



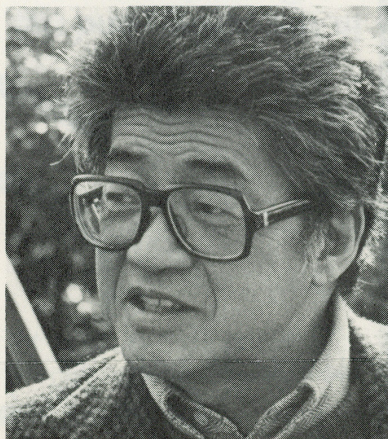
KOBO ABE'S
THE
MAN
WHO TURNED INTO A
STICK

May 13-June 7, 1986
 Playhouse 46
 423 W. 46th Street
 212-245-2660

"It's unnatural having to go on day in and day out living with anything so baffling," a woman says to her friend. They are circling a mysterious suitcase in which the woman's husband claims his ancestors are locked. The suitcase is a man.

DISCOVER

KOBO ABE'S THE MAN WHO TURNED INTO A STICK



Kobo Abe *Shinchosa*

Suitcase is the first of three related plays which compose Kobo Abe's **THE MAN WHO TURNED INTO A STICK**, a work of striking allegory and absurd humor by Japan's foremost contemporary playwright and novelist. Pan Asian Rep is pleased to present the New York premiere of this mesmerizing drama as the final selection of the 1985-86 season.

Kobo Abe is best known in this country for his acclaimed novel, **THE WOMAN IN THE DUNES**, upon which the award-winning film was based. Kobo Abe's novels and plays reflect his concern with the alienation and loss of identity which come from living in an urban, highly technological society. In **THE MAN WHO TURNED INTO A STICK**, Kobo Abe uses images of isolation and metamorphosis to represent the disorientation of modern life.

Translated by
DONALD KEENE
Directed by
RON NAKAHARA
Light Design
TINA CHARNEY
Set Design
BOB PHILLIPS
Costume Design
EIKO YAMAGUCHI

with
ERNEST ABUBA*
RAUL ARANAS*
KATI KURODA
MARY LEE-ARANAS*
DON LI*

**Courtesy Actors' Equity Association
Production photos by Carol Rosegg,
Martha Swope Associates*

May 13 - June 7, 1986 at Playhouse 46, 423 West 46th Street

To Mr. Abe, the three scenes of **THE MAN WHO TURNED INTO A STICK** represent Birth, Process, and Death. The plays were not originally intended to be performed together, and in fact were written in exactly the reverse order in which they are now performed. But Mr. Abe felt intuitively that the pieces formed a single work, as he describes in his postface to **STICK**: "Suddenly, from the midst of a thick fog, a large shape loomed up and by the time I became aware of it, the three existed before me as a single work. I accepted this combination just as it was, without hesitation, as an absolutely inevitable reality. It is almost impossible for me now to believe that these three scenes were originally not a single work."

Mr. Abe stresses the importance of a central actor who will play the roles of the suitcase, a boxer, and the man who turned into a stick, creating the link between scenes which, at first glance, appear very different from one another. In the first, the women attempt to unlock the suitcase which periodically emits strange noises, snatches of conversation, and fragments of the stock report. In the second, a boxer fights an invisible opponent, urged on by an offstage voice. In the final scene, a man falls from the roof of a department store and is transformed into a stick. Mr. Abe's theatre is obviously contemporary not only in its themes but in its format.

His modernity makes Kobo Abe utterly unlike other Japanese writers of his generation. While Yukio Mishima and Yasunari Kawabata reflected in anger or nostalgia on the past, Kobo Abe's perspective is firmly rooted in the present. He is compared most often with Western writers like Franz Kafka, Harold Pinter, and Samuel Beckett. In Japan, Mr. Abe is referred to as an "international writer," a term he dislikes. Yet despite his universal themes and the absence in much of his work of specific names and places, Kobo Abe's work is clearly influenced by--and a reflection on--the enormous changes in Japanese society during the last half century.





