APPENDIX I

ACTORS’ DEATHS: 1952–1965

The deaths of Nakamura Kichiemon I, Ichikawa Sanshō V, Nakamura Tokizō IV, Ichikawa En’ō, Ichikawa Danshirō III, and Ichikawa Danjūrō XI are discussed in chapter ten. That of Danjūrō XI is covered in chapter eleven.

Nakamura Tokizō III

Following Sanshō’s demise, the next star to pass away was Tokizō III, an outstanding onnagata who had found himself edged aside in his brother Kichiemon’s favors by Utaemon, causing a serious rift that took several years to heal. His achievements had recently been recognized by his being elected to the Japan Art Academy in 1958. He died of liver cancer at sixty-four on July 12, 1959. Tokizō left behind a family of five sons and five daughters, his sons being Kashō (later Karoku IV), Shidō, Shibajaku (later Tokizō IV), Kinnosuke, and Kazuo.

Nakamura Tomijūrō IV

Nakamura Tomijūrō V (formerly Tsurunosuke and Ichimura Takeojo), who died in 2010, was the son of Tomijūrō IV, who had become a star despite humble beginnings, and dancer Azuma Tokuho, who took her own Azuma Kabuki company on tour to America and Europe during these years, so his theatre genes were perfectly matched to make him one of the top actor-dancers of the second half of the twentieth century. However, for all his ability, his father, considered the leading Kansai onnagata of the 1950s, never was able to sustain his reputation; in 1960, when he died at fifty-two of softening of the brain while touring in Ube City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, he was still struggling to regain popular acceptance. His physical qualities were considered a drawback for classical roles and his voice was also somewhat lacking, which led him to specialize in new plays; his attempt to reignite his career by establishing the
Yaguruma-za study group in 1955 failed and he died while in the prime of life.

*Bandō Mitsugorō VII*

One of the few top kabuki actors whose frailty forced them off the stage years before they died was Bandō Mitsugorō VII, who retired in 1958 after collapsing at home of a cerebral hemorrhage following a dance performance with his adopted son, Minosuke, the next Mitsugorō, their first time together on stage in twenty-four years. Death arrived three years later, on November 4, 1961, to this seventy-nine-year-old Living National Treasure, Person of Cultural Merit, and recently elected member of the Japan Art Academy. He enjoyed a distinguished career, but his diminutive stature and other aspects of his demeanor made it difficult for him to gain the kind of reputation in heroic tachiyaku roles held by his colleagues Kichiemon and Kikugorō. Mitsugorō was a repository of theatrical lore, attained extreme mastery as a dancer (he was headmaster of the Bandō school), and published important writings on kabuki. Having had the benefit of training at the hands of Danjūrō IX and Kikugorō V, and even earlier by Shikan IV, he was the last star to continue the traditions of Meiji kabuki.

*Sawamura Tosshi VIII*

The seventy-five-year-old Tosshi’s passing was seen as yet another example of how Shōchiku’s bias toward actors with powerful family backing could keep outstanding actors from becoming stars under its banner. In his youth, when known as Denjirō, he was popular as a romantic lead in Asakusa’s mid-sized theatre; from middle age on he was active in Sadanji II’s company; and after the war he moved to Kansai and became a leading player in older men’s roles. But when Kansai Kabuki went into decline and Tokyo offers did not come his way, his health suffered and he retired. Akiyama Yasusaburō observed,

> When he saw how many Kansai actors of his generation were flourishing in Tokyo, perhaps he got so upset and lonely that he died. As for me, every time I ran into someone with Shōchiku’s theatre division, I would urge them, ‘How about bringing Tosshi to Tokyo?’ but they merely shrugged. ... There are probably very few now who remember his Denjirō days when he was the