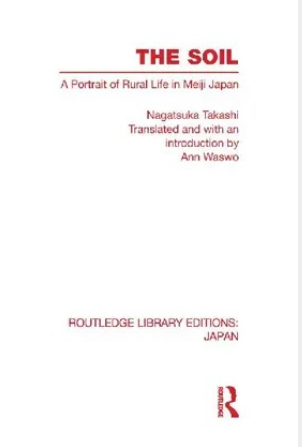
Takashi

The Soil

A Portrait of Rural Life in Meiji Japan

This is a selection of the best plays of Chikamatsu, one of the greatest Japanese dramatists. Master of the marionette and popular dramas, he had, until the publication of this book, remained unknown to western readers owing to the difficulty of translating the work into English. The introduction provides a comprehensive survey of the history of Japanese drama which will assist the reader in better understanding the plays.

The Soil was originally written in 1910 and is a classic account of rural and agricultural life in Japan in the early 1900s. In addition to its deft, powerful evocations of nature, the novel also provides a wealth of information about farming, courtship, marriage, child-rearing, health care, folk religion and funeral customs in the late Meiji era, when Japan's transformation from an agrarian to an industrial society was still in its initial phase.This translation contains a detailed introduction, setting the novel in the context of Japanese development and discussing its major themes.



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