Kobo Abe was born in 1924. His family moved from Tokyo to Mukden, a city in Manchuria, when he was a year old. While he was still in grade school, he witnessed the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. He returned to Tokyo to attend high school, and was enrolled in medical school when World War II broke out. His medical studies exempted him from military service, but perhaps because of his early memories of the Manchurian invasion, Mr. Abe had mixed feelings about the Japanese war effort and was more relieved than devastated when Japan was defeated. While still at the university, he met and married Machi Yamada, an art student. He began neglecting his medical studies, for which he had little interest, in order to write, and received a medical degree only on the condition that he never practice. The Abes moved frequently, working odd jobs to make money, until Kobo Abe's novelette, **THE CRIME OF MR. S. KARUMA**, won the prestigious Akutagawa award in 1951. Several successful novels followed, including **THE BOX MAN**, **THE RUINED MAP**, **THE FACE OF ANOTHER**, and **THE WOMAN IN THE DUNES**, which won the Yomiuri prize.

As a playwright, Mr. Abe was often critical of the productions his plays received. He formed his own company so he could train the actors, direct, and write and compose the score himself. His wife designed sets and costumes. In 1979, his theatrical troupe toured the United States with a production

of **THE LITTLE ELEPHANT IS DEAD**. Mel Gussow of The New York Times wrote, "Hypnotic and highly comic...experimental theatre with a sense of humor." The company has since disbanded, but many of the actors trained by Mr. Abe have gone on to successful theatrical careers. Other plays include **FRIENDS** and **YOU, TOO, ARE GUILTY**, both of which have been translated into English. While Mr. Abe's plays are not frequently performed outside of Japan, his plays and novels are translated into both English and Russian more than any other contemporary Japanese writer.

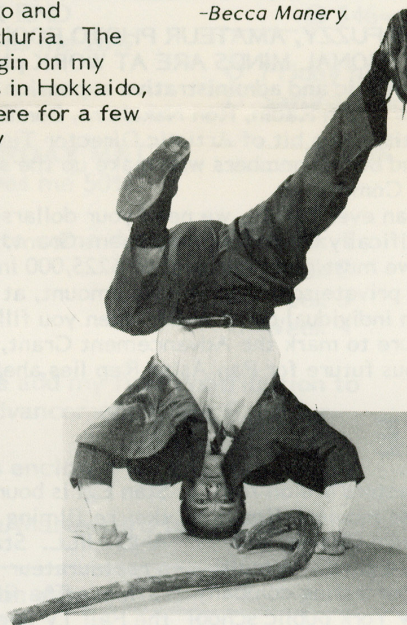
Part of Kobo Abe's appeal to foreign audiences is his rootlessness, a concept which many Europeans, displaced by war or poverty, and most Americans can sympathize with. As Mr. Abe explains, "I was born in Tokyo and brought up in Manchuria. The place of family origin on my papers, however, is in Hokkaido, and I have lived there for a few years. In short, my place of birth, the place where I was brought up, and my place of family origin are three different places on the map."

Essentially, I am a man without a hometown." In Japan, where people have a sentimental attachment to their furusato, or hometown, rootlessness is a strange concept.

But Kobo Abe realizes, perhaps more clearly than any Japanese writer, the impact technology and urbanization have had on a society based on loyalty and tradition. As people become more mobile, and yet more isolated from one another, the idea of a hometown may soon be obsolete.

Like the characters in **STICK** faced with baffling images, the Japanese are watching their familiar world rapidly disappearing. For Kobo Abe, the only way to deal with the disorienting experiences of modern life is to confront them with laughter--and a realization that you can never go home.

—Becca Manery



Subscribers and the general public are invited to a roundtable discussion immediately following the May 15 performance, approximately 8:30 p.m. Dr. Nancy Shields Hardin, a scholar of Abe's dramatic work, will be among the guest speakers. For more information, call 505-5655.

Dr. Donald Keene, translator of **THE MAN WHO TURNED INTO A STICK**, will address the audience after the Opening Night performance. Considered one of the most important scholars of Japanese literature in this century, Dr. Keene is Professor of Japanese at Columbia University and has received numerous awards for his scholarship.

1986 - 1987 SEASON
SUBSCRIBER BENEFITS

Season reservations: Your seats are guaranteed for the year. And the year after that. Seating will be filled in the order received.

