

《(日本名伎川上贞奴) MADAME SADAYAKKO》

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内容简介

The first Japanese actress of modern times, Sadayakko (1871-1946) shared the stage with Isadora Duncan and influenced Puccini's writing of *Madame Butterfly*. Unfortunately, this biography, a follow-up to Downer's *Women of the Pleasure Quarters*, never takes wing despite the author's best efforts to track down relatives who still remember the actress, sold by her family to become a geisha at age five. Pieced together from newspaper clippings and writings by contemporaries, the book fails to capture the excitement of Sadayakko's success. Like many geisha, who were considered social outcasts, Sadayakko married into the theater at age 19 by choosing a husband, Otojiro, from among the "riverbed beggars," as actors were then known. She joined him on stage during his troupe's first American tour, but soon she became a bigger star than he. Otojiro founded New Wave drama, or *shimpa*, which was much less stylized than traditional kabuki, yet Downer makes a strong case that Sadayakko was every bit as important as Otojiro to the development of Japanese theater. But Sadayakko, who was eager to support her husband, left no record to indicate the exact nature of her role, if any, in the development of his plays. After Otojiro's death, Sadayakko continued to act and to train other young actresses. Although Sadayakko was a captivating character, Downer doesn't come up with enough facts to present an equally captivating story.

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