

# Five Modern Japanese Novelists: A Journey into Japanese Literary Masterpieces



## Five Modern Japanese Novelists by Donald Keene

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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By Donald Keene



- Author: Donald Keene
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## **Unveiling the Rich Tapestry of Modern Japanese Literature**

In the literary landscape of the 20th century, Japanese novelists emerged as luminaries, captivating readers worldwide with their profound insights into the human condition and the complexities of modern life. 'Five Modern Japanese Novelists' by renowned scholar Donald Keene is an illuminating exploration of the works of five literary giants: Tanizaki Jun'ichiro, Kawabata Yasunari, Oe Kenzaburo, Mishima Yukio, and Abe Kobo.

### **Tanizaki Jun'ichiro: Master of Sensuous Beauty and Eroticism**

Tanizaki's works delve into the realm of aesthetics, sensuality, and the pursuit of beauty. His novel 'The Key' explores the erotic obsession of a man for his wife's younger sister, while 'Quicksand' delves into the complexities of a forbidden love affair. Tanizaki's prose is renowned for its lyrical quality and evocative descriptions, capturing the essence of traditional Japanese culture and the allure of the exotic.

### **Kawabata Yasunari: Nobel Laureate and Poetic Lyricist**

Kawabata's writing is characterized by its poetic sensibility and focus on the beauty of everyday life. His masterpiece, 'Snow Country,' paints a serene and evocative portrait of a geisha and her lover, capturing the fragility and transience of human relationships. Kawabata's style is minimalist and restrained, allowing the subtleties of emotion and imagery to speak volumes.

### **Oe Kenzaburo: Exploring the Absurd and the Tragic**

Oe's novels delve into the complexities of post-war Japan, grappling with themes of nuclear devastation, family relationships, and the search for

identity. His masterpiece, 'A Personal Matter,' recounts the birth of his disabled son and the profound impact it had on his life. Oe's writing is deeply philosophical and introspective, inviting readers to confront the existential questions that haunt modern society.

### **Mishima Yukio: Provocateur and Master of the Form**

Mishima was a controversial and enigmatic figure, renowned for his flamboyant lifestyle and complex literary output. His work often explored themes of violence, aesthetics, and the search for a meaningful existence. His novel 'The Temple of the Golden Pavilion' depicts the arson of a famous temple by a young Buddhist novice, delving into the depths of human psychology and the destructive forces that lurk within.

### **Abe Kobo: Pioneer of the Absurd and the Fantastic**

Abe's writing is characterized by its dreamlike imagery, surrealism, and exploration of the absurd. His novel 'The Woman in the Dunes' depicts a man's struggle against the relentless demands of a strange village, highlighting the existential crisis of modern humanity. Abe's work challenges conventional narratives and invites readers to question the nature of reality and the meaning of existence.

### **Immerse Yourself in the World of Modern Japanese Literature**

'Five Modern Japanese Novelists' is an indispensable guide for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of modern Japanese literature. Donald Keene, a preeminent scholar of Japanese culture, provides insightful analysis and contextualization of the works of these literary masters. Through his engaging prose, Keene illuminates the cultural, historical, and

aesthetic influences that shaped their writing and offers a unique perspective on the development of Japanese literature in the 20th century.

## Embrace the Literary Brilliance of Modern Japan

Discover the captivating world of modern Japanese literature with 'Five Modern Japanese Novelists' by Donald Keene. Immerse yourself in the works of Tanizaki, Kawabata, Oe, Mishima, and Abe, and gain a profound appreciation for the richness and diversity of this literary tradition. This book is an essential resource for students, scholars, and anyone fascinated by the beauty and complexity of Japanese literary culture.

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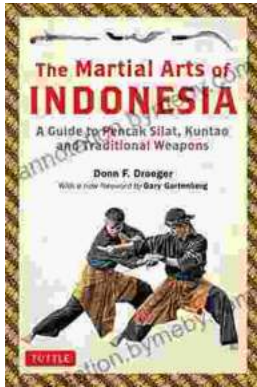


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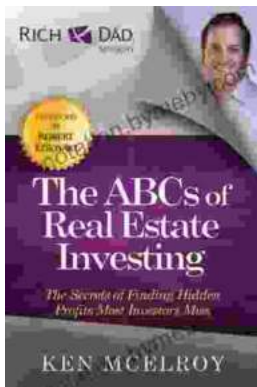
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