Unlimited ticket exchange: Call anytime during the day from 10 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday, at 505-5655.

Buy additional tickets anytime at 25% off Box Office price.

Dine Out Discounts: Special prices at Restaurant Row eateries--on 46th Street, on the way to our theatre.

Invitations for Subscribers only: To meet-the-company events and discussion groups.

Additional discounts on group sales and house buyouts for your business or social organization. Call 505-5655 for details.

1986 - 1987 BOX OFFICE
SINGLE TICKET PRICES

Week Night	\$12
Weekend	\$16
Saturday Matinee	\$16
Opening Night	\$35

"EARLY BIRD"
SUBSCRIPTION PRICES
Good only until
JUNE 7, 1986

WEEK NIGHT Save 38%	\$30
WEEKEND Save 28%	\$46
SATURDAY MAT Save 50%	\$32
OPENING NIGHT Save 29%	\$100

**EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT
GOOD THROUGH 6·7·86**

You're having a raffle of GHASHIRAM KOTWAL and EMPRESS OF CHINA costumes? And only subscribers are eligible? And you're having reserved seating for next season starting now? So I won't have to remember not to forget to order my tickets for the next show?

WOW! Count me in! I'm yours for the 1986-1987 Pan Asian Rep Season:

OPENING NIGHT _____ @ \$100= \$ _____
Saves me 29%

WEEK NIGHT _____ @ \$30= \$ _____
Saves me 38%

- ☐ Tuesday night
☐ Wednesday night
☐ Thursday night

WEEK END _____ @ \$46= \$ _____
Saves me 28%

- ☐ Friday night
☐ Saturday night

SATURDAY MAT _____ @ \$32= \$ _____
Saves me 50%

And I want to come during ☐ Week 1
☐ Week 2
☐ Week 3
☐ Week 4

Now, let me add my first contribution to the NEA Advancement Grant Fund for \$ _____

My check is enclosed for the total of \$ _____

Bill my Visa/Mastercard for a total of \$ _____

Expiration date _____

My name is _____

Address _____

Mail to: Pan Asian Repertory Theatre
47 Great Jones Street, New York, NY 10012

ABOUT: EIKO YAMAGUCHI

Costumer

She perches on the edge of her chair. She doesn't really pound the table, but pats it for emphasis, setting important phrases into italics as she speaks.

"I do start with the director and a concept, but my job is to help the actors. My joy is when the actors can feel their roles through the costumes--when I bring the costumes in and we find that their character and my character are the same." She shrugs, "If there is a problem, we talk."

Years ago in Japan, Eiko listened. Because her parents wanted her to have a profession, she dutifully set aside her desire to design and got a four year Masters in pharmacology. Then, as she had bargained, she did what she wanted. But three years of mass produced fashion proved a disappointment. So she came to this country armed with her schoolroom English

--which did not include much conversation--and her portfolio, her student visa, and determination. That was eleven years ago.

"I kept going to school, because that was all my visa would allow," sighs Eiko. Then she got a sponsor, which meant a permanent visa, and she began at the Studio and Forum of Stage Design under her mentor, Lester Polakov. She studied at night for no credit, no degree, no graduation, and during the day pursued her career--at last--as a fully employed costume designer.

Pan Asian Rep has been gowned, shod, caped, and crowned in Eiko's creations for five years now, and her enthusiasm hasn't waned. Her favorite show, TEAHOUSE, 1983, called for 200 costumes for 50 roles, and the removal of a substantial number of seats in order to get all the actors onstage.

When she did last season's successful Off-Broadway revival of PACIFIC OVERTURES--with Ernest Abuba--she realized that out there she would need the union to protect her in her negotiations with producers. So she took the fast-track United Scenic Artists' exam, and got in. Like that.

"I want to say something." Eiko is patting the table again. "In five years at Pan Asian there's never been a bad experience. That's very rare. This group cares about helping each other." Pat. "And now, everyone is beginning to know about Pan Asian. When I took my exam, the judges said, 'Oh, I know that show.' They already had seen my work."

She puts two hands on the table. "That's another thing. In America, when you work hard, always, always, someone will notice you. Someone is always looking."



