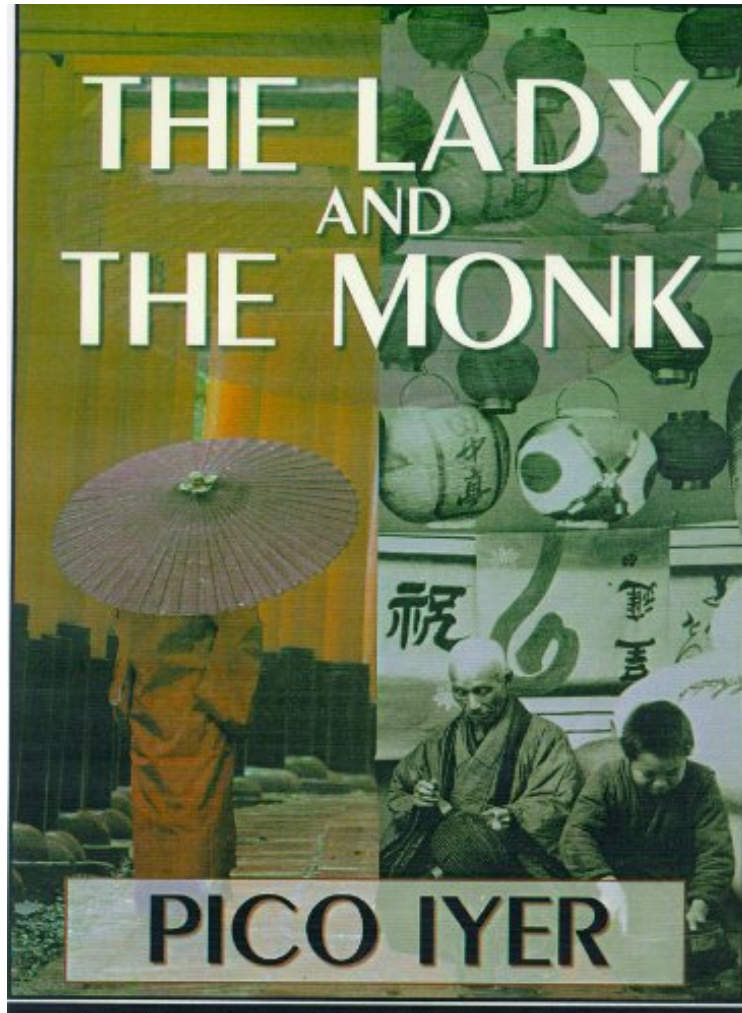


[PDF] The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto (Library Edition)

## The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto (Library Edition)

*Pico Iyer*

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**Pico Iyer : The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto (Library Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto (Library Edition):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very enjoyable By Maria First time reading anything from this Author and I enjoyed it thoroughly as I recently came back from a trip to Japan. And helped me understand much of what I saw and felt. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. "O brave new world/ That has such people in't!" By Daniel Myers Any reviewer can find something wrong with a book, if s/he tries hard enough. And many have been quick to do so here. I suppose I could as well (e.g., by picking on Iyer for not going into the implications of the faux-Utopian society Japan has created). But I have absolutely no desire to do so. The book is so beautifully and deftly written, the romance so touching and piquant without falling into bathos, that it would, to me be similar to picking at

the lovely haikus interspersed herein, stylistically complementing the lyrical writing. Yes, as one reviewer has pointed out, it is more memoir than what is called "Travel Literature"-though the boundaries between the two have always seemed blurry to me at best. This book will be enjoyed most by lovers of poetry, lyrical poetry - such as that of Yeats and Shelley, than by readers of the "hard-boiled" school of travel writing epitomized in V.S. Naipaul's works. If you believe that poetry is the deepest sort of writing, that one can get to "know" a society or people better through a Romantic relationship with a member of that society than by doing a Sociological study of it, if your dream life is as important to you as waking life, in short, if you have a poetic nature: This is the book for you! "Everyone falls in love with what he cannot begin to understand."--Or, as Pico finds out, thinks he cannot, but through patience and love finds that he can...begin. PS-Pico and Sachiko are still together, according to wikipedia at any event. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. ... before my first trip to Japan in 2008 and liked it enough that I broke my rule of trying ...By Michele Wucker, Author of THE GRAY RHINO read Lady and the Monk before my first trip to Japan in 2008 and liked it enough that I broke my rule of trying to find new homes for non-work books in hopes of keeping my shelves to a dull roar. I just booked another trip and am glad I kept it because I'm going to give it a re-read.

