

### Japanese Studies Series

This series deals with various aspects of Japanese studies, including history, politics, diplomacy, security, economics, literature, cultural studies, comparative studies, and other fields.

There are many concepts, ways of thinking, lifestyles, traditions, and ideas widely accepted in Japan that are not familiar to people outside Japan. The major purpose of this series is to introduce diverse viewpoints on Japan and to precipitate constructive discussion to have a better understanding of this country.

This series is unique because it includes research monographs not only by scholars and researchers in the academic community, but also by professionals (such as doctors, lawyers, business executives, etc.) and practitioners (such as NGO representatives, volunteer group organizers, etc.). The common thread among the series authors is that they are all respected individuals who offer new perspectives on Japanese studies.

**T**his is the first comprehensive, English-language study of the literature, plays, and theatre work of this influential and important contemporary Japanese writer, best known for his novel, *Suna no onna* (*The Woman in the Dunes*), and his play, *Tomodachi* (*Friends*). The work is in six chapters, including an introduction, biographical sketch, and conclusion. One chapter each is devoted to Abe's prose, drama, and methods of actor-training. The study situates Abe within modern Japanese and world literature and theatre, and explores such central themes as the function of Existentialism and the Absurd within Abe's work, the relationship between the individual and society, the relationship between the actor, the rôle, and the troupe, and Abe's constant drive towards a restructuring of the human community into a form capable of dealing with the daily realities of urbanisation, alienation, and social fragmentation. It presents Abe as a fundamentally Modernist writer whose satire and vision of a possible human society prefigured much of the social theories of the Post-modern, through his fiction and work in the theatre.

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**T**imothy Iles was born in Ottawa, Canada, in 1961, but was raised predominantly in Vancouver. He attended the University of British Columbia for his undergraduate degree in the Japanese language, as well as for his Master's in Modern Japanese Literature. He completed his Doctorate at the University of Toronto, also in Japanese Literature. He has taught the Classical Japanese Language at the University of Toronto, as well as Japanese Literature, Theatre, and Film courses both there and in the United States, at the University of Iowa. He currently lives and works in Vancouver, Canada, where he is researching the first English-language study of the Japanese film-maker, Ichikawa Kon.

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Abe Kôbô an Exploration of his Prose, Drama and Theatre

Timothy Iles

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