



# **Enter a Samurai: Kawakami Otojiro and Japanese Theatre in the West, Volume 2**

*Joseph L. Anderson*

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Looking back to the last years of the nineteenth century, veteran producer-director Joseph L. Anderson draws upon a monumental body of research gleaned from libraries and archives in seven countries to introduce the Japanese theatrical impresario Kawakami Otojiro. In 1899, Kawakami, his wife -- the inspired dancer and actress Sadayakko -- and his troupe went on epochal performance tours of the U.S. and Europe, introducing audiences to new forms of dramatic art and dance previously unseen in the West.

Possessed of boundless energy and limitless imagination, Kawakami was a pioneer who quite literally viewed the world as his stage. In the closing decade of an all-too-brief life, Kawakami introduced major reforms of Japanese performance and the theatre business.

Scholarly, witty, and filled with fascinating insights into the culture and conventions of *fin de siecle* America, Europe, and Japan, *Enter a Samurai* opens a door into a little-known, yet vitally important era of modern theatrical history.

## About the Author

Joseph L. Anderson has been enjoying Japanese and American plays and films for over seven decades. During the 1950s and 1960s he wrote for and was an editorial board member on many little film magazines. Later, as professor of film in the Ohio University College of Fine Arts and adjunct in its Comparative Arts doctoral program in the early 1960s, he pioneered university-level studies of Japanese cinema. He has a BA in history from Antioch College and an MA from Ohio State University, and he was a language student at ICU, Tokyo. Anderson is the principal coauthor of *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (in print for fifty years).

Anderson was chief advisor for the Tokyo Broadcasting System academic program in Japanese Broadcasting, Media, and Culture and taught at the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. He has been an assistant director and dialogue coach on American feature films shot in Japan as well as a director of documentary films, a *Variety* stringer, and a writer of subtitles for Japanese films. In Hollywood and at WGBH Boston, he developed computer-generated subtitles for feature motion pictures (the technique in use today).

During his career, he directed two independent American feature films, was an outside producer for ABC and CBS news specials, director of special projects at the [American] Art Theatre Guild, Mid-West producer for the Candid Camera Company, a puppeteer, a neophyte comedian in burlesque, an actor in lesser touring companies, director of a children's theatre, and an English language *benshi* (live narrator of Japanese silent films). In his teens he was a professional scenic artist, stage carpenter, and minor actor with several Equity summer stock theatres.

Anderson is now a retired vice president of WGBH Boston, the organization that for several decades has produced more than a fourth of the television programs seen nationwide on PBS. In 1989, he received the Japan Prize (Nihonsho) for WGBH and was a Japan Foundation senior fellow in 1975.

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