When Pico Iyer decided to go to Kyoto and live in a monastery, he did so to learn about Zen Buddhism from the inside, to get to know Kyoto, one of the loveliest old cities in the world, and to find out something about Japanese culture today--not the world of businessmen and production lines, but the traditional world of changing seasons and the silence of temples, of the images woven through literature, of the lunar Japan that still lives on behind the rising sun of geopolitical power. All this he did. And then he met Sachiko. Vivacious, attractive, thoroughly educated, speaking English enthusiastically if eccentrically, the wife of a Japanese "salaryman" who seldom left the office before 10pm, Sachiko was as conversant with tea ceremony and classical Japanese literature as with rock music, Goethe, and Vivaldi. With the lightness of touch that made *Video Night in Kathmandu* so captivating, Pico Iyer fashions from their relationship a marvelously ironic yet heartfelt book that is at once a portrait of cross-cultural infatuation--and misunderstanding--and a delightfully fresh way of seeing both the old Japan and the very new.

From Publishers Weekly Iyer's travelogue about visiting Japan and living in a monastery is subverted by his encounter with a vivacious woman. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Iyer, author of *Video Night in Kathmandu* (LJ 4/1/88), has written a lyrical fable about the Japan of both yesterday and today. He is drawn to Japan, he explains, because "everyone falls in love with what he cannot begin to understand." He begins by traveling to a Kyoto monastery to study Zen Buddhism, which is part of his effort to "get to the urgent truth." This leads him to a friendship with a bourgeois housewife named Sachiko, who is fascinated by the West. Iyer sets out to understand Sachiko and, by extension, Japanese culture. With his light touch for travel writing, Iyer selectively weaves the plaintive love poems and stories of Buddhist priests into his narrative. His sensitive treatment is recommended for most travel collections.- Susan Fifer Canby, National Geographic Soc. Lib., Washington, Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sA critically acclaimed young writer with a warm eye for the incongruous (*Video Night in Kathmandu*, 1988) spends a year in Kyoto, intending to both explore "the private Japan...the emotional Japan" and live a life of Thoreauvian simplicity. Iyer succeeds in his first goal but not completely in his second as life throws him a curveball in the form of Sachiko, a pretty and wildly enthusiastic woman in her early 30s. The mother of two small children, Sachiko is a typical Japanese housewife married to a usually absent businessman who "was no more affected by her doings than a big boss might be." Everything in Sachiko's world has been preordained--she had no career, she's not allowed to travel--and she yearns with enormous hunger for the freedoms of the West. "I dream you life-style," she says to Iyer in her struggling English on numerous occasions. "You are bird, you go everywhere..." Sachiko's passions are ardent and almost unbelievably eclectic--rock music, tea ceremonies, stuffed animals, classical literature--and through her, Iyer learns much about the conflicts and complexities of modern-day Japan. He also learns much that debunks his preconceived notions about the island nation. In between Iyer's increasingly personal meetings with an awakening Sachiko (she eventually leaves her husband to travel as a tour guide), he describes his encounters with Zen Buddhism, Japanese culture, Japanese literature and Americans abroad. His observations in these sections are often astute and light in touch, but they lack some of the energy and refreshing elements of surprise that suffuse the rest of the book. A personal and evocative work filled with much gentle humor, intelligence and insight. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.