EMPRESS OF CHINA, 1984 Tina Chen, Alvin Lum

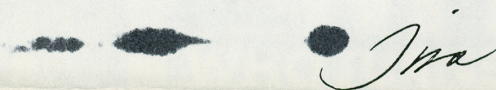


GHASHIRAM KOTWAL, 1986 Lynette Chun, Mel Gionson

EVENTS

Artistic Advance!

In celebrating our 10th Anniversary this September, my long dreamed of wish to designate a core of Senior Artists is at hand! These are actors of exceptional talent and versatility--with long track records at Pan Asian Rep--who share in the goals of and commitment to the company. These actors will be given first consideration in casting, and will be guaranteed at least 16 weeks of work in tours, workshops, and staged presentations, as well as mainstage shows. Finally, and at long last, we are on the verge of sustaining a repertory ensemble of exemplary artists! HOORAY!



FESTIVAL AT LINCOLN CENTER May 3 Noon to 7PM

Entertainment...food...crafts... balloons. Damrosch Park at Lincoln Center will again be the site of this year's Asian/Pacific American Heritage Festival. Pan Asian Rep actors will be manning a table selling MAN WHO TURNED INTO

A STICK tickets and a mystery raffle. The festivities are under the guidance of Artistic Director Tisa Chang and our new Box Office Manager, Henry Lee Chan. Come for the fun, and give us a hand.

TISA TO KOREA

Tisa will be going to Seoul, Korea, on June 5th, courtesy of ITI--International Theatre Institute. While there she will research Korean theatre in hopes of unearthing a new project for Pan Asian. She'll also hit Hong Kong and Kyoto on this junket. It's all work related, she claims.

TISA ON TAPE

Lehman College President **Leonard Lief** interviewed **Tisa Chang** for the series "Arts in New York", to air Friday, May 9 at 5:30 and 10:30 PM on WNYC-TV, Channel 31. The subject of discussion was the history and future of Pan Asian Rep.

WORKSHOPS & READINGS

All young at heart are invited to a free presentation of improvised scenes from **THE JAKARTA TALES** on Friday, May 2, 8 PM, at Staret Space 603 -- 311 West 43rd Street near 8th Avenue, in room 603. This is the culmination of **Kati Kuroda's** Improvisation Workshop. The presentation is free, but you must make a reservation by calling us at 505-5655. We hope to develop this piece to tour the public schools next season.

Pan Asian Rep and **Basement Workshop** will co-produce a staged presentation of **YIN CHIN BOW**, a play by **Cherylene Lee** about a Chinese immigrant living in the American West in the 1880's. **Ernest Abuba** is scheduled to direct, as part of the play development series at Basement Workshop. A performance is planned for Monday, June 30, at 7:30 PM, also at Staret Space 603. One man and three women skilled in mime, movement and improvisation will perform all roles. Those interested in auditioning may call 505-5655 from 10 to 6, Monday through Friday.

Ernest Abuba's new play, **PAPA-BOY** will be developed during July with the aid of a Rockefeller grant. This workshop, involving two actors and a director/dramaturg, may lead to a public presentation later in the year.

David Leong's Stage Combat class, originally scheduled for May, has been postponed. The class will meet three times a week from August 18 - 30 at the rehearsal space, 47 Great Jones Street. This class will either focus on fencing for a future presentation of **THREE MUSKETEERS**, or Japanese combat in preparation for next season's **SHOGUN MACBETH**.

A NEW LOOK:

With our 10th Anniversary in the offing, and the
NEA Advancement Grant Campaign upon us,
the time has come for

PAN-ASIAN-REPERTORY

T · H · E · A · T · R · E

47 Great Jones Street • New York, NY 10012

Pan Asian Rep is the professional Asian American theatre company producing--under the highest artistic standards--new plays from the Asian American experience, adaptations of World classics, and American premieres of Asian masterworks.

We mount our mainstage productions in Playhouse 46, 423 West 46th Street, between 9th and 10th Avenues.

We are a Primary Organization of the New York State Council on the Arts and a participant in the National Endowment for the Arts Advancement Program.



Bill & Yuri Kochiyama
545 W. 126th St. #3B
New York, NY 10027