their practices, and how this form of esotericism survived into the modern age. These questions are examined through the use of esoteric texts from the 15th to 18th centuries and theatrical treatises from the late 19th century onwards.