



# The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto

*Pico Iyer*

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## **The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto** Pico Iyer

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 10 P.M., 